

2020

# Tax Time Toolkit

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## Transport and logistics



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Taxation Office**

# Helpful occupation guides and information for tax time

We encourage you to share this information with your staff, clients, members and networks.

The following pages contain practical and tailored information to help anyone in the transport and logistics industries understand what they can and can't claim in their tax return.

You'll find tips for IT professionals and truck drivers as well as 'ready to use' messages you can adapt for your own communication channels.

#### Occupation guides:

- [IT professional](#)
- [Truck driver](#)

#### Common claims:

- [Gifts and donations](#)
- [Travel expenses](#)

#### Ready-to-use messages:

- [Social media posts](#)
- [Article](#)

# If you're an IT professional, it pays to learn what you can claim at tax time



## 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.

## Self-education expenses



- ✓ **You can claim** a deduction for self-education expenses if your course relates directly to your current job – eg learning new software required to perform your work duties.
- ✗ **You can't claim** a deduction if your study is only related in a general way or is designed to help get you a new job – eg you cannot claim a deduction if you are a computer sales person who is studying to be a software programmer.

## Car expenses



- ✓ **You can claim** a deduction when you:
  - drive between separate jobs on the same day – eg you work for two different employers
  - drive to and from an alternate workplace for the same employer on the same day – eg a computer repairer who travels to multiple call outs per day.
- ✗ **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 travelling at night to reboot computer servers.

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 computer peripherals such as large monitors. 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.

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

## Clothing expenses



- ✓ **You can claim** a deduction for the cost of buying, hiring, mending or cleaning certain uniforms that are unique and distinctive to your job – eg clothing items you're required to wear which have a logo that is unique and distinctive to your employer.
- ✗ **You can't claim** a deduction for the cost of buying or cleaning plain clothing worn at work, even if your employer tells you to wear it and even if you only wear it for work – eg black pants and a white shirt or a business suit.

## Other common deductible work-related expenses



- ✓ Other expenses **you can claim** a deduction for include:
  - the work-related portion of phone and internet expenses if you have to make phone calls, send texts or use the internet for work.
  - tools and equipment you are required to purchase for work. If the tool or equipment:
    - > cost more than \$300 – you claim a deduction for the cost over a number of years (depreciation)
    - > cost \$300 or less – you can claim an immediate deduction for the whole cost
  - union and professional association fees.



This is a general summary only.  
For more information, go to [ato.gov.au/occupations](http://ato.gov.au/occupations)



Australian Government  
Australian Taxation Office

# If you're a truck driver it pays to learn what you can claim at tax time



## 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 – eg you drive for two separate employers
- drive to and from an alternate workplace for the same employer on the same day – eg travelling between depots.

✗ **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.

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. 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.

## Phone and internet expenses



✓ **You can claim** phone and internet usage if your employer needs you to use your personal devices for work.

You can only claim the work-related portion of the use of your personal device.

## Travel expenses



✓ **You can claim** a deduction for travel expenses if you are required to travel overnight – eg travelling to a remote area, provided the cost was incurred while carrying out your work duties. This could include meals, accommodation, fares and incidental expenses that you incurred and your employer has not provided or reimbursed you.\*

✗ Receiving a travel allowance from your employer does not automatically entitle you to a deduction. You still need to show that you were away overnight, you spent the money yourself, and the travel was directly related to earning your income.

✗ **You can't claim** accommodation expenses if you sleep in your truck or your employer provides you with accommodation.

\* Circumstances may be different for FIFO workers.\*

## Clothing expenses



✓ **You can claim** a deduction for the cost of buying, hiring, mending or cleaning certain uniforms that are unique and distinctive to your job – or the environment you work in – or protective clothing that your employer requires you to wear – eg steel-capped boots.

✗ **You can't claim** a deduction for the cost of buying or cleaning plain clothing worn at work, even if you only wear it to work and even if your employer tells you to wear it – eg standard jeans, drill shirts and trousers.

## 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:

- protective equipment such as sunglasses, sunhats and sunscreens
- restraining ropes
- union fees.





# Gifts and donations

## When can I claim?

- ✔ You can claim a deduction for a donation you make to an organisation if the donation meets four conditions:
  - You make it to a deductible gift recipient (DGR)
  - It must truly be a donation. A donation is a voluntary transfer of money or property where you receive no material benefit or advantage\*
  - It must be money or property, which includes financial assets such as shares
  - You have a record of the donation such as a receipt.

