

Medical beds and related items policy



WorkSafe may in certain circumstances pay the reasonable cost of, or make a contribution to, the purchase of a:

1. medical bed and related items
2. companion bed or mattress for a medical bed
3. non-medical beds and related items.

Definitions

In this policy:

- **Allied health professional**, (for example, occupational therapist) for the purpose of this policy, is a suitably qualified person who uses their expertise to recommend and clinically justify the most appropriate equipment to maximise a worker's rehabilitation or medical function.
- The **WorkSafe Equipment Purchasing Team**, based on recommendations from suitable allied health professionals, source non-contracted, specialised and/or custom made equipment for workers through non-contracted suppliers.
- The **Community Integration Program (CIP)** is an initiative that provides specialist care for eligible catastrophically injured workers in partnership with the Transport Accident Commission (TAC). Eligible workers are defined as those who have an accepted claim for compensation for a spinal injury resulting in quadriplegia/paraplegia or an acquired brain injury rated as severe or moderately severe.

1. Medical beds and related items

WorkSafe can pay the reasonable costs of medical beds and related items required as a result of a work-related injury or illness under Victoria workers compensation legislation. Medical bed and related items may include, but is not limited to:

- adjustable medical bed bases
- hilo beds/mattresses
- specialist or high risk pressure care mattresses
- pressure care overlays
- moving or positioning supports.
- mattress protectors (based on individual needs relating to incontinence)

An injured worker may claim the reasonable cost of a medical bed or a related item if they:

- are participating in a WorkSafe approved CIP; or
- have a spinal cord, acquired brain injury/traumatic brain injury or amputation as a result of their work-related injury,

and:

- can supply clinical justification from a suitably qualified allied health professional (for example, occupational therapist) relating to the request for a medical bed, mattress or related item.

Allied Health Professional Assessment and Referral to WorkSafe's Equipment Purchasing Team

The worker's selected allied health professional (for example, occupational therapist) will assess the worker's individual requirements and select a suitable medical bed, mattress or related item upon completion of equipment trials. The allied health professional must identify a suitable medical bed, mattress or related item from the WorkSafe contracted equipment list from WorkSafe contracted equipment providers. After completion of contracted equipment trials if no suitable item is identified, the allied health professional may conduct trials of non-contracted medical beds, mattresses or related items and must provide written clinical justification for this recommendation using the WorkSafe equipment prescription form, in line with the equipment and related services policy, to the Agent.

Agents are required to contact WorkSafe's Equipment Purchasing Team at equipment@worksafe.vic.gov.au for all medical bed, mattress and related item requests. This team will be able to assist with determining if a suitable medical bed, mattress or related item can be provided through a WorkSafe contracted equipment provider, or assist to find alternative options.

All requests sent to the WorkSafe Equipment Purchasing Team by agents should include the following:

1. A completed WorkSafe equipment order form.¹
2. A completed WorkSafe prescription form.
3. Any additional information to support the request, especially if the recommendation is for an item not from a WorkSafe contracted equipment provider.

Contribution cap does not apply:

The Agent's contribution to a medical bed, mattress or related item will not be subject to the cap which applies to non-medical equipment described below for workers who meet the criteria mentioned in the beginning of this policy. A worker may be eligible for replacement medical beds or mattresses depending on the worker's needs with support of clinical/medical justification provided by a suitably qualified allied health professional (for example, occupational therapist). Where a worker requires the replacement of a medical bed or related item, the replacement must be the same (or a similar to) the original item being replaced.

2. Companion bed or mattresses for medical beds

Where a worker is entitled to a replacement of their medical bed or mattress under this policy and the relevant medical bed or mattress is also used by the worker's companion, WorkSafe may fund the replacement if the companion's section of the medical bed or mattress.

Where WorkSafe funds the replacement of a companion's section of the bed or mattress, or any related item, the funding will be on a one-off basis for the life of the injured workers claim. Any additional requests will not be considered and will be at the cost of the injured worker or their companion. The Agent should advise the injured worker that the replacement of their companion's section of the bed or mattress is on a one-off basis at the time the funding is approved.

The funding of the replacement of the companion's section of the medical bed or mattress will only apply to a same, similar or smaller sized section depending on clinical justification. A larger sized

¹ <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/equipment-order-form>

replacement may be purchased if the companion/worker elects to pay the difference in cost for the larger sized product.

WorkSafe's contribution to the companion section of the medical bed or mattress will only be a standard basic bed or mattress taking into consideration the minimum requirements of a functioning base and mattress.

3. Non-medical beds and related items

Standard non-medical mattresses are generally considered normal household items and therefore will not usually be eligible for WorkSafe funding. There is currently no conclusive National Health and Medical Research Council level 1 or 2 evidence to show that sleeping on a particular type of bed or mattress can help back pain compared to other mattress types.

