



What can you claim if you're a Pilot?

SOURCE: AUSTRALIAN TAXATION OFFICE

With work-related expense claims high on the ATO radar, the Australian Taxation Office is stepping up to help and provide advice for taxpayers who aren't quite sure what they can and cannot claim.

The ATO have already flagged that over-claiming of deductions is a big issue. The ATO wants taxpayers to get right what they claim as tax deductions.

We understand tax time can be tricky and taxpayers often ask whether we have advice about what they can and cannot claim based on their job. The good news is that we do. The most popular topics include car, clothing, travel, working from home and self-education expenses.

Getting the right information before you lodge your income tax return is helping

our clients to get their claims right and avoid issues later on.

We want every person to have the information they need to know whether they can make a claim, to get it right, and know what records they need to keep. Understanding what you can and cannot claim will help ensure that your income tax return is processed quickly and any refund is paid as soon as possible. Most people want to lodge their income tax return with the right information and helping people to do that in the first place is the most efficient way to operate.

Our objective is to educate you; this is just part of the process.

What you can and can't claim

Each occupation has specific circumstances which affect what can and cannot be claimed. Here are some snippets from some ATO occupation guides. Remember, regardless of the occupation you are in, you can only claim the work-related part of expenses, and you must meet the three golden rules:

- You must have spent the money yourself and not been reimbursed;
- The claim must be directly related to earning your income; and
- You need a record to prove it.

Pilot employees: work-related expenses

Common deductions include the following:

1. You can claim the cost of using a car you own when you drive:
 - between separate jobs on the same day – for example, from your job as a pilot to your second job as a cadet trainer, or
 - to and from an alternate workplace for the same employer on the same day – for example, from the airport to the airline training centre.
2. If you receive an overtime meal allowance under an industrial law, award or agreement and it's included in your assessable income, you can claim the cost of the meal that you buy and eat when you work overtime.
3. You can claim a deduction for self-education and study expenses if they directly relate to your current job as a pilot and they:
 - maintain or improve the skills and knowledge you need for your current duties, and
 - result in or are likely to result in an increase in your income from your current employment.
4. You can claim travel expenses if you're

required to travel away from your home overnight in the course of performing your work duties. 'Overnight' could include a mandatory rest break after being on duty and before recommencing duty, that is of sufficient length for you to sleep (around seven hours or more), and would usually involve you taking up accommodation for that purpose.

Travel expenses can include meals, accommodation, fares and incidental expenses that you incur and your employer has not provided or reimbursed you for.

Receiving an allowance from your employer doesn't automatically mean you can claim a deduction. You need to be able to show you were away overnight, you spent the money yourself, and the travel was directly related to earning your income.

5. You can claim the cost of buying, hiring, repairing, replacing or cleaning certain uniforms that are unique and distinctive to your job.
6. You can claim the work-related portion of other expenses if they relate to your employment, including:
 - aviation medical appointments and examinations required by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority,

- anti-glare glasses, if used to counter glare and protect against illness or injury,
- rehydrating moisturisers and rehydrating hair conditioners,
- the decline in value of luggage used for work purposes,
- union and professional association fees,
- visa applications and fees when you are required to enter a country as part of your job, and
- phone and internet costs, apportioned for private and work use, with records showing a detailed usage pattern.

However, you usually **cannot** claim home to work travel, and you **cannot** claim clothes or shoes that are not uniform or are not designed to provide you with sufficient protection from the risk of injury at your worksite, even if the item is called 'workwear' or 'tradie wear' by the supplier.

Footnote: Please note that the information here is a general overview. Taxation is a complicated matter and you should seek specific advice from a qualified and experienced professional suited to your circumstances.



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