



Transport  
Accident  
Commission

# At the emergency hospital

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TAC information for  
people with major injuries



# About at the emergency hospital

This brochure provides basic information about the support services funded by the TAC for people who have sustained major injuries as a result of a transport accident, and their families.

Major injuries are defined as: spinal cord injuries such as quadriplegia or paraplegia; moderate or severe acquired brain injuries; extensive burns; and/or amputations.

If you would like more detailed information about support services, please contact your family member's TAC Early Support Coordinator or the TAC on 1300 654 329.

For information about the TAC in your own language, call one of the numbers listed on the back of this booklet.



1300 654 329



[www.tac.vic.gov.au](http://www.tac.vic.gov.au)



myTAC





# Getting information and support

## Working together: you and the TAC

The TAC provides support for people injured in transport accidents. Accidents are sudden and unexpected, and learning that a family member has been injured is a painful and traumatic experience. The TAC will work together with you, and with the health professionals concerned, to ensure that this trauma and confusion is kept to a minimum. It is important you understand that your family member will be supported for the short and longer-term.

Your injured family member has been assigned a TAC Early Support Coordinator. This Early Support Coordinator will be your single point of contact at the TAC and will make sure your family member is looked after. Early Support Coordinators are experienced in working with people who have sustained a major injury and understand the types of issues people confront. They will be with you and your family member throughout this journey.

### While your family member is at the emergency hospital, the Early Support Coordinator will:

- Explain the role of the TAC and how we can help
- Help you lodge a TAC claim on behalf of your family member (if you haven't already)

- Develop an understanding of your family member's individual circumstances and individual needs by gathering as much information as possible
- Find out what is important to you and your family during this stage of care
- Manage your family member's claim by making decisions on requests for treatment and services
- Work closely with you, your family member and the health professionals concerned to ensure the right services and supports are in place when your family member leaves hospital
- Work with you to begin to anticipate and plan for your family member's future needs

If they haven't already, the Early Support Coordinator will meet with you face to face and explain their role in more detail.

When the time is right, the Early Support Coordinator will visit you and your family member at home and have regular interaction with you, your family member and the health professionals involved such as doctors, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

Remember, if you have any questions or concerns don't hesitate to contact the Early Support Coordinator. They are here for you and your family.

**“Finding out your loved one is hurt is extremely traumatic. A way to help is to arm yourself with as much information as you can.”**

Mother of an injured TAC client

## Working together: you and the health professionals

When someone close to you is in an emergency hospital, you need to feel confident that they will receive the best possible care. The first stage of care is provided by the doctors and other health professionals who will give the best emergency treatment available.

If you are confused about any aspect of your family member's treatment, you should speak to a social worker or nurse, or to the doctor in charge. These health professionals realise that it is important for you to understand what is happening so that you can take an active, helpful role in the process.

The first stage of care is provided by the doctors and other health professionals who will give the best emergency treatment available.

## Available support services

Your Early Support Coordinator will talk to you about the support services the TAC can pay for. But remember the TAC can only start paying for support services once your family member's claim has been accepted. Your Early Support Coordinator can help you lodge a claim if you haven't already done this.

Once you have submitted a claim form, we will ensure it is processed as quickly as possible. We can then help by paying for the ambulance and any appropriate medical treatment needed at this stage.

The TAC may also pay income support while your family member cannot work and the travelling and accommodation expenses for you to visit your loved one in hospital. If you are interested in claiming these TAC benefits, your Early Support Coordinator can help with the paperwork.

The TAC's ability to fund support services is dependent on legislation (*Transport Accident Act 1986*), your family member's needs (as determined by a qualified health professional) and the relationship between those needs and the accident injuries.

Please note that the TAC cannot cover the income of family and friends who take time off work to be with the injured person. It is important that you talk to your employer about the type of leave that may be available to you for this purpose.

We encourage you to read our booklet *Supporting you after a transport accident* to find out more about the support services we provide.

**If you would like to discuss any specific concerns, please call your Early Support Coordinator or our Customer Service Centre on 1300 654 329 or toll-free on 1800 332 556.**

## Getting support for yourself

From the thousands of people with whom we work, we understand that coping with the trauma of an injured loved one is emotional and challenging. However, it is important that you look after yourself, so you can provide the best possible support to your family member.

Hospital social workers can advise on how to obtain support for you. You can ask a nurse or other hospital staff members for an appointment with a social worker or for a referral to an outside agency.

**There are several organisations that can help and many of their services are free. (Ask your Early Support Coordinator for our fact sheet on *Community Services*.)**

The Road Trauma Support Services for example, provides support, information and counselling to people whose lives have been affected by road trauma. You can call their helpline on 1300 367 797.

The parents, partner, siblings and children of an injured person may be eligible to receive TAC-funded counselling from a doctor, psychologist or qualified social worker. If you would like more information about counselling, please speak to your Early Support Coordinator.

Make sure you ask lots of questions and if you don't get the answer find out if someone can help you.



# What happens next

## Returning to day-to-day life

The following outlines what your family member can expect to happen throughout their rehabilitation and move back to day-to-day life.

