



Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP)

Information for Providers about Home Modifications and Household Adaptive Appliances

Overview

This Factsheet outlines how entitled members of the veteran community may obtain home modifications and household adaptive appliances if they have a clinical need.

What is the objective of the Home Modifications Program?

The objective of the home modifications program is to enable the entitled person to remain in their home with:

- enhanced independence and safety;
- reduce dependency on carer(s);
- reduced likelihood of having to move residence and consequent dislocation from family, friends and community; and
- reduced risk of falls.

An example of a home modification is the replacement of a bath with a hobless shower to allow safe, independent showering.

The types of home modifications available are listed on the RAP National Schedule of Equipment: http://www.dva.gov.au/service_providers/rap/Pages/index.aspx

What are household adaptive appliances?

Household adaptive appliances are items used to assist entitled persons who have difficulty with everyday tasks, for example turning a key in a lock or opening a jar. Items such as jar openers, key turners and reaching appliances are listed on the RAP National Schedule of Equipment: http://www.dva.gov.au/service_providers/rap/Pages/index.aspx

Who is eligible?

Entitled persons with a Repatriation Health Card for *All Conditions* (Gold Card) may be able to obtain equipment or home modifications where there is a clinical need.

Entitled persons with a Repatriation Health Card for *Specific Conditions* (White Card) may be able to obtain equipment or home modifications, where there is a clinical need, for a disability that has been accepted by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) as being war or service-caused.

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A White Card is also issued to ex-service personnel who are eligible for treatment under agreements between the Australian Government and New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and the United Kingdom for disabilities accepted as war-caused by their country of origin.

How do entitled persons get access to this service?

Where home modifications are required, the entitled person's Local Medical Officer (LMO) and other GPs should refer them to an occupational therapist who will:

- assess their clinical need(s);
- provide information on available alternatives;
- seek prior financial authorisation from DVA if home modifications are required; and
- make recommendations to DVA in respect of the most appropriate modifications that meet the entitled person's identified clinical need(s).

DVA will advise the entitled person if the recommended modifications meet our guidelines and whether financial responsibility has been accepted.

What standards do modifications need to meet?

Any home modification should meet:

- Relevant state/local government regulations; and
- Applicable Australian standards for home modifications.

What else needs to be considered?

The condition of a entitled person's home is also considered (i.e. must be structurally sound and suitable as living accommodation).

The entitled persons prognosis is also taken into account. Home modifications may be disruptive and take considerable time to arrange and install.

Are alternative options considered by DVA?

Alternative options are always explored before DVA pays for modifications. For example, a problem may be solved by:

- increased community support
- use of simpler options
- relocating to a different living or bedroom within the house
- provision of special equipment or safety education.

Can an entitled person have modifications provided to more than one residence?

No. Home modifications are provided for one residence *only*.

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If DVA has paid for modifications to an entitled person's existing home and they choose to move to a less suitable home, the entitled person and/or the owner of the new home will have to pay for any modifications.

Does an entitled person have to own their own home to obtain modifications?

No. It is not necessary for an entitled person to own their home but the owner of the home must confirm that the entitled person will be a resident on a long-term basis. The owner must also agree in writing to the modifications, and that DVA will not restore the property to its former state once the modifications are no longer required.

Who can do the modifications?

DVA will only pay for home modifications done by licensed builders.

Will DVA pay for repairs and maintenance?

No. DVA will not pay for repairs and/or maintenance. DVA regards these as the responsibility of the home owner.

When will DVA *not* pay for modifications to your home?

DVA will not pay for modifications to an entitled person's home if:

- there is no clinical need;
- they were aware, at the time of moving into a house, of a condition that could make access to their home difficult in the future;
- they are in the process of, or have had, a compensation or insurance settlement in relation to the condition requiring the modification;
- they are a resident of a residential aged care facility, state-owned housing, independent living unit or retirement village;
- they require non essential items, such as additional toilets and spa baths; and/or
- they require home renovations.

Are there any Guidelines for Home Modifications?

Yes. Guidelines contain eligibility criteria and the direct order forms (<http://clientforms.dva.gov.au/clientforms/>) explaining the assessment process. Click on the following link http://www.dva.gov.au/service_providers/rap/Pages/TMP76roqwhyto.aspx to access the guidelines for home modifications in the RAP National Guidelines.

Other Factsheets

Other Factsheets related to this topic include:

- *HIP72 Rehabilitation Appliances Program*
- *HAC03 Veterans' Home Maintenance Helpline*

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- *HAC 04 HomeFront*
- *HSV 60 Repatriation Health Card – For All Conditions (Gold)*
- *HSV 61 Repatriation Health Card – For Specific Conditions (White)*

More information

All DVA Factsheets are available on request from any DVA office or on the DVA web site at <http://factsheets.dva.gov.au/factsheets/>.

If you need more information about this topic, contact DVA, or visit our web site at www.dva.gov.au.

You can telephone DVA for the cost of a local call* on the numbers listed below:

Health Providers

- **Metro** 1300 550 457
- **Non-metro** 1800 550 457

Note: * If you use a mobile phone, calls may be more costly. You are advised to use a normal phone (i.e. a landline phone) when ringing these numbers.