\* If you receive a material benefit – that is if the donor receives something which has a monetary value from the DGR in return for their donation – it is considered a contribution, and extra conditions apply. Visit [ato.gov.au/gift-or-contribution](https://ato.gov.au/gift-or-contribution) for more information.



## What is a DGR?

A deductible gift recipient (DGR) is an organisation or fund that can receive tax deductible gifts.

Not all charities are DGRs. For example, in recent times there has been an influx of crowdfunding campaigns. Many of these crowdfunding websites are not run by DGRs.

You can check whether your donation was made to an endorsed DGR on the Australian Business Register website [abn.business.gov.au/DgrListing.aspx](https://abn.business.gov.au/DgrListing.aspx).



## What records do I need?

- ✔ You should keep records of all tax deductible gifts and contributions you make.

When you make a donation, the DGR will usually issue you with a receipt – but they don't have to. If this is the case, in some circumstances, you can still claim a tax deduction by using other records, such as bank statements.

If a DGR issues a receipt for a deductible gift, the receipt must state:

- the name of the fund, authority or institution to which the donation has been made
- the DGR's ABN (if any – some DGRs listed by name might not have an ABN)
- that the receipt is for a gift.

If you give through a workplace giving program your payment summary or a written record from your employer is sufficient evidence.

## Bucket donations

- ✔ If you made one or more donations of \$2 or more to bucket collections conducted by an approved organisation for natural disaster victims, you can claim a tax deduction of up to \$10 for the total of those contributions without a receipt. Further information is available on the **ATO website**.



## When you can and can't claim a deduction

- ✔ You may be able to claim a deduction when:
  - the gift or donation is \$2 or more and you have a record of the donation
  - you donate property or shares, however special rules apply (see [ato.gov.au/gifts-and-fundraising-rules](https://ato.gov.au/gifts-and-fundraising-rules))
  - there are special circumstances under the Heritage and Cultural gift programs where donations can also be deductible (see [ato.gov.au/cultural-gifts](https://ato.gov.au/cultural-gifts) for more detail).

Token items used to promote a DGR can be claimed as a deduction, such as label pins, wristbands and stickers.

- ✘ You can't claim gifts or donations as a deduction when it is for:
  - the purchase of raffle or art union tickets, such as an RSL Art Union prize home
  - the purchase of fundraising items that have an advertised price and can be used, such as chocolates, mugs, keyrings, caps or toys
  - the cost of attending fundraising dinners, even if the cost exceeds the value of the dinner
  - payments to school building funds made, for example, as an alternative to an increase in school fees
  - gifts to families and friends regardless of the reason
  - donations made under a salary sacrifice arrangement
  - donations made under a will.

## Gifts and donations to political parties and independent candidates and members

In some circumstances, your gifts and donations to registered political parties and independent candidates may be claimed as a deduction.

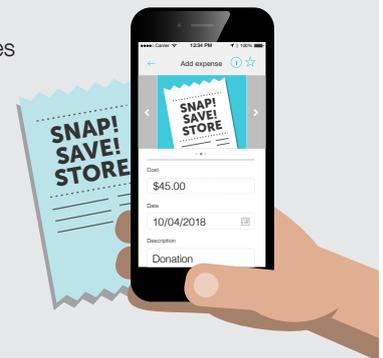
Your gift or donation must be \$2 or more and be money or property that you purchased during the 12 months before making the donation. This includes if you pay a membership subscription to a registered political party. You must also make the gift or donation as an individual, not in the course of carrying on a business, and it can't be a testamentary donation.

The most you can claim in an income year is:

- \$1,500 for contributions and gifts to political parties, and
- \$1,500 for contributions and gifts to independent candidates and members.

To claim a deduction you must keep a written record of your donation.

To find out who is registered, go to [ato.gov.au/political-gifts](https://ato.gov.au/political-gifts).





# Travel expenses

## What you need to know before you go

### Travel expenses include:

- ✔ **Transport expenses** are deductible when you travel in the course of performing your duties. This includes the cost of driving your car, flying, catching a train, taxi or bus.
- ✔ **Accommodation, meals and incidental expenses** are deductible when you travel in the course of performing your duties AND are required to be away from home overnight.



