



# A guide to workers' compensation weekly payments Queensland

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Workers' compensation in Queensland is designed to provide financial support to employees who suffer work-related injuries or illnesses. One of the key benefits under the scheme is weekly compensation payments, which replace lost wages while the worker is unable to perform their usual duties.

Calculating these payments involves several factors, including the worker's pre-injury earnings, the degree of incapacity, and the duration of the claim. This article explains how weekly compensation benefits are calculated under the [Queensland workers' compensation scheme](#).

## Eligibility for weekly compensation

Before weekly payments are calculated, the injured worker must meet eligibility criteria.

The injury or illness must be work-related;

The worker must be an employee (not an independent contractor, in most cases);

The injury must result in a temporary or permanent incapacity to work;

The claim must be [lodged with WorkCover Queensland](#) or a self-insured employer.

If the claim is accepted, the worker may be entitled to weekly payments to cover lost wages, and the amount will be based on their level of incapacity.

## Determining pre-injury earnings

The foundation for calculating weekly benefits is the worker's pre-injury earnings, which include the following:

Ordinary wages (including overtime if it was regular);

Allowances (e.g., shift penalties, industry allowances);

Bonuses and commissions (if they form part of regular earnings).

For payments like overtime, shift penalties, and bonuses/commission to be considered "regular", they need to have formed part of the worker's normal earnings and be paid on a regular basis.

Certain payments, such as reimbursements for expenses or irregular bonuses and occasional overtime, may be excluded. The calculation considers the worker's earnings in the 12 months before the injury (or a shorter period if employment was shorter).

## Special cases when calculating pre-injury earnings

Exemptions for calculating pre-injury earnings by assessing the average earnings in the 12 months before injury apply to a range of employees:

**Casual or part-time workers:** earnings are averaged based on regular hours.

**Seasonal workers:** adjustments may be made to reflect typical earnings.

**New employees:** if employed for less than four weeks, comparable earnings from a similar role may be used.

## Types of workers' compensation weekly payments

Weekly benefits are categorised based on the worker's incapacity.

### Temporary total incapacity (TTI)

If the worker is completely unable to work due to an injury or illness, they will receive the

following weekly payments:

First 26 weeks: 85% of their normal weekly earnings (NWE).

After 26 weeks: 75% of NWE (if still totally incapacitated).

The maximum weekly payment that can be made is adjusted annually and is subject to a legislative cap.

### Temporary partial incapacity (TPI)

If the worker can return to work but in a reduced capacity (e.g. fewer hours or lighter duties), the payment is calculated as follows:

The difference between their NWE and what they are currently earning in their reduced capacity.

For example:

Pre-injury earnings: \$1,000/week.

Current earnings having returned to work part-time: \$600/week.

Weekly compensation:  $\$1,000 - \$600 = \$400$  paid by WorkCover (subject to percentage adjustments noted above at the 26 week post acceptance of claim stage).

## Can WorkCover reduce or stop weekly payments?

Payments may be reduced or stopped if:

the worker returns to full duties;

medical evidence shows the worker has recovered;

the worker refuses suitable employment without a valid reason;

the worker reaches the two-year point of receipt of weekly payments. At this two-year point, an injured worker is entitled to continue to receive weekly benefits only if there is medical material (usually a written opinion from a specialist) that the worker's injury 'could result in a degree of permanent impairment (DPI) of more than 15%.

## Reducing or stopping weekly payments for seriously injured workers

In our experience, it is rare for WorkCover to allow an injured worker to continue to receive weekly benefits for anywhere near 2 years (let alone beyond that point). This is because, for longer-term (or more serious) injuries, the most common way that WorkCover may reduce or stop weekly compensation is by arranging for the injured worker to be assessed for DPI. Once this assessment is completed, WorkCover issues a Notice of Assessment to the worker.

Once a Notice of Assessment has been issued, the only way for a worker to try to continue receiving weekly payments is to formally disagree with the DPI rating in the notice. In doing so, they can request that the Medical Assessment Tribunal review the matter and determine that their injury is not yet stable and stationary - that is, not ready for permanent impairment assessment.

You can read more about permanent impairment claims in our earlier blog, ["WorkCover lump sum compensation claims Queensland"](#).

## Appealing a decision related to weekly payments

If a worker disagrees with the calculation, reduction or cessation of weekly benefits, they can appeal that decision.

Initially, the injured worker should ask their case manager to review the calculation.

If an internal review doesn't result in an adjustment being made, then an injured worker can make an application for review with the Workers' Compensation Regulator (a separate entity to WorkCover Queensland). An application for review must be lodged within three (3) months of the adverse decision.

If an injured worker is not satisfied with the decision of the Regulator, then they are entitled to lodge an Appeal to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC).

## Key takeaways

Weekly compensation payments in Queensland are based on pre-injury earnings and level of incapacity (temporary total incapacity or temporary partial incapacity);

These benefits are paid at 85% of normal weekly earnings for the first 26 weeks, then 75% thereafter (subject to caps);

Casual, part-time, seasonal, and new employees may have their pre-injury earnings calculated differently;

Payments can be reduced or stopped under specific conditions, such as returning to work or reaching benefit limits;

Workers can appeal decisions about their weekly payments through a structured review process.

## Get help from a workers' compensation lawyer

If you're unsure whether your workers' compensation weekly payments have been calculated correctly or your payments have stopped and you believe that decision is wrong, speaking with a lawyer experienced in Queensland workers' compensation can make a real difference. The rules are complex, and time limits often apply. Getting early advice can help you make informed decisions about your next steps without unnecessary stress or confusion.

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*This article is of a general nature and should not be relied upon as legal advice. If you require further information, advice or assistance for your specific circumstances, please contact us.*