

## Work related hearing loss claims – Employer and Worker

### Fact Sheet

Hearing loss may occur for a number of reasons including recreational exposure, age, hereditary or work related factors. Without examination by a specialist, the cause(s) for your hearing deterioration is unknown.

### Who can claim for hearing loss?

- If a worker believes their hearing loss is due to workplace noise exposure they may be eligible to pursue a worker's compensation claim for hearing loss.
- A worker who meets 10% or greater hearing loss between their 'baseline' (first) hearing test and the most recent hearing test is eligible to pursue a potential hearing loss claim (or greater than 5% for a subsequent claim)
- To progress their claim, a worker must undergo further audiometric testing to determine the extent their hearing loss is due to exposure to workplace noise.

### How can a hearing loss claim be progressed?

- If notified of potential hearing loss by a worker, an employer must:
  - ▶ Arrange and pay for further testing which includes a subsequent full assessment with an Audiologist and if advised by WorkCover WA, an Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist from WorkCover WA's list of approved testers [www.workcover.wa.gov.au/health-providers/audiometric-officers](http://www.workcover.wa.gov.au/health-providers/audiometric-officers)
  - ▶ Complete a Form 18 (notification of Audiologist appointment details). This form must be given to the worker to take to the appointment.
  - ▶ An employer can obtain their WorkCover number (WCN) from their insurer.
  - ▶ The employer is required to pay for further testing.

*Note: A worker must not be exposed to noise levels greater than 80dB(A) for 16 hours before the test. This is equivalent to average street traffic.*

### Why are three assessments needed?

- The Audiologist will register the test results with WorkCover WA. If the assessment shows less than a 10% change in hearing from the baseline test the worker's compensation claim cannot proceed.
- If the Audiological assessment confirms a 10% or greater loss in hearing the worker must see an ENT to determine the percentage loss of hearing due to workplace noise exposure.
- The worker will make their ENT appointment, and the employer must pay for the assessment.
- An ENT determines the percentage loss of hearing that is due to workplace noise exposure. There is an option for an appointment or a file review. An ENT file review is acceptable when a worker lives outside of Perth or unable to travel to an appointment.
- The ENT sends their report to WorkCover WA with a determination on the percentage of work-related hearing loss. If the hearing loss is:
  - ▶ less than 10%, no further action required;
  - ▶ greater than 10%, WorkCover WA will send a claim form and relevant documents to the worker to complete and return back to WorkCover WA.

### How is a claim lodged?

- Once WorkCover WA has lodged the worker's claim documents with their employer, the employer has 5 business days to forward the claim documents to their Insurer. Your insurer will then accept or decline the claim and compensate the worker (where required).
- If a worker is successful in a workers' compensation hearing loss claim they are entitled to a lump sum payout, based on the Audiologist and ENT assessment.
- For more information contact WorkCover WA on 1300 794 744 | [noise@workcover.wa.gov.au](mailto:noise@workcover.wa.gov.au) | [workcover.wa.gov.au](http://workcover.wa.gov.au)