

Aids and appliances (equipment) (companion to Part 13)

Lifetime Care will pay for the reasonable and necessary aids and appliance you need because of an injury you sustained from a motor vehicle accident. We also call aids and appliances 'equipment.'

This companion explains what equipment we'll pay for, what we won't pay for, what we mean by certain terms, and how we make our decisions.

When we use the word 'you', we mean the person covered by the Lifetime Care and Support Scheme (also known as 'the participant') or someone representing them, such as a parent, guardian or legal representative.

What we fund

Equipment

Aids and appliances, also referred to as equipment or assistive technology, increases or maintains your:

- independence
- community participation
- mobility
- health
- safety.

Its purpose could be to aid communication, relieve pain or discomfort, and ensure the safety of you, your family, carers or attendant care workers. It could also help you return to or start work, education or leisure activities.

Wheelchairs, commodes, pressure care cushions and shower chairs are common examples of equipment.

Personal computers and internet access

We will consider paying for personal computers and internet access if:

- it will make you more independent in daily activities such as shopping and managing money
- you live in a remote location
- you are severely physically impaired or have another condition related to the motor accident injury that makes your access to the community difficult.

If you're enrolled in distance education, can't access computing facilities at your education institution and you don't own or have access to computer equipment, we'll also consider paying for computers and internet access if:

- it helps you return to work, including working remotely until you can go back to your workplace
- it's needed for a vocational retraining program where the goal of the program has been confirmed by a Work Options Plan and we support this goal
- you don't own or have access to suitable computer equipment and the school or education facility does not have a 'bring your own device' or similar policy in place.

Tablets and smartphones

We generally consider tablets and smartphones to be normal personal items rather than equipment and don't fund them. However, we may pay for one when you need the device for a rehabilitation program if the device is used to measure an increase in independence or improve injury-related communication issues.

Exercise and fitness equipment

We'll pay for exercise and fitness equipment if it's related to goals documented in your plan, and you've been using similar hire or loan equipment regularly.

Recreation and leisure equipment

We'll pay for leisure or recreation equipment if it helps you return to, or start, a leisure activity that's been identified as suitable for your needs.

General household and personal items

We generally don't pay for household appliances. However, we'll pay for beds, mattresses, and domestic goods such as washing machines if you need a specific type because of the injury.

Hiring equipment

It may be better for you to hire equipment if:

- your medical condition or circumstances are likely to change
- your future living arrangements aren't yet known so it's not possible to know if the equipment will work in your home
- you only need the equipment for a short time
- the service provider who has prescribed the equipment wants you to try the equipment before buying it.

Maintaining and repairing equipment

We'll pay for repairing equipment when:

- damage is due to normal wear and tear
- it's recommended by the manufacturer
- it needs to be adjusted because it doesn't fit.

We'll pay for equipment to be maintained and repaired if it's not covered under warranty or insurance, and the cost would be the same for a replacement or modification.

Replacing equipment

We'll replace your equipment when:

- your needs have changed and the equipment can't be modified to accommodate those changes
- it needs replacing due to normal use over time and it can't be fixed.

Making an agreement

We may need you to sign a formal agreement that describes the conditions of use, maintenance, insurance and ownership of the equipment.

What we don't fund

We don't pay for:

- equipment or associated expenses that aren't cost effective
- equipment that has been neglected, abused, misused or lost
- expenses related to continence aids, supplies or other consumables where you're a hospital inpatient, or the bed fee includes these costs
- general household and personal items which you would normally replace – even if we funded the original purchase
- repairs or replacements that are covered under warranty or insurance
- equipment that doesn't comply with Australian Standards or isn't registered with the Therapeutic Goods Administration
- unnecessarily replacing or upgrading an item
- equipment that you can use somewhere else that you can access (such as in a gym)
- equipment that you only use in other environments, such as a physiotherapist's rooms
- buying equipment when hiring is more appropriate, for example if you don't have definite living arrangements.

For expenses related to computers, smartphones and tablets, we don't pay for:

- the cost of software, hardware or peripherals if you don't need them to improve your independence
- the cost of software upgrades where it's not required to keep your computer serviceable or maximise your independence in computer use
- mobile data or the cost of connecting the device to the internet
- an upgrade or replacement of the device

- applications (apps) if they haven't been prescribed for you to meet an injury related need.

We don't pay for the cost of connecting devices to the internet unless you are:

- an inpatient in hospital and can't return to your workplace
- taking part in a short-term therapy program delivered via the internet
- participating in a short-term return to work program.

How we decide

We follow Lifetime Care funding principles to determine which, if any, equipment you need. We may also refer to other guidelines to help us in this process.

We'll pay for equipment if:

- you can show your need for it is related to an injury you sustained in the motor accident
- it will help you do one or more of the following:
 - increase or maintain independence
 - increase or maintain participation
 - improve or maintain mobility
 - aid communication
 - relieve pain or discomfort
 - maintain health or prevent ill-health
 - assist a return or entry to vocational, education or leisure activities or
 - increase or maintain the safety of you, your family, carers or attendant care workers.

Information we may need to make our decision

We may ask you for information to help us assess your needs, including:

- why you need the equipment
- clinical assessments
- whether you have successfully trialed the equipment and can use it safely in your environment
- implementation procedures, including any training requirements

- written support from your education provider that the equipment will help you return to or start an education activity.

Our funding principles

When we're making decisions about funding aids and appliances we follow the guidelines below.

- Planning, decision-making and risk assessment activities are collaborative, and this is evident in plans and requests for services.
- Our aim is to help you be as independent as possible and to participate in the community.
- The treatment or service must relate to the motor accident injury.
- Services should be flexible and tailored to meet your needs.
- The treatment, item or service benefits you, are appropriate, and is cost effective.
- The provider is appropriate to your needs.
- Decisions are made within 10 working days.

We'll document our decisions and communicate them via a 'certificate' (a certificate is a letter we'll send you about the decisions we've made).

Your rights

- You have the right to refuse services.
- You have the right to dispute any decision we make about your needs.

Our process for making decisions

- We'll need to get some information about the equipment you want us to pay for.
- After we get this information, we'll make a decision within 10 working days.
- We'll let you know our decision by letter. This is known as a 'certificate'.
- You don't have to agree with our decisions. You have the right to dispute any decision we make. That's OK and we can help you do this.

Other info

Ordering equipment

You need a health professional or a team of health professionals with recognised qualifications to prescribe equipment.

They'll need to fill out an equipment request form or order through one of our suppliers.

The following guidelines for ordering equipment are on our website:

- Professional criteria for prescribers
- Guidelines for levels of attendant care for people with spinal cord injury
- Summary of the Guidelines for the prescription of a seated wheelchair or mobility scooter for people with a traumatic brain injury or spinal cord injury.

More expensive items

If you'd like specific equipment that is more expensive than an equivalent item, we may contribute to the cost.

If the equipment costs more than \$2,000 and we don't have an existing agreement with the supplier, we may request two quotes.

Requesting replacements

If your needs haven't changed and you ask for a replacement because of normal wear and tear, and it's the same as the one previously prescribed, you may not need to fill in an equipment request form. We'll let you know how to request a replacement.

For more information contact Lifetime Care

9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Phone: 1300 738 586

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Web: www.icare.nsw.gov.au