



Support for emergencies

Defence Community Organisation

Emergency and crisis support for families

Defence Community Organisation, or DCO, can provide short-term financial assistance to an ADF member's dependants in an emergency or crisis situation.

This support is given when the member is absent from home for Service reasons or unable to care for their dependants for a medical reason.

The emergency event must be unforeseen, sudden and be beyond the immediate coping mechanisms of your family.

DCO's crisis support should not be used as a substitute for Triple Zero emergency services.

A Defence Social Worker will assess the extent of the emergency and your family's needs and develop a support plan in partnership with the member's unit.

Depending on the circumstances, financial assistance may cover:

- dependant care,
- specialist dependant care,
- housekeeping,
- child minding,
- respite care, or
- travel for immediate family to provide support to the member's dependants.

The social worker will also develop a longer term strategy to ensure the wellbeing of your family for the remainder of the member's absence.

How to apply

The ADF member, their dependants or the member's Commanding Officer can apply for

emergency support by contacting the Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608**.

The applicant will need to fill out the AD570 *Application for Emergency Support for Families Scheme* web form available on the Defence intranet or the DCO website.

Fringe Benefits Taxation

All emergency financial assistance incurs Fringe Benefit Tax for the ADF member. As these amounts can be significant and may affect other payments or benefits received, we strongly urge you to seek independent financial advice before applying for assistance.

Safe house accommodation

DCO can also facilitate access to temporary 'safe house' accommodation for the dependants of ADF members in situations of extreme domestic crisis, where the family members cannot remain in the home and have no available alternatives for accommodation. To access this service, contact the Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608**.

Australians Dangerously Ill Scheme

The Australians Dangerously Ill Scheme, or AUSDIL, allows an ADF member who has been hospitalised through serious injury or illness to be supported by a nominated family member or close friend.

The visitor can receive transport, accommodation, meals and necessary





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support so that they can assist the recovery of the ADF member.

When is assistance provided?

AUSDIL assistance is provided when the member has been hospitalised for serious or life-threatening injury or illness, including mental health conditions.

A parent or guardian may also visit an ADF member under 18 who requires medical treatment (the member does not have to be seriously ill in this case).

A medical professional must confirm that the nominated person's support would positively benefit the member's wellbeing or recovery, and, along with the member's commanding officer, will initiate the AUSDIL request.

Normally, only one visitor per member may be approved for any one illness or injury.

What assistance is provided?

Approved visitors will have their travel costs covered, including:

- return transport to the hospitalised member's location,
- accommodation for the duration of the approved visit,
- reasonable cost of meals (excluding alcoholic beverages), and
- travel insurance for visits overseas.

When the nominated person cannot travel without a carer or appropriate support (for example, if the person is physically handicapped or elderly), we also cover the costs for an attendant of their choice to accompany them.

Approval for any one visit is usually up to seven consecutive days.

For more information on this factsheet and other Defence Community Organisation support services visit www.defence.gov.au/dco or call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

The Defence Community Organisation offers a wide range of support services for the families of ADF members.

The best way to access these services is to call **1800 624 608**. The all-hours Defence Family Helpline is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

