

# Undertaking a home assessment

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## Introduction

To support an assessment of an employee's need for household services, attendant care services, modifications and alterations and home based aids and appliances, Comcare can arrange for a qualified Occupational Therapist (OT) to conduct

an assessment of these needs through a home based assessment.

Any proposed assessment of household services, attendant care services, modifications and aids and appliances should be discussed with an Injury Manager before any action is taken.

For more information about these types of needs, refer to the following pages:

- [Home help and attendant care](#)
- [Aids and appliances under sections 16 and 39](#)
- [Alterations and modifications under section 39](#)

For guidance on the information gathering provisions under the SRC Act, refer to:

- [Gathering claim information](#)
- [Evidence collection under the SRC Act](#)

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## When are home based assessments conducted and what is included

Home based assessments are undertaken in the employee's home.

They are undertaken when:

- a new claim for household, attendant care services, modifications or alterations, or home based aids and appliances is received or we are proactively looking at providing this to the employee
- a request for an increase of the services is received or we consider it is needed
- the amount of services claimed appears more than what is considered needed.
- a review is required to determine if service provision remains relevant to the compensable condition.

## A home based assessment may cover multiple types of services

A home based assessment may cover one type of service, such as attendant care services, or multiple types of services. An assessment undertaken for one type of service may elicit the need for another type of service or assessment.

## **What should a home based assessment include when considering household and/or attendant care services?**

At a minimum a home based assessment for household and/or attendant care services should include:

- Information on the household's details including:
  - the size of the residence
  - the number of people living there
  - their ages and occupations
  - the domestic activities they undertake; and
  - the number of hours per week that they perform these activities.
- Details of the pre-injury tasks and who performed them.
- An assessment of the current household needs, including if the injured employee or other household members could meet those needs.
- Consideration of the employee's functional capacity – it may be useful for the assessing OT to contact the employee's treaters to confirm expectations around task performance and likely increase in capacity or possible decline. This will inform decisions around length of time for service expected; extent of service; need for a review etc.

## **What should a home based assessment include when considering modifications or alterations?**

At a minimum a home based assessment for modifications and alterations should include:

- identification of area requiring modification or alteration as a result of the compensable injury
- review of current status of house (eg. floor plan of area to be modified) and suggested changes and/or additions

Following the assessment the OT should provide a report which identifies:

- suggestion/s for modification and next steps eg. consultation with a builder
- how such adjustments will improve independence, health and, possibly a return to community and/or work

## **What should a home based assessment include when considering home based aids and appliances?**

At a minimum a home based assessment for home based aids and appliances should include:

- An assessment of EE's task performance of domestic, personal and community activities of daily living, (any combination of), and identification of assistive aids and appliances.
- Liaison with relevant treaters prior to assessment to establish clinical functional presentation. This information will inform which area should be focussed on and ensure a consistent approach

Following the assessment the OT should provide a report which outlines recommended aids and appliances and how these devices will positively impact the compensable injury with respect to health and RTW.

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## Power to arrange and pay for home based assessments

The power to arrange for and pay a home based assessment is made under section 70 of the SRC Act.

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## Procedure for arranging a home based assessment

Once you have discussed the claim/need for the service with the Injury Manager, follow this procedure to arrange a home based assessment.

### Step 1: Phone the employee

Your conversation should include:

- that you are arranging an OT to assess the employee's household attendant care/aids and appliances/modifications and alterations needs to ensure they receive the most appropriate support to help them recover and remain as independent as possible

- that you will engage a provider to conduct the assessment and the provider will contact them to arrange an appropriate time for the assessment
- that the OT will be sent copies of relevant information contained on the employee's claim file, such as medical reports to assist the provider with their assessment.
- the OT may contact relevant treaters, to ensure recommendations align with measured and observed functional capability.

## Step 2: Phone the Rehabilitation Case Manager

Your conversation should:

- advise of the claim/need for the service
- explain that you are arranging an OT assessment of the employee's needs and options before a determination is made, and
- provide the opportunity for the RCM to provide any suggestions for inclusion in the assessment, for example, capacity for employee's house to have a suitable home based office set up

## Step 3: Select a provider

Select a provider to perform the assessment.

Refer to the [Directory of approved workplace rehabilitation providers](#) which is available on Comcare's website.

## Step 4: Phone the provider

Advise the provider:

- the employee's details
- the type of assessment required
- the employee's current restrictions, hours at work and duties they need assistance with
- that you will be sending copies of relevant claim information to assist with their assessment, such as medical reports
- that they should speak with the treating doctor and/or allied health treater/s to ascertain functional capacity demonstrated in a rehabilitation setting – the assessing OT's recommendations should align
- to scope for opportunity to train employee in task simplification and pacing technique to support independence

- to determine when a review of home help service is recommended. If appropriate the OT should be encouraged to establish a weaning of service and a transition to independence, from the outset. The latter can be discussed with employee at the time of assessment
- that the following documents are available on the Comcare website for them to use:
- [Home Assessment \(Occupational Therapy\) Report template](#)
- [Guidance for Occupational Therapists undertaking Home Assessments](#)

**Important:**

1. Discuss with the Injury Manager regarding the referral for assessment and the specific requirements of the assessment.
2. Very sensitive information, such as clinical notes are not to be released to the OT.

Note: If the provider requires a referral complete a [Referral for Occupational therapist assessment form](#) and attach it to your letter.

## **Step 5: Send letter to the provider**

Using the standard letter in Pracsys, draft and send the letter to the provider. Your letter should include:

- employee details including functional status and relevant medical information that will assist with the focus of the assessment eg. continence issues, mobility issues. Injury Management can assist with nomination of relevant information.
- type of assessment required eg. access to property; bathroom modification; mobility aids etc. Injury Management can assist with nomination of the appropriate request.
- questions to be addressed in the report. Questions should be reviewed by Injury Management
- referral form (if required).

## **Step 6: Update Pracys**

Go to 'Manage Claim Comment' (MCOM), enter a comment with name of the provider and the reason for the assessment. Record all your conversations.

Go to Manage Action Plan (MAP) and in the description field enter the name of the OT you requested the report from and the due date (3 weeks after date of letter) of the report.

## Step 8: Next steps

Once the report is received, review the report and recommendations/suggestions, discuss with the Injury Manager and proceed to Triage as required. For further guidance refer to the [Triage](#) page.

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