



Guide to Medical Panels hearing for workers

What to expect at a Medical Panels hearing

Contents

What is Medical Panels?	2
What happens during a Medical Panel hearing?	2
Do I have to attend my Medical Panel hearing?	3
Do I have to answer the Medical Panel's questions?	3
Will my hearing be on time?	3
How long will the hearing take?	3
What if I am running late to the hearing?	3
Can I attend my hearing online or by phone?	3
Can the Medical Panel advise me about treatment?	3
Will I need to do any special tests?	4
What happens with surveillance video?	4
Can I be asked to see a psychiatrist?	4
Will the Medical Panel contact my treating healthcare practitioner?	4
What should I bring with me?	4
Can I give the panel extra information?	4
Can I bring a friend or family member with me?	5
Can I bring someone to represent me?	5
Can I bring my children?	5
Can I bring a service animal with me?	5
What if I need an interpreter?	5
Is there a cost?	5
Can I claim any other costs?	5
Will I get a medical certificate?	6
When will I receive the opinion?	6
What if I disagree with the Medical Panel opinion?	6
What if I am unhappy about aspects of the hearing?	6
Where is the Medical Panels office?	6
Where can I find more information?	6
Support	6

So, you've been referred to Medical Panels

Medical Panels convene independent panels of medical practitioners and healthcare professionals who provide opinions on any medical questions under the legislation where there is a dispute.

A conciliation officer, a court, a WorkSafe agent or a self-insured employer may refer medical questions to Medical Panels.

This happens if there's a difference in opinion about:

- your injury
- your entitlements
- your level of impairment/work capacity
- a decision made on your WorkCover claim by a managing agent/self insurer.

A Medical Panel opinion on a medical question is considered final and conclusive by any court, body or person.

It's important to attend your Medical Panels hearing

Your hearing is an opportunity to talk to independent medical specialists about your claim.

This brochure will provide all the information you need so that you know what to expect at your hearing.



What is Medical Panels?

Medical Panels is an independent panel of medical practitioners and healthcare professionals who provide opinions on referred medical questions under the legislation where there is a dispute.

Each medical panel functions as a tribunal that provides final and legally binding answers to specific medical questions put to them by a court, body or person eligible to make a referral.

Medical Panels answer referred medical questions in relation to those areas in which a dispute may exist, which may include:

- The nature of your medical condition.
- Your incapacity for work and whether it is permanent.
- What other work you may be able to perform.
- Whether your treatment is appropriate for your injury.
- Whether your employment was a significant contributing factor to your injury.
- The level of any impairment from your injury.
- The extent and likely prognosis of your condition.
- Whether your incapacity is due to your injury.

What happens during a Medical Panel hearing?

Confirmation of your hearing

The Medical Panels office will email you the information about your hearing. The list of all the material received with the referral will also be sent to you, including who referred your case to Medical Panels.

If you need copies of any material that the referrer has provided to Medical Panels, please contact the referrer directly to obtain the copies.

If you have not been referred by a court, you can send the Medical Panels office copies of any further material that you wish to place before the Medical Panel.

If you have been referred by a court, the Medical Panel can only consider material that has been forwarded by the court.

At the hearing

The Medical Panel hearing will involve you seeing one or more doctors, either individually or jointly for examination. Most hearings are held at the Medical Panels office. If it is in a different location, we'll let you know in your hearing confirmation email.

The Medical Panel will ask you about the history of your claimed injury or condition. This will be a detailed discussion and may include your work history, previous medical history and/or life experiences.

The Medical Panel will invite you to comment on the material provided to the panel.

The hearing may also include a physical examination.

A thorough physical examination may require the Medical Panel to examine parts of your body beyond the immediate area of your injury. For example, your legs may be examined when claiming for a back injury.

It's likely that you'll need to remove your clothing for the physical examination. Please wear clothing and under garments that allow you to undress with ease. Gowns will be provided. Nursing staff are available on request to assist where required and may be present during the examination. You may request a nurse to be present as a chaperone.

The Medical Panel may need to look at any X-rays, test results and hospital summaries that you bring, that haven't already been provided as part of the referral.

After your hearing

Medical Panels will discuss your case. You may be requested to attend another hearing or provide further information. If this is required, you will receive clear instructions from the Medical Panels office on what you need to do.

If nothing further is required, the Medical Panel will form their opinion, and this will be sent to all relevant parties.

Do I have to attend my Medical Panel hearing?

Yes. It's important you attend your hearing.