### Things to remember

- ✔ You need to keep receipts – or other written evidence – for your travel expenses. There are some exceptions for expenses on accommodation, meals and incidental expenses.
- ✔ You need to apportion your expenses if they are partly private in nature. If you travel on a work trip, you may not be required to apportion your costs where there is a minor private component that is merely incidental to the work.
- ✔ If you travel away from home for six or more nights in a row, you need to keep travel records – such as a travel diary. This is in addition to keeping receipts for your expenses.
- ✘ Receiving a travel allowance from your employer does not automatically entitle you to a deduction.
- ✘ If any travel expenses are reimbursed, you cannot claim a deduction for them.
- ✘ You generally can't claim for normal daily trips between home and work – this is private travel.
- ✘ You can't claim accommodation, meals and incidental expenses you incur in the course of relocating or living away from home.

### Examples of when you need to apportion your expenses

- ✔ You take your partner or children away with you when you travel for work. You cannot claim the cost of any travel expenses you incur for them. For example, if you pay for a two bedroom apartment to accommodate your children, you can only claim a deduction for the cost you would have incurred on a one bedroom apartment had you travelled alone.
- ✔ You fly to Perth for a seven day work conference and add on a return trip to Broome for 4 days. You can only claim your flights to and from Perth. You can only claim the accommodation, meals and incidental expenses that you incurred during the seven days of work-related travel.
- ✔ You are in the process of booking a holiday to Sydney to see an art exhibit when your employer asks if you'd like to attend a three day work-related conference in Sydney which coincidentally is to be held from the Monday following your planned holiday. You change your travel arrangements to include the additional time in Sydney. In total, you spend three days in Sydney for private purposes followed by three days at the conference. You must apportion your flights for the private component of your trip (50%) and only claim the accommodation, meals and incidental expenses you incur during the three days of work-related travel.
- ✔ You fly to London for a 10 day international, work-related conference. You stay over for an extra two days to do some sightseeing. While you cannot claim the cost of accommodation and meals for the two days of private travel, the private component of the trip is merely incidental and so you can claim the full cost of your airfares.
- ✔ You are holidaying in Cairns when you become aware of a work-related seminar which runs for half a day. You can claim the cost of attending the seminar, but you cannot claim your airfares to and from Cairns, or accommodation whilst in Cairns, as the primary purpose of the travel is private.



## Record keeping exception for accommodation, meals and incidental expenses

You must always keep records of your expenses, however you don't have to keep all your receipts if:

- ✔ you received an allowance from your employer for the expenses, and
- ✔ your deduction is less than the Commissioner's reasonable amount. To find this year's amount, visit our legal database ([ato.gov.au/law](http://ato.gov.au/law)) or 'ask Alex' on [ato.gov.au](http://ato.gov.au)

If you claim a deduction for more than the Commissioner's reasonable amount you need to keep receipts for all expenses, not just for the amount over the Commissioner's reasonable amount.

Even if you are not required to keep receipts, you must be able to explain your claim and show you spent the amounts, eg show your work diary, that you received and correctly declared your travel allowance, and bank statements.



## Travel diary



A travel diary is a record of your travel movements and activities you undertake during your travel. It will help you work out the work-related and private elements of your trip.

You will need a travel diary for each trip you take away from home for six or more nights in a row. There are a couple of exceptions.

These are:

- You travel within Australia and meet the requirements for the record keeping exception (shown left), or
- You are a crew member on an international flight and you claim a deduction for less than the allowance you received.

You should record your movements and activities in whatever diary/journal you use. It can be paper or electronic. It must be in English.

You must record your travel movements and activities before they end, or as soon as possible afterwards. You need to state:

- ✔ where you were
- ✔ what you were doing
- ✔ the times the activities started and ended.



