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What can you claim if you're a Police Worker?

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.

Police: work-related expenses

Common deductions include the following:

- The cost of mending your police uniform,
- The cost of tools and/or equipment you were required to use for work,
- The cost of cleaning your police uniform,
- Union and/or professional fees,
- Publications and/or self education costs related to your employment and,
- Work related phone calls.

Unfortunately, you **cannot** claim a deduction for the cost of haircuts, grooming, weight loss programs or supplies, even though they may be covered by specific regulations. You also **cannot** claim costs associated with attending social functions or fitness expenses unless your employment depends on maintaining a level of fitness well above ordinary police standards, such as special operations.

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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NORTH MELBOURNE

Ground Level
124 Errol Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051

WHEELERS HILL

Level 2 Suite 10
622 Ferntree Gully Rd
Wheelers Hill VIC 3150

Ph: 03 9888 3175

E: info@financiallysorted.com.au

W: www.financiallysorted.com.au