Cancellation of hearings will cause a delay in resolving your case. For WorkCover claims, not attending hearings can lead to suspension of your entitlements.

If you're unable to attend a hearing, please notify the Medical Panels office immediately.

Do I have to answer the Medical Panel's questions?

You must cooperate with the Medical Panel and the hearing process. If you don't, your entitlement to compensation may be suspended.

It's important that you fully understand the hearing process. If you have any concerns, let the Medical Panel know.

Will my hearing be on time?

Most Medical Panel hearings take place on time. However, sometimes the panel may be running late. This can happen because of a medical emergency or the complexity of some hearings.

If you are able to wait, the panel will see you as soon as they can. If not, you can request our reception staff to arrange another hearing for you.

How long will the hearing take?

Hearings normally take between 30 and 90 minutes.

The duration of each hearing depends on the complexity and nature of the injury. A full history of your injury or condition will be discussed during your hearing. This may include a:

- thorough physical or psychiatric examination
- review of the referral material and reports provided.

What if I am running late to the hearing?

We understand that sometimes there may be unexpected delays.

If you are running late, please call the Medical Panels' office on 1800 061 715 to let us know. The Medical Panel hearing may need to be cancelled and rescheduled to another date and time. This is to ensure the panel has enough time for your assessment.

Please allow plenty of time to get to your hearing. If you need directions or have any doubt about how to get to the hearing, contact the Medical Panels office.

Can I attend my hearing online or by phone?

In some cases, you'll be advised your hearing is to be conducted online by Zoom. This depends on the complexity and injury type of your claim. If you have a Zoom hearing scheduled, you'll be provided with a Zoom user guide. You can also request a test call with one of our Zoom officers if needed.

You can request your Zoom hearing be changed to be an in-person hearing. There can be long waiting periods for in-person hearings and the resolution of your dispute may be delayed.

You cannot attend your hearing by phone call.

If your hearing is scheduled as an in-person hearing, you'll need to attend in person at the location mentioned in your hearing confirmation email.

All physical injuries are assessed in person.

Can the Medical Panel advise me about treatment?

No. The Medical Panel is not permitted to advise you on the treatment of your injury or condition.

The panel's role is to make an independent assessment of your condition, and give their opinion to the court, body or person who referred the medical questions.

Will I need to do any special tests?

The Medical Panel will check the tests that have been completed by any other doctors you've seen, and which have been made available to the panel. Sometimes the Medical Panel may need to arrange for you to have additional X-rays or other basic investigations such as hearing tests.

If these are needed, the panel (with your consent) will arrange this with your treating healthcare practitioner.

What happens with surveillance video?

Surveillance video may be provided to the panel. The panel may view and discuss the footage with you.

Please contact the referrer to receive copies of any surveillance video applicable to your claim if this is listed as part of your referral documentation. You must do this before your hearing.

Can I be asked to see a psychiatrist?

Yes, you may be asked to see a psychiatrist so the panel can consider a more comprehensive assessment.

Will the Medical Panel contact my treating healthcare practitioner?

The Medical Panel may need to contact your treating healthcare practitioner but will only do so with your consent.

This applies to contacting not only your treating healthcare practitioner, but also providers of any medical and related services (such as physiotherapists and psychologists).

Our office will organise this for you.

What should I bring with me?

If you have a copy of the following information relating to your condition, you should bring it with you to the hearing.

- X-rays, CT scans, MRI scans, nerve conduction studies and the reports that go with them.
- Results of any other tests (such as blood tests, urine tests or any other tests).
- A list of medications.

Can I give the panel extra information?

Yes, you can provide the panel with extra information if you want. This can include:

- medical reports from a hospital, doctor or allied health professional
- a summary of information in your own words.

You can send this information by mail or email to our office before or after your hearing. You can also bring any additional information with you to the hearing. Any additional information provided after the Medical Panel has formed its opinion will not be considered.

Please note, any information you provide to the Medical Panel will be provided to the other parties involved.

If you've been sent to the Medical Panel by the Magistrates' Court or County Court, any information you want to give to the panel must be approved by the magistrate or judge before it's given to the Medical Panel. We recommend this information is provided to the panel by your representatives.

Can I bring a friend or family member with me?

You are welcome to bring a friend or family member with you for support when you attend Medical Panels.

Given the personal and private nature of some questions asked, the panel will decide at the time of your hearing whether a support person can be present during the hearing. As the panel decides this, we won't be able to confirm this to you over the phone before the hearing.

Can I bring someone to represent me?