	What happens at the hospital	What happens at the TAC
<b>Stage 1: The emergency hospital</b>	Immediately after the accident emergency treatment is given.	Ambulance and hospital bills are paid.  An Early Support Coordinator is assigned to look after your family member and manage their claim. They will be your family's single point of contact at the TAC and will be in regular contact with you and your family member throughout this journey. Don't hesitate to contact them if you have questions or concerns. They are here for you.
<b>Stage 2: The rehabilitation hospital</b>	Your family member receives the treatment they need and works through their rehabilitation program.	Appropriate support services are paid. A hospital discharge plan is developed with the treating team and discussions begin about an Independence Plan to help your family member on their journey to independence.
<b>Stage 3: Returning to day-to-day life</b>	Your family member leaves the hospital and moves back into day-to-day life with the right services in place to support them.	We continue to pay for services and offer options appropriate to your family member's needs and that will maximise their independence. The Independence Plan is regularly reviewed to match your family member's goals.

## Moving to the rehabilitation hospital

At the rehabilitation hospital, a team of health professionals will look at how well your family member manages the day-to-day activities, both physical and psychological, that are integral to their lifestyle.

Based on this assessment and other information, your Early Support Coordinator and the treating health professionals will develop a plan for your family member's safe discharge from hospital. This is very important because it will ensure your family member has supports and services in place when they return home.

Once a discharge plan has been organised the Early Support Coordinator may begin talking to your family member about an Independence Plan.

Put simply, an Independence Plan sets out what your family member wants to achieve and how they want to achieve it. It will outline the goals they want to achieve at home, at work/study and in the community.

Most importantly, the Independence Plan will detail the necessary steps and the key people involved to achieve these goals.

The Early Support Coordinator will provide you and your family member with more information about the Independence Plan at the appropriate time.

## What happens next

Our goal is the same as yours – to return your family member to as independent a lifestyle as possible. The TAC will continue to offer support during this time by funding appropriate services and providing information when you need it.

After receiving treatment at an emergency hospital, most people are ready to move to a rehabilitation hospital. This is usually several weeks after the accident. The emergency hospital staff will arrange the move when no immediate treatment or surgery is required.

## Choosing a rehabilitation hospital

You have a choice about where your family member will go to receive rehabilitation services. With several hospitals to choose from, it is important that you consider your family member's needs and make an informed decision.

For example, you will need to think about the location of the hospital. Rehabilitation may take many months, so access to the facility should be considered.

You may wish to visit the hospital before making your decision. If you would like to discuss this, please contact your Early Support Coordinator.

You may also wish to talk about options with staff at the emergency hospital. Ask to speak with representatives from the rehabilitation hospitals and discuss whether their facilities and support services are suitable for your family member's type of injury. Prepare a list of questions you want answered and request a meeting to clarify any concerns.

**For more information on what you need to do while your family member is at the emergency hospital, please refer to the next page.**

Remember if you have any questions at all, don't hesitate to contact your Early Support Coordinator.

## An Early Support Coordinator:

- Is you and your family member's key point of contact at the TAC
- Meets face to face with you, your family member and the health professionals involved in the journey from hospital to home
- Manages your family member's claim by making decisions on requests for treatment and services
- Ensures the right supports and services are in place when your family member leaves hospital and goes home
- Works closely with your family member to develop an Independence Plan, that captures their goals at home, at work and in the community
- Works through the steps that need to be taken to achieve these goals
- Shares the Independence Plan with the relevant health professionals to ensure that everyone involved in your family member's care is working towards achieving these goals
- Regularly monitors your family member's Independence Plan to ensure it matches changing goals and needs
- Supports your family member on their journey towards independence
- Is there to help address any questions, concerns or fears you may have

It is important you understand that your family member will be supported for the short and longer-term.



## What you need to do

You play an important role in the early stages after the accident.

### You need to ensure that you:

- Lodge a claim with the TAC on behalf of your injured family member
- Ask the health professionals at the hospital for information about your family member's injuries and treatment
- Keep receipts for any payments made on behalf of your injured family member
- Read the brochure *Supporting you after a transport accident* to find out about our support services and policies

- Actively investigate rehabilitation hospital options by talking with emergency hospital staff and representatives from the rehabilitation hospitals
- Look after yourself by discussing support options with the hospital social worker or the Early Support Coordinator
- Contact the Early Support Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns

**Please contact your Early Support Coordinator if you have questions or concerns. Your Early Support Coordinator will be happy to visit you to discuss things in more detail and to provide you with relevant booklets or information sheets.**

## Contact us

8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday



**1300 654 329** (local call)

**1800 332 556** (toll-free outside the Melbourne metropolitan area)



### Address

60 Brougham Street, Geelong VIC 3220



### Mailing address

TAC, Reply Paid 2751, Melbourne VIC 3001



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For information about the TAC in your own language, call one of the numbers listed here:

العربية

1300 138 639

Ελληνικά

1300 138 642

廣東話

1300 138 640

Türkçe

1300 139 073

Polski

1300 139 072

Hrvatski

1300 138 641

Tiếng Việt

1300 139 074

English

1300 139 076

Italiano

1300 138 643

All other languages

1300 139 075

普通话

1300 139 071