## This is an example of a travel diary, which is kept in addition to a log book for car expenses:

October 2017			
<p><b>9 Monday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 6am travel to Wangaratta. Arrive 9am.</li> <li>■ 9:30am to 5:30pm sales conference Wangaratta.</li> <li>■ Overnight conference centre.</li> </ul>	<p><b>10 Tuesday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 9:30am to 5:30pm sales conference Wangaratta.</li> <li>■ Overnight conference centre.</li> </ul>	<p><b>11 Wednesday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 9:30am to 5:30pm sales conference Wangaratta.</li> <li>■ Overnight conference centre.</li> </ul>	<p><b>12 Thursday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 8am travel to Shepparton. Arrive 9:15am.</li> <li>■ 10am meet Mr Smith for display meeting.</li> <li>■ 1pm to 5pm Shepparton store review.</li> <li>■ Overnight Shepparton hotel.</li> </ul>
<p><b>13 Friday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 6am travel to Echuca. Arrive 7am.</li> <li>■ 8am to 12noon Echuca store review.</li> <li>■ 12:30pm to 12:45pm drive to Moama store.</li> <li>■ 1pm to 5pm Moama store review.</li> <li>■ Overnight Moama hotel.</li> </ul>	<p><b>14 Saturday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 7am travel to Bendigo. Arrive 8:30am.</li> <li>■ 9am to 6pm State Rep meeting.</li> <li>■ 6pm Dinner with State Reps.</li> <li>■ Overnight Bendigo Motor Inn.</li> </ul>	<p><b>15 Sunday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 8am State Rep breakfast conference. Finish 10am.</li> <li>■ 10am travel home to Melbourne. Arrive 12:30pm.</li> </ul>	

This is a general summary only.

For more information, speak with your tax agent or visit [ato.gov.au/travelexpenses](http://ato.gov.au/travelexpenses)

# Ready-to-use Tax Time messages

Below are a range of messages you can use (or adapt) for your own communication channels, such as websites, intranets, newsletters and social media platforms.

## Suggested social media posts for Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn profiles

On the road for work? Deductions for transport and logistic employees may include travel and self-education expenses. To understand what you can and can't claim, check out the ATO's exhaustive work-related expenses guide at [ato.gov.au/occupation20](https://ato.gov.au/occupation20)

It's tax time! Claim your work-related expenses the right way. Download the ATO's transport and logistics industry work-related expenses guide [ato.gov.au/occupation20](https://ato.gov.au/occupation20)

# Three ‘wheely’ easy tips to get your tax right

Are your tax deductions built like a Mack Truck? With tax time just around the corner, pump the brakes before you claim and find out what transport and logistics employees can claim.

## Check out these three tips from the Australian Taxation Office

**1. Travel** – If travel is an essential part of your role, you can claim a deduction for the costs you incur on accommodation, meals and incidentals when you travel for work, if you are required to take your mandatory long rest break and sleep away from your home overnight. You can't claim a deduction for accommodation where you have not incurred any accommodation expenses, because you sleep in your truck or sleep in accommodation provided by your employer.

If you can claim a deduction for accommodation and incidentals you must get and keep written evidence, such as receipts for all of those expenses. Even if you receive a travel allowance and can rely on the exception from providing written evidence for meals, you may still be required to show the basis of your claim, including when you travelled away overnight for work, that you spent money on meals, how you calculated your claim and the allowance was included in your income.

**2. Drivers licence** – You can't claim a deduction for the cost of acquiring or renewing your drivers licence. Your drivers licence is a private expense, even if driving is an essential part of your employment and you must have a licence as a condition of your employment. You can, however, claim a deduction for additional costs you incur to obtain a special licence or condition on your licence in order to perform your duties.

For example, Rhonda is a long-haul truck driver who needs a drivers licence and a heavy vehicle permit to

work. Her drivers licence renewal costs her \$45 per year and it costs \$73 to apply for the heavy vehicle permit. The \$45 to renew Rhonda's licence is not deductible because it is a private expense. The cost of the heavy vehicle permit (\$73) is deductible as it is an additional expense she incurs to fulfil her work responsibilities.

**3. Phone and internet** – You can claim a deduction for the phone and internet costs associated with the work-related use of your own phone or electronic devices. You need to keep records to show your work use. You can't claim a deduction if your employer provides you with a phone for work and pays for the usage, or if your employer reimburses you for the costs. You can't claim a deduction for any phone calls to family and friends, even while you're travelling for work. This is because they aren't work-related calls.

Remember, if you want to claim a work-related expense:

- you must have spent the money yourself and weren't reimbursed by your employer
- the expense must be directly related to how you earn your income
- you must have a record to prove the expense.

To manage your tax affairs on the go, download the ATO app which provides information and tools all in one place. This includes myDeductions, a useful way to keep track of your records throughout the year. Download the app at [ato.gov.au/app](https://ato.gov.au/app)