If you are a 'person under disability' you are entitled to representation under law. This includes if you are:

- under 18 years of age
- with a disability and incapable of self-advocacy
- with legally/court appointed advocates, litigation guardians/representative.

If you are entitled to have a representative under the law, please contact our office so suitable arrangements can be made to ensure your representative can accompany you to the hearing.

Legal representatives, WorkCover insurers, union representatives, employers or any other official party to the dispute cannot attend a Medical Panel hearing with you or on your behalf.

Can I bring my children?

Please don't bring children to your hearing. The panel would like to speak to you without distraction. If you do, your hearing may need to be postponed/rescheduled.

Note, Medical Panels do not provide child minding facilities. If it is unavoidable that a child comes with you, another person must attend with you to supervise the child while you are in the examination room.

Can I bring a service animal with me?

You can bring a registered assistance dog to your hearing. You may be asked to provide evidence that the assistance dog is qualified, accredited and serving the person they are with.

Please advise the Medical Panels' office if you will be attending with your assistance dog.

Please note that emotional support animals are not recognised by law in Australia and are not permitted to attend.

What if I need an interpreter?

If an interpreter has been arranged for your hearing, your hearing confirmation email will confirm this.

If you're not sure an interpreter has been arranged and you need one, please contact our office as soon as possible before the hearing.

If we are not aware you need an interpreter, the hearing may not be able to proceed. It will be rescheduled for another day and time.

Please note, friends and family members are not allowed to interpret for you.

Is there a cost?

You don't need to pay anything for your hearing. The cost is paid by the WorkSafe agent or self-insured employer.

Can I claim any other costs?

You should speak to your WorkSafe agent or self-insured employer directly if you wish to claim any costs incurred attending a Medical Panel hearing. They will be able to advise you on what you can claim and how to claim it. Usually, you can claim reasonable cost of your travel, and in some cases, you may be able to claim accommodation and meals.

If you believe you may face financial hardship by paying the costs upfront, there are options for pre-payment. If this applies to you, you should contact your WorkSafe agent or self-insured employer as soon as you receive notification of your hearing.

Will I get a medical certificate?

If requested, the Medical Panels office can provide you with a Certificate of Attendance.

When will I receive the opinion?

When the Medical Panel has written up its medical opinion, it will be sent to all relevant parties. Opinions may be released within 24 hours after your appointment. However, for most WorkCover cases it takes around 4 weeks from your hearing. It may take longer for more complex matters.

What if I disagree with the Medical Panel opinion?

The Medical Panel can't reopen your matter once it has issued its opinion. If you don't agree with the opinion, seek legal advice.

For a WorkCover claim, please contact:

- your legal representatives
- WorkCover Assist on 9941 0537 or workcoverassist@workcoverassist.vic.gov.au
- Union Assist on 9639 6144 or info@unionassist.org.au
- WorkSafe Advisory on 1800 136 089 or through the website at worksafe.vic.gov.au

What if I am unhappy about aspects of the hearing?

If you're unhappy about any part of your Medical Panel hearing, you can reach us by:

- phone on 1800 061 715
- mail to Medical Panels, Level 6 (North Tower), 485 La Trobe Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
- email info@medicalpanels.vic.gov.au

Where is the Medical Panels office?

The Medical Panels office is located at Level 6 (North Tower), 485 La Trobe Street, Melbourne. Most hearings are conducted here. Please refer to the map at the end of this brochure for location, public transport, and parking information.

You should check your hearing letter to confirm the venue of your hearing.

Where can I find more information?

You can find information about your hearing on our website: medicalpanels.vic.gov.au

You can also contact your WorkSafe Agent or self-insured employer for more information.

Support


We understand that dealing with a Panel Hearing can be a difficult and stressful time. If you'd like to talk to someone, these services may be of assistance:

- Lifeline – lifeline.org.au phone 131 114 (Australia-wide)
- Beyond Blue – beyondblue.org.au phone 1300 224636 (Australia-wide)
- SuicideLine – phone 1300 651 251 (Victoria)
- Your local GP or mental healthcare professional



**The Medical Panels office is located at
Level 6 (North Tower), 485 La Trobe Street Melbourne**

Please note this map is not to scale

-  Tram Stops
-  Tramlines

Glossary of terms

Convener

The Convener of Medical Panels is the head of the organisation and is appointed by the relevant Victorian Government Minister.

Worker

A worker is the injured person who makes a claim against the employer.

WorkSafe agent

WorkSafe agents are organisations appointed by WorkSafe to manage employers' WorkSafe insurance and injured workers' compensation claims.

