

GUIDELINE

Payment of travel expenses

Operational guideline

The National Injury Insurance Agency, Queensland (NIISQ Agency) will fund travel expenses that are:

- incurred by a participant in connection with NIISQ Agency approved treatment and/or rehabilitation services;
- required as a result of the eligible motor vehicle accident injury/ies;
- necessary and reasonable in the circumstances.

Approval for participant travel that is to be funded by the NIISQ Agency must be sought prior to the journey.

For the avoidance of doubt, participants should be aware that they are responsible for everyday travel expenses that are not for or in connection with their assessed treatment and rehabilitation needs. NIISQ Agency will not fund any of a participant's travel needs that do not meet the above criteria. For example, travel expenses for social outings or holidays.

To avoid requirements that might be unreasonable in the circumstances on any participant, NIISQ Agency may waive observance of any part or parts of this Guideline.

When assessing whether travel expenses are necessary and reasonable in the circumstances, NIISQ Agency will take into consideration whether other options for travel assistance have been investigated, for example:

- Transport Taxi Subsidy Scheme;
- public transport concessions for example, Companion Card, Seniors Card or State Concession Card;
- local council and community transport programs where available;
- mobility or transport allowances from other state or federal schemes, such as Centrelink;
- provisions from the Australian Tax Office for people with a disability to claim tax concessions when buying, leasing or modifying a vehicle.

The NIISQ Agency will fund the following travel modes for a participant to attend treatment and rehabilitation services:

- reimbursement of kilometres in own car based on industry standard;
- reimbursement of public transport cost;
- attendant care supported travel;
- taxi / Uber travel;
- car parking costs;
- airfares.

The NIISQ Agency will generally not fund:

- travel expenses incurred before someone has been accepted as an eligible participant;
- participant travel that is not for a necessary and reasonable treatment and rehabilitation service related to the eligible injury (for example, travel expenses that are incurred as a result of a condition that existed before the motor vehicle accident or that is not a result of the participant's motor vehicle accident);
- participant travel that is not pre-approved by the NIISQ Agency;

- travel for anyone other than the participant (unless by pre-arranged agreement with the NIISQ Agency);
- participant travel where the participant elects to travel a different way to what the NIISQ Agency considers is necessary and reasonable (for example, the participant takes a longer route instead of the most direct route);
- participant travel where the participant chooses a mode of travel over and above what the NIISQ Agency considers is reasonable and necessary (for example, their preference is to hire a car instead of taking public transport);
- travel expenses for everyday activities that any person would incur (for example, travel to shops, chemist, hairdresser or social outings);
- travel expenses such as hire car or taxi if NIISQ Agency has modified a vehicle for the participant to use as a driver or passenger;
- reimbursement claims for parking or paid travel not supported by a receipt.

If the request is not related to treatment and rehabilitation, the NIISQ Agency will not consider the request.

Participants should explore their eligibility for alternative travel schemes which may include:

- Transport Taxi Subsidy Scheme;
- Companion Card;
- Community Transport;
- Mobility Allowance;
- Australian Tax Office provision for purchasing a car.

Reimbursement of participant travel costs via the Travel Reimbursement Form

The participant should submit a Travel Reimbursement Form available on the NIISQ website niis.qld.gov.au along with any receipts to support their request for reimbursement.

The form is to be used for:

Private car use

Reimbursement per kilometre in line with the industry standard using the shortest and most direct route.

Distances claimed for travel will be checked against google maps or a similar trip calculator to ensure claimed mileage meets approximate distance travelled.

The NIISQ Agency will pay tolls where the use of a toll road is necessary and reasonable to attend the appointment.

Car parking

The NIISQ Agency will reimburse the cost of parking costs incurred as a result of attending approved treatment services where payment for parking is required (for example, free street parking is not available within a reasonable distance of the destination).

Public transport

If public transport is available and its use is reasonable in the participant's individual circumstances, we will reimburse public transport costs.

Taxi travel

If the participant has a taxi subsidy and/or companion card, they are required to advise us and use the concession appropriately.

Taxi receipts and travel details are to be provided and funds reimbursed to the participant via the Travel Reimbursement Form.

Taxi travel will only be funded where:

- the participant's injuries are such that an accessible taxi is the only practical travel option available to them;
- all other travel methods have been considered and have been found to be inappropriate;
- it is demonstrated that taxi travel is the most cost-effective method to meet the participant's travel needs.

Uber

The NIISQ Agency will reimburse the use of Uber where the travel is deemed necessary and reasonable for the eligible injury.

Uber travel will only be funded where:

- all other travel methods have been considered and have been found to be inappropriate;
- it is demonstrated that Uber travel is the most cost-effective method to meet the participant's travel needs.

Airfares

The NIISQ Agency may pay the return airfare or reasonable travel costs for the participant to travel to necessary and reasonable treatment or rehabilitation appointments in the circumstances where specialist care is not available locally.

Specialist medical justification demonstrating the requirement for travel will be required.

Any requests to fly business class (or other specific requests) must be based on treating medical specialist opinion.

Participant travel with an attendant carer

The NIISQ Agency may approve an attendant care worker to transport a participant, either in the attendant care worker's vehicle or the participant's vehicle.

An attendant care worker may assist the participant with their treatment and rehabilitation travel needs by:

- a. implementing travel training in the use of public transport as prescribed by the service provider overseeing the travel training;
- b. accompanying the participant in the use of public transport;
- c. driving the participant to treatment and rehabilitation services in the participant's car using approved travel kilometres;
- d. driving the participant to treatment and rehabilitation services in the attendant care worker's car using approved travel kilometres.

There may be activities or transport needs that are not covered within the approved travel expenses by NIISQ Agency, or that are not related to a treatment or care need.

For example, a participant is travelling to a social activity to meet a friend. The participant may require attendant care supervision for activities of daily living, such as travelling to and participating in the activity, which would be funded by NIISQ Agency, however the travel costs remain the responsibility of the participant as an everyday living expense. In such cases it is the responsibility of the participant to fund their own travel.

Special circumstances relating to reimbursement of travel expenses to a family member or friend assisting a participant to attend an appointment

In special circumstances, NIISQ Agency may consider reimbursing the reasonable travel expenses of a person who has assisted a participant to attend an appointment, for example an appointment with a treating medical specialist, in the following circumstances:

- a. where the participant is unable to attend or participate in the medical appointment without support (for example, if the participant is a child or lacks legal capacity);
- b. the person assisting them to the appointment is a legal guardian or person responsible/ family member or carer
- c. when the participant requires attendant care support in addition to a family member or carer. NIISQ will only reimburse one person's reasonable travel expenses where they are the legal guardian or person responsible.

The information provided in this document is a guideline only and is for general information purposes and is subject to change and does not constitute legal advice or recommendations. It should not be relied upon as constituting legal advice or a recommendation or as applicable to specific circumstances. Please refer to the *National Injury Insurance Scheme (Queensland) Act 2016* and *Regulation 2016* for more details about the National Injury Insurance Scheme, Queensland.

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More information

For more information contact the NIISQ Agency: