

# INDEPENDENT MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Information for workers



Returnto  
**WorkSA**



Government of  
South Australia

## **What is an independent medical examination?**

It is a medical examination that provides an independent opinion about your work injury and treatment to assist with decisions about supporting your recovery and return to work and entitlement to compensation.

## **Who is an independent medical examiner?**

They are medical specialists with qualifications relevant to your injury. They are not employed by ReturnToWorkSA or the claims agent, and they cannot treat or offer to treat you.

## **Do they replace my treating doctor?**

No, they do not replace your medical practitioner. They review and provide an independent opinion about your injury.

## **Why would I have an independent medical examination?**

It may be necessary:

- to obtain information not available from your treating doctor; or
- to provide an opinion about issues raised in discussion with your treatment team; or
- in preparation for a future assessment of permanent impairment.

**NB: an independent medical examination is not for the purposes of assessing permanent impairment entitlements.**

## **Who pays for the independent medical examination?**

ReturnToWorkSA, its claims agents or a self-insured employer will pay for the independent medical examination and any necessary costs, reasonably incurred, to attend the examination (e.g. travel).

## Who makes the referral?

ReturnToWorkSA, its claims agents or a self-insured employer. They will select an appropriately qualified medical specialist with expertise in your work injury.

The referral process includes a report request to the independent medical examiner containing information and questions necessary to better understand the extent of the injury or illness and how it impacts on your work. Those questions include things like:

- relationship between an injury and employment;
- past and present medical history as it relates to the work injury;
- the cause of the injury or condition;
- any associated conditions that may be affecting the current work injury;
- how the injury impacts you in your capacity to work, and in your daily activities;
- current treatment and its effectiveness.

**NB: if you have a legal representative, they may also refer to an independent medical examination to understand more about your injury.**



## **Can I have a telehealth examination?**

The examination must be face-to-face with the independent medical examiner. Telehealth examinations are not appropriate for independent medical examinations.

An exception may be made if you have a psychiatric injury and require an independent medical examination.

## **What am I required to do for the independent medical examination?**

You are required to attend the independent medical examination. Refusal to participate or not attend may impact on your entitlement to compensation.

To prepare for the independent medical examination you should:

- confirm the appointment with the referrer and discuss any special needs such as an interpreter;
- wear comfortable and appropriate clothing for the examination.



## **What happens during an independent medical examination?**

The examiner will conduct the examination in a respectful and professional manner, making all efforts to preserve modesty and not exacerbate your work injury or cause any discomfort. You are not expected to undertake any activity that cannot be done safely during the examination.

## **Can I bring a support person with me to the appointment?**

Yes, you can bring an adult support person. They should not answer questions or contribute to the examination.

## **What is an independent medical examination report?**

Following an independent medical examination, the examiner will prepare a report.

The report, based on the information provided to the examiner and your examination, will be sent to the referrer.

## **Will I get a copy of the independent medical examination report?**

Yes, your claims manager will provide you a copy of the report. Your employer and treating doctor can also request a copy.

## **How do I provide feedback or make a complaint?**

To make a complaint or provide feedback about any aspect of your independent medical examination experience, the first step is to speak with the referrer, usually the claims agent.

If you still feel unsatisfied, you can follow the instructions on the ReturnToWorkSA website about making a complaint or call ReturnToWorkSA on 13 18 55.



### Visit us

400 King William Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

### Opening hours

8:30am – 5:00pm Monday to Friday

### Contact us

Phone 13 18 55  
Email [info@rtwsa.com](mailto:info@rtwsa.com)

### Mail us

GPO Box 2668  
Adelaide SA 5001 Australia DX660

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can call ReturnToWorkSA on **13 18 55** through the National Relay Service (NRS) [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au).

For languages other than English, call the Interpreting and Translating Centre on **1800 280 203** and ask for an interpreter to call ReturnToWorkSA on **13 18 55**.

For braille, audio or e-text of the information in this publication call **13 18 55**.

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