Employer

An employer is the injured worker's employer against whom a claim is made.

Self-insured employer

Self-insured employers are responsible for managing their own workers compensation claims, including rehabilitation and return to work of their injured workers. They are also responsible for the cost and the financial liabilities of claims made against them.

Person under disability

A worker who is incapable of managing their affairs in a referral due to a physical or mental condition. This includes a minor.



Level 6 (North Tower),
485 La Trobe Street
Melbourne, Victoria 3000
GPO Box 2709
Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Email
info@medicalpanels.vic.gov.au

Phone
(03) 8256 1555

Fax
(03) 8256 1550

Toll free
1800 061 715

Website
medicalpanels.vic.gov.au

Business hours
Monday to Friday, 8:45 am to 5:00 pm

Call 131 450 to translate this information or to speak to Medical Panels in your language. For more information about this free service, visit [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#).

Sinhalese

මෙම තොරතුරු පරිවර්තනය කරනු ලැබීම සඳහා හෝ ඔබගේ භාෂාවෙන් වෙළඳ මට්ටමට හා කරනු ලැබීම සඳහා දුරකථන අංක 131 450 අමතන්න. හෝ මිලදී ගත් සපයනු ලබන මෙම සේවාව පිළිබඳ අමතර විස්තර සඳහා 'Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)' වෙබ් අඩවියට පිවිසෙන්න.

Rohingya

Eí maalamat yāan tuāñir nijór zuban ór lekát maáni bánǵi diballá yáto Medikel Penel ór fúañti hotá hoiballá kol goro 131450. Eí maána sarvíg or baboté aró maalamat zaniballá, eçe sóo [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#).

Tagalog

Tumawag sa 131450 para isalin sa wika ang impormasyong ito o upang makipag-usap sa Panel na Medikal sa inyong wika. Para sa higit na impormasyon tungkol sa libreng serbisyo, bisitahin ang [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#).

Macedonian

Јавете се на 131 450 за превод на оваа информација или за да разговарате со Медицински одбор на вашиот јазик. За повеќе информации за оваа бесплатна услуга, посетете го Националната служба [\(TIS National\)](#).

Hindi

इस जानकारी का अनुवाद करने या अपनी भाषा में मेडिकल पैनल से बात करने के लिए 131 450 पर कॉल करें। इस निःशुल्क सेवा के बारे में अधिक जानकारी के लिए, अनुवाद और दूमाषिया सेवा [\(TIS National\)](#) पर जाएँ।

Punjabi

ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੈਡੀਕਲ ਪੈਨਲ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ 131 450 'ਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰੋ। ਇਸ ਮੁਫਤ ਸੇਵਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੱਧ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ, [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#) 'ਤੇ ਜਾਓ।

Arabic

اتصل على الرقم 131 450 لترجمة هذه المعلومات أو للتحدث إلى اللجان الطبية بلغتك. لمزيد من المعلومات حول هذه الخدمة المجانية، تفضل بزيارة خدمة الترجمة التحريرية والشفوية [\(TIS National\)](#).

Persian

به 131 450 تلفن کنید تا این اطلاعات را برای شما ترجمه کنند یا به زبان خودتان با Medical Panels (هیئت های پزشکی) صحبت کنید. برای اطلاعات بیشتر در باره این خدمات رایگان از [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#) ترجمه نوشتاری و گفتاری (تیس نیشنال) دیدن کنید.

Khmer

ហៅទូរស័ព្ទទៅលេខ 131 450 ដើម្បីបកប្រែព័ត៌មាននេះ ឬនិយាយទៅកាន់កុមរដ្ឋសាស្ត្រ (Medical Panels) ជាភាសារបស់អ្នក។ ស្រមាប់ព័ត៌មានបន្ថែមអំពីសេវាកម្មព័ត៌មានច្នៃចំនុះ សូមចូលទៅកាន់ សេវាបកប្រែភាសាសរសេរ និងបកប្រែផ្ទាល់មាត់ [\(TIS National\)](#)។

Burmese

ဤအချက်အလက်များကို သင့်ဘာသာစကားသို့ ဘာသာပြန်ဆိုလိုလျှင် သို့မဟုတ် ဆေးဘက်ဆိုင်ရာအဖွဲ့များနှင့် စကားပြောဆိုလိုလျှင် 131 450 သို့ ဖုန်းခေါ်ဆိုပါ။ ဤအခမဲ့ဝန်ဆောင်မှုနှင့်ပတ်သက်၍ အချက်အလက်ပိုမိုသိရှိလိုပါက ဘာသာပြန်နှင့် စကားပြန်ဝန်ဆောင်မှု [\(Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)\)](#) သို့ ဝင်ရောက်ကြည့်ရှုပါ။

Korean

이 정보에 대한 번역이 필요하시거나 한국어로 Medical Panels와 통화를 원하시면 131 450으로 전화하세요. 이 무료 통번역 서비스에 대한 자세한 정보는 [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#) 에서 찾아보실 수 있습니다.

