



Home modifications – A way to stay at home

Information sheet | HM01

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Enjoy the freedom and independence of your own home

When you return home after a motor accident injury, or serious injury or illness at work it's important that you're able to easily enter, exit and move around your home independently and safely. We can support you to do this by paying for changes to the structure, layout or fittings in your home that you need because of your injuries. These changes are called 'home modifications'.

Examples of home modifications

- Installing portable and/or permanent ramps and/or rails
- Widening doors
- Modifying cooking facilities, light switches and taps
- Installing equipment (such as shower seats)
- Changing the structure of rooms (including the bathroom, bedrooms, living room, kitchen and laundry)
- Installing air conditioning (if you're unable to regulate your body temperature).
- All modifications must be approved by us and carried out by a registered builder.

Eligibility for home modifications

If you need home modifications because of your motor accident injury, or serious injury or illness at work your icare contact will refer you to our Home Modifications team, the team will arrange for someone (Home Modifications Officer) to meet with you and discuss options. We will engage a Building Modification Occupational Therapist (BMOT) and Building Modification Project Manager (BMPM), who'll visit your home to conduct a feasibility assessment and then make recommendations in a report for us to consider.

The BMOT and BMPM will take into account the following factors:

- your ability to enter, exit and move around your home
- whether your home can be suitably modified to meet your needs
- whether you own or lease the home and how long you intend to live there
- the scale and cost of the modifications
- Australian Standards and other related legislation (including building regulations and council permits)
- your specific preferences (if these aren't related to your motor accident injury, or serious injury or illness at work you'll need to pay the cost difference).

After reviewing the feasibility report, we'll make a decision about whether your home can be suitably modified and what home modifications can be funded. If these are approved, a plan for the proposed modifications will be referred to the BMPM to proceed.

Building Modifications Project Manager

A BMPM is a Building Modification Project Manager, an industry professional who ensures that the recommended modifications meet the required building standards. They work in the building industry and have experience in construction and management of building modifications. The BMPM will manage your modifications from start to finish. Depending on the extent of your home modifications, they'll allocate a builder to make sure your modifications are completed on time.

When home modifications start

Depending on your needs, transitional home modifications can start before you return home. More extensive modifications can be completed later. If the modifications aren't completed before you return home, or you can't live at home while the modifications are being done, we can pay for the reasonable cost of alternative accommodation until the modifications are finished.

How long will the modifications take?

Your icare contact, Home Modifications Officer, BMPM and BMOT will work with you to ensure your modifications meet your needs and are completed as quickly as possible.

The time it takes to complete the modifications depends on:

- the type and extent of the modifications
- how quickly plans are agreed upon by all involved parties, including the local council
- how quickly a builder is engaged and contracts are signed
- the availability of all involved parties, including the builder
- other requirements (such as town planning and building permits).

You can help the process by attending meetings, asking questions, reviewing our correspondence as quickly as you can, and notifying your Home Modifications Officer of any concerns you have along the way.

If your home can't be suitably modified

The size, age, condition and design of your home may mean that it can't be suitably modified. The terrain outside your home may also mean it can't be modified. If your home can't be suitably modified, we'll consider alternatives, including contributing to the cost of installing a semi-detached unit or contributing to the cost of moving you to a more suitable home. Your Home Modifications Officer will discuss what options are reasonable and may work best for you.

Service agreement and building contracts

By law, we require you (and the owner of the home if you don't own it) to sign a contract called a Capital Service Agreement if the cost of the modifications is likely to be more than \$30,000.

The Capital Service Agreement outlines your entitlements and responsibilities, and provides information about maintenance of modifications, subsequent modifications, frequency of modifications and changes to ownership.

Some modifications may require you (or the owner of the home if you don't own it) to sign a building contract. The building contract outlines the work to be undertaken, the rights and responsibilities of you and the builder, any special conditions and payment. If a building contract is required, your Home Modifications Officer will ensure that it's signed before the works commence.

Your legal guardian or family member (if applicable) may sign the Capital Service Agreement and/or building contract on your behalf.

Further information

If your circumstances change or you'd like further information about home modifications, contact us through one of the options below. There is also more information and a series of videos about the home modifications process available on our website. View the videos here:

www.icare.nsw.gov.au Go to: injured or ill people > motor accident injuries > services and support > home and vehicle modifications.

icare

GPO Box 4052,
Sydney, NSW 2000

Phone: 1300 738 586

Fax: 1300 738 583

Email: homemodifications@icare.nsw.gov.au

Web: icare.nsw.gov.au