

# If you work for the Australian Defence Force it pays to learn what you can claim at tax time



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## To claim a deduction for work-related expenses

- you must have spent the money yourself and weren't reimbursed
- it must be directly related to earning your income
- you must have a record to prove it.\*

You can only claim the work-related part of expenses. You can't claim a deduction for any part of the expense that relates to personal use.

\*You can use the ATO app myDeductions tool to keep track of your expenses and receipts throughout the year.

## Car expenses



✓ **You can claim** a deduction when you:

- drive between separate jobs on the same day
- drive to and from an alternate workplace for the same employer on the same day – eg if you are required to travel from your normal Army base to another military base to attend a fitness assessment.

✗ **You generally can't claim** the cost of trips between home and work, even if you live a long way from your usual workplace or have to work outside normal business hours – eg a military exercise held over the weekend.

There are limited circumstances where you can claim the cost of trips between home and work, such as where you carry bulky tools or equipment for work – eg if you are required to take your field equipment pack from your base to home (and back) to prepare for an overseas deployment. The cost of these trips is deductible only if:

- your employer requires you to transport the equipment for work
- the equipment was essential to earning your income
- there was no secure area to store the equipment at the work location, and
- the equipment is bulky – at least 20kg or cumbersome to transport.

If you claim car expenses, you need to keep a logbook to determine the work-related percentage, or be able to demonstrate to the ATO a reasonable calculation if you use the cents per kilometre method to claim.

## Fitness expenses



✓ **You can only claim** the cost of fitness expenses if your job requires you to maintain a fitness well above the ADF general standard, eg if you are a physical training instructor with the Australian Special Forces.

✗ **You can't claim** a deduction for the cost of gym fees to maintain your personal fitness.

## Home office expenses



✓ **You can claim** a percentage of the running costs of your home office if you have to work from home, including depreciation of office equipment, work-related phone calls and internet access charges, and electricity for heating, cooling and lighting costs.

If you are required to purchase equipment for your work and it costs more than \$300, you can claim a deduction for this cost spread over a number of years (depreciation).

If you keep a diary of your home office usage, you can calculate your claim quickly using the ATO's home office expenses calculator.

✗ **You generally can't claim** the cost of rates, mortgage interest, rent and insurance.

## Self-education expenses



✓ **You can claim** a deduction for self-education expenses if your course relates directly to your current job or to the next likely promotion as planned by the ADF.

✗ **You can't claim** a deduction if your study or seminar is only related in a general way or is designed to help you get a new job, eg to enable you to move to a job outside of the ADF.

## Other common deductible work-related expenses



✓ As long as the expense relates to your employment, **you can claim** a deduction for the work-related portion of the cost of:

- technical or professional publications
- compulsory mess subscriptions
- union and professional association fees.

✗ **You can't claim** a deduction for the cost of:

- attending social functions, even though these may be compulsory
- haircuts, grooming, weight loss programs or supplies, even though the ADF has specific regulations.

