

# Claim recovery expenses after witnessing violence

A witness can claim financial assistance if they have been psychologically injured by seeing or hearing violence being committed against another person in Queensland.

## Who can claim

We define a 'witness' as a person who saw or heard an act of violence (including domestic violence) being committed against someone else. A witness can claim financial assistance **if they were injured** by what they saw or heard.

Unfortunately, we can't pay financial assistance to witnesses who didn't see or hear the violence being committed (e.g. the violence happened before you arrived at the scene).

## Witnessing domestic violence

A bystander who witnesses domestic violence may **apply as a witness**. This may include people who:

- overhear threats of physical abuse
- overhear repeated derogatory taunts, including racial taunts
- see or hear an assault.

## Primary victims of domestic violence

A person that is the main victim of domestic violence can apply for financial assistance as a primary victim.

Children and other family members, who are **living** in a home where domestic violence happens, can also apply for financial assistance as a **primary victim** if – the violence was directed at you, your parent, your caregiver or other family members who live with you.

You might have:

- been physically abused by the offender
- been threatened or coerced by the offender
- been emotionally, psychologically or economically abused by the offender
- had your property deliberately damaged by the offender
- been otherwise restrained, controlled or dominated by the offender in a frightening way, including:
  - having to hide from the offender because you were frightened
  - fearing for the safety of another person or an animal that the offender was threatening

- comforted or provided assistance to a person who has been physically abused
- observed bruising or other injuries of a person who has been physically abused
- cleaned up a site after property has been damaged
- been present at a domestic violence incident that is attended by police officers
- experienced financial stress arising from economic abuse.

## Types of expenses

The type of expenses that can be claimed will depend on the seriousness of the violence.

All witnesses can ask us to pay for:

- medical and counselling expenses
- travel to medical and counselling appointments
- report expenses for medical or counselling reports.

If you witnessed fatal violence, you may be able to claim other expenses. This may include:

- other exceptional circumstance expenses
- loss of earnings.

## How to claim

To claim financial assistance, you need to report the violence, and

- apply for financial assistance using the Witness application form
- provide information about **your** injuries
- attach receipts, invoices, or formal quotes for each expense you are claiming
- provide identity document(s)
- Send your application and other documents to:
  - [VictimAssist@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:VictimAssist@justice.qld.gov.au)
  - Victim Assist Queensland, GPO Box 149, Brisbane, Qld 4001.

## Payments process

If your claim is approved, we will send you a 'Notice of Decision'. This notice will list what we have agreed to pay for, who we will be paying and the conditions on the payment. Please don't tell someone that we will pay for something before you get the 'Notice of Decision'. The 'Notice of Decision' will say if we will pay the cost or not.

## Common payment conditions

**Paid expenses** – We must reimburse the person that paid the cost. This may have been you or it may have been a family member, friend, or agency. If someone else paid the cost for you, we need to pay them back. Please provide their name, phone number or email and banking information.

**Unpaid expenses** – In some cases, the cost hasn't been paid yet. Please provide an invoice so we can pay the service provider directly. If it is a medical or counselling expense, we must deduct any Medicare and private health rebates first. It is important that the invoice is made out to your name. This is because you received the service or goods. The invoice should not be made out to Victim Assist.

Other conditions (if any) will be noted in your 'Notice of Decision'.

## Timeframe

Due to the high number of claims already queued, it may be many months before we're able to assess your application and pay approved expenses.

If you have an urgent expense, and meet the conditions for claiming urgent expenses, we may prioritise the assessment of these expenses. If we decide the expenses don't meet these conditions, we'll let you know. Non urgent expenses will be queued for general assessment within normal timeframes.

## Other factsheets you may need

You should also read the following instructions:

- Reporting requirements for all applicants
- Providing information about your injuries
- Prove your identity when you apply
- Claiming urgent expenses

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*All instructions, forms and reports talked about in this factsheet are available at [www.qld.gov.au/victimscopy](http://www.qld.gov.au/victimscopy).*

*If you do not have internet access, please call 1300 546 587 during business hours and request the information via post.*

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