Mandarin

拨打 131 450 即可翻译此信息或以您的语言与医疗小组交谈。有关此免费服务的更多信息，请访问[翻译和口译服务 \(TIS National\)](#)。

Vietnamese

Hãy gọi số 131 450 để dịch thông tin này hoặc nói chuyện với Hội đồng Y tế bằng ngôn ngữ của quý vị. Để biết thêm thông tin về dịch vụ miễn phí này, hãy truy cập Dịch vụ Biên dịch và Phiên dịch [\(TIS National\)](#).

Hazaragi

بلده ترجمه كيدون ازى مالومات پا بلده توره گمتو قد هئيت طبي (Medical Panels) زيون خود خو، د شماره 131 450 زنگ ديد. بلده كسب مالومات زيادت د باره ازى خدمت مفت، به خدمات ترجمانى شفاهى و كنى [\(TIS National\)](#) مراجعه كيد.

Somali

Wac 131 450 si aad u turjuntid macluumaadkan ama si aad ugula hadashid Dhakhaatiirta Caafimaadka luuqadaada. Wixii macluumaad ah ee intaa ka badan oo ku saabsan adeegan bilaashka ah, booqo Adeegga Turjumaada afka iyo Qoraalka ah ee [\(TIS National\)](#).

Amharic

ይህን መረጃ ለህክምና ቡድን በቋንቋ በመተርጎም ለማነጋገር በስልክ 131 450 ይደውሉ። ስለዚህ ያለክፍያ በነጻ አገልግሎት ተጨማሪ መረጃ ለማግኘት በትርጉም እና አስተርጓሚ አገልግሎት [\(TIS National\)](#) ላይ ይጎብኙ።

Turkish

Bu bilgilerin tercüme edilmesi veya Tibbi Panellerle kendi dilinizde konuşmak için 131450'yi arayın. Bu ücretsiz hizmet hakkında daha fazla bilgi için Ulusal Tercümanlık Hizmeti'ni [\(Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)\)](#) ziyaret edin.

Greek

Καλέστε το 131 450 για να μεταφράσετε αυτές τις πληροφορίες ή για να μιλήσετε σε Ιατρική Επιτροπή στη γλώσσα σας. Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες σχετικά με αυτήν τη δωρεάν υπηρεσία, επισκεφθείτε την Υπηρεσία Μετάφρασης και Διερμηνείας [\(TIS National\)](#) [[Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#)].

Bosnian

Nazovite 131 450 da biste preveli ove informacije ili razgovarali s Medical Panels [Jekarskom komisijom] na vašem jeziku. Za više informacija o ovoj besplatnoj usluzi, posjetite Službu za prevodenje i tumačenje [\(TIS National\)](#).

Italian

Chiama il 131 450 per ottenere una traduzione di queste informazioni o per parlare a Medical Panels nella tua lingua. Per ulteriori informazioni su questo servizio gratuito, visita il sito internet del servizio nazionale di traduzioni e interpretariato [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#).

Croatian

Nazovite 131 450 kako biste preveli ovu informaciju ili razgovarali s medicinskim komisijama na vašem jeziku. Za više informacija o ovoj besplatnoj usluzi, posjetite [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#).

Serbian

Pozovite 131 450 za prevod ove informacije ili da razgovarate sa Лекарском комисијом [Medical Panels] на свом језику. За више информација о овој бесплатној услузи посетите Националну службу преводилаца и тумача [\(Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)\)](#).

Spanish

Llame al 131 450 para traducir esta información o hablar con los Paneles médicos en español. Obtenga más información sobre este servicio gratuito en la página web [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#).

Albanian

Telefononi numrin 131 450 për ta përkthyer këtë informacion ose për të folur me Panelin e Mjekëve në gjuhën tuaj. Për më shumë informacion rreth këtij shërbimi falas, vizitoni Shërbimin e Përkthimit me shkrim ose me gojë [\(TIS National\)](#).



**Medical
Panels**