



Australian Government  
Australian Taxation Office

# If you work for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) it pays to learn what you can claim



## To claim a deduction for work-related expenses:

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

You can only claim the work-related portion of an expense. You can't claim a deduction for any part of an expense that does not directly relate to earning your income.

\* You can use the [myDeductions](#) tool in the ATO app to keep track of your expenses and receipts throughout the year.

## Car expenses



- ✘ **You can't claim** the cost of normal trips between home and work, even if you live a long way from your usual workplace or work outside normal business hours – for example, a military exercise held over the weekend.
- ✔ **You can claim** the cost of using a car you own when you drive:
  - between separate jobs on the same day
  - to and from an alternate workplace for the same employer on the same day – for example, from the base you work at to a meeting in the city.
- ✔ In limited circumstances, **you can claim** the cost of trips between home and work where you carry bulky tools or equipment for work. You can claim a deduction for the cost of these trips if all of the following apply:
  - the tools or equipment are essential to perform your employment duties and you don't carry them merely as a matter of choice

- the tools or equipment are bulky – meaning that because of their size and weight they are awkward to transport and can only be transported conveniently by the use of a motor vehicle
- there is no secure storage for the items at the workplace.

If you claim car expenses, you can use the logbook method or the cents per kilometre method to calculate your deduction.

If you use the logbook method, you need to keep a valid logbook to work out the percentage of work-related use along with written evidence of your car expenses.

If you use the cents per kilometre method, you need to be able to show how you calculated your work-related kilometres and that those kilometres were work related.

If you claim work-related car expenses using one of the above methods, you can't claim any further deductions in the same tax return for the same car. For example, petrol, servicing, and insurance costs.

## Fitness expenses



- ✘ **You can't claim** fitness expenses, such as gym fees, to maintain your fitness.
- ✔ In very limited circumstances, **you can claim** fitness expenses if your role requires you to maintain a fitness level well above the normal ADF general standard and strenuous physical activity is an essential and regular part of your work. For example, if you are a physical training instructor with the Australian Special Forces.

## Working from home expenses



- ✔ If you work from home, **you can claim** a deduction for expenses you incur that relate to your work. You must:
  - use one of the methods set out by us to calculate your deduction
  - keep the correct records for the method you use.
- ✘ **You can't claim:**
  - coffee, tea, milk and other general household items, even if your employer provides these at work
  - items your employer provides – for example, a laptop or a phone
  - any items where your employer pays for or reimburses you for the expense.

## Tools and equipment expenses



- ✔ **You can claim** the cost of tools and equipment you use for work, including repairs and insurance.

If a tool or equipment costs:

  - more than \$300 – you claim a deduction for the cost over a number of years (decline in value)
  - \$300 or less (and doesn't form part of a set that costs more than \$300) – you can claim an immediate deduction for the whole cost.

- ✘ **You can't claim** tools and equipment that are supplied by your employer or another person.

If you also use the tools and equipment for private purposes, you can only claim the work-related portion. You also need to apportion the cost of insurance and repairs between private and work-related use.


## Other expenses



- ✔ **You can claim** the work-related portion of other expenses that relate to your employment, including:
  - technical or professional publications
  - compulsory mess subscriptions
  - union and professional association fees.
- ✘ **You can't claim** private expenses, such as 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
  - self-education or study, if the course
    - doesn't have a connection with your current employment
    - only relates in a general way to your current employment
    - enables you to get employment or change employment.
- ✘ **You can't claim** a deduction if the cost was met or reimbursed by your employer.

- ✘ **You can't claim** tools and equipment that are supplied by your employer or another person.

If you also use the tools and equipment for private purposes, you can only claim the work-related portion. You also need to apportion the cost of insurance and repairs between private and work-related use.

 **This is a general summary only.**  
For more information, go to [ato.gov.au/defence](https://ato.gov.au/defence) or speak to a registered tax professional.