Non-medical bed, mattress and related items include, but are not limited to:

- Mattresses supplied by non-medically specialised retail providers
- Orthopaedic mattresses
- Memory foam mattresses
- Chiropedic mattresses

Requests for a contribution towards a non-medical mattress will only be approved in exceptional circumstances as determined by WorkSafe, which are justified by a suitably qualified allied health professional (for example, occupational therapist). Where deemed appropriate, a contribution towards a non-medical mattress will be subject to a capped contribution.

A contribution toward a non-medical bed, mattress or related item will only be made once during the life of a claim. Any further requests will not be considered and will be at the cost of the worker. Agents should advise workers of this at the time of approval of initial contribution funding.

When a worker is eligible for a contribution toward the cost of a non-medical mattress and trials of equipment have been completed, the worker's selected allied health professional (for example, occupational therapist) will assess the worker's individual requirements and select a suitable non-medical bed, mattress or related item upon completion of equipment trials. The allied health professional must identify a suitable non-medical bed, mattress or related item from the WorkSafe contracted equipment list from WorkSafe contracted equipment providers. After completion of contracted equipment trials if no suitable item is identified, the allied health professional may conduct trials of non-contracted non-medical beds, mattresses or related items and must provide written clinical justification for this recommendation using the WorkSafe equipment prescription form, in line with the equipment and related services policy, to the Agent.

Agents are required to contact WorkSafe's Equipment Purchasing Team at equipment@worksafe.vic.gov.au for all non-medical bed, mattress and related requests. This team will be able to assist with determining if a suitable bed/mattress can be provided through a WorkSafe contracted equipment provider, or assist to find alternative options.

All requests sent to the WorkSafe Equipment Purchasing Team by agents should include:

1. A completed WorkSafe equipment order form.²
2. A completed WorkSafe prescription form. (link to be inserted)
3. Any additional information to support the request, especially if the recommendation is for an item not from a WorkSafe contracted equipment provider.

Capped contribution to non-medical mattresses

Any WorkSafe contribution towards the cost of non-medical mattresses will be capped and determined after considering the following factors:

- The extent to which the standard non-medical mattress is necessary to manage the worker's work-related injury or illness beyond the ordinary requirements of an average person.
- The age and condition of the worker's current mattress. WorkSafe will not contribute towards the cost of a non-medical mattress where the worker's mattress is of an age or condition where it would have reasonably required replacement irrespective of the work related illness or injury.
- The size of a worker's current mattress - WorkSafe will only contribute towards the cost of a non-medical mattress that is the same, similar or smaller in size than the pre-accident/injury mattress taking into consideration the worker's work related injury or illness needs and any medical recommendations.
- The referral provided by an allied health professional including written medical justification.
- Whether the worker requires the recommended non-medical mattress due to a pre-existing condition.

WorkSafe's will only contribute up to the amounts listed below unless a larger contribution is determined to be reasonable in the circumstances:

Percentage of WorkSafe contribution table					
Age of existing mattress	Less than 12 months	1-2 years	3/5 years	6-9 years	10+ years
Contribution – percentage of the average cost of a standard bed	100%	75%	50%	25%	0%

² <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/equipment-order-form>

Standard non-medical mattress capped contribution payments

King	Up to \$2600 for 100% co-contribution or pro-rata % based on age of existing mattress
Queen	Up to \$2100 for 100% co-contribution or pro-rata % based on age of existing mattress
Double	Up to \$1900 for 100% co-contribution or pro-rata % based on age of existing mattress
King single	Up to \$1600 for 100% co-contribution or pro-rata % based on age of existing mattress
Single	Up to \$1300 for 100% co-contribution or pro-rata % based on age of existing mattress

What won't WorkSafe fund?

In relation to medical beds, mattresses and companion beds and related items, WorkSafe will not pay for:

- new items where a worker's existing mattress will support their work-related injury or illness.
- antique bed replacements or repairs
- linen, blankets or bedding etc.
- bases, bed frames and headboards above the minimum recommended requirements
- beds and mattresses larger than the workers pre-injury sleeping arrangement, unless recommended and justified by an allied health professional

In relation to non-medical beds, mattresses and related items, WorkSafe will not pay for:

- new items where a worker's existing mattress will support their work-related injury or illness
- anything other than standard basic models
- waterbeds or waterbed heaters
- antique bed replacements or repairs
- linen, blankets or bedding
- bed bases, bed frames, headboards (in circumstances where the worker already has a suitable base)
- companion beds and mattresses
- an upgrade to a larger bed or for a base when the worker has elected to upgrade to a larger size bed
- more than one non-medical mattress over the lifetime of the workers claim.