



## Veterans' Home Care

# Home and Garden Maintenance

### Purpose

This Factsheet provides information for veterans and war widows/widowers about the safety related home and garden maintenance service available under the Veterans' Home Care (VHC) program.

### What is home and garden maintenance?

The focus of home and garden maintenance services is to assist in keeping the home safe and habitable by minimising environmental health and safety hazards that may impact on you in and around the home.

### What services are available?

Tasks may include a range of minor maintenance or repair tasks that could be done by a **handyman**, such as:

- replacing light bulbs and tap washers
- installing batteries in smoke/security alarms
- gutter, window or fan cleaning
- minor home maintenance (e.g. cupboard door adjustment)
- pruning, grass cutting or weeding only where a safety hazard exists
- clearing of debris following natural disasters
- collection and/or cutting of firewood in rural and remote areas *or*
- other tasks agreed between you and your service provider.

'One-off' yard/garden clean ups covering a variety of tasks may only be approved in specific circumstances i.e. if you are assessed with mobility limitations.

### What services are not available?

The following tasks are not available:

- tasks that require a qualified tradesperson, such as a plumber, electrician etc
- major home repairs and maintenance, such as gutter replacement, house painting, and garden tasks such as landscaping, mulching, branch lopping, tree felling, tree removal etc
- tasks that are considered to be routine, cosmetic or ornamental gardening services such as weeding, maintaining flower beds, regular lawn mowing and pruning of shrubs, unless there is an environmental health or safety hazard.

# Home and Garden Maintenance, *continued*

## Service thresholds

The maximum amount of home and garden maintenance you can receive in a 12 month period is 15 hours. You are not automatically entitled to 15 hours and, as for all VHC services, approval of service is based on your assessed need.

*Note:* In certain circumstances minor regular support may be approved, for example, three monthly gutter cleaning in a high bushfire-risk area.

## Service arrangements

Once home and garden maintenance services have been approved, you will receive a Care Plan in the mail. The Care Plan details the service arrangements, such as the:

- tasks to be done;
- start and end date of services;
- frequency of services;
- referrals to other home support services, if required;
- copayment;
- an assessment review date; and
- contact details of the VHC service provider who will provide the services.

The VHC service provider is only approved to do the set hours of work during each visit as outlined in your Care Plan. Your service provider will contact you to discuss a suitable day and time. If the number of hours approved are not adequate to complete all the work as per your Care Plan, you may need to identify some priorities with the service provider.

Service providers in some States or Territories may be unable to provide certain tasks because of State or Territory specific work health and safety regulations, legislation or insurance issues. Your service provider will be able to confirm if this is the situation.

Arrangements between you and the service provider to complete tasks not listed in your Care Plan are private arrangements. You will be responsible to pay for any costs involved. Service providers are required to provide any equipment needed, e.g. garden tools, ladders. *If you are not going to be at home at the scheduled time of your service, you need to let your service provider know in advance so that a new time can be scheduled.*

Tasks requiring a qualified tradesperson can be referred to the Veterans' Home Maintenance Line (telephone **1800 801 945\***). The advice is free but you must pay the full cost of work done by tradespeople, including call out fees. Where possible, this telephone line will link you to government subsidised services.

## Who is eligible to be assessed for services?

Australian veterans or mariners, or war widow/widowers of an Australian veteran or mariner, who have a Repatriation Health Card – For all conditions (Gold) or Repatriation Health Card – for specific conditions (White), may be assessed for all VHC Services.

## Home and Garden Maintenance, *continued*

White Card holders who are eligible under the *Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Act 2006* or are British, Commonwealth & Allied entitled persons or persons with eligibility under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act* are advised to contact a VHC assessment agency on **1300 550 450**<sup>^</sup> to discuss eligibility for VHC services as it may vary from that outlined in this factsheet.

### Assessment and how to access VHC services

To access personal care services through the VHC program, a comprehensive assessment is conducted by a VHC assessor. A majority of assessments done over the telephone. Individual circumstances are discussed to identify the range of services that maybe required.

To arrange an assessment for services, telephone a VHC assessment agency on **1300 550 450**<sup>^</sup>. Calls should be made from a standard landline telephone, as calls from mobile phones are unable to be connected to any correct VHC assessment agency.

Following the assessment, agreed services will be written in a care plan and sent to the entitled person and the VHC service provider. The details will include:

- tasks to be done
- frequency of visits
- start and end date of plan, including assessment review date
- referrals to other home support services, if required
- amount of copayment to be paid
- contact details of the VHC service provider who will provide the services.

The VHC service provider will telephone to discuss a suitable day and time to provide the service(s) that have been approved in the care plan.

### Payment for services

Your Care Plan will indicate if you are required to pay a copayment and how much the payment is. Your service provider will discuss with you when this can be paid and your preferred method of payment.

In addition to the copayment, you will need to pay for the hiring of specialised equipment such as cherry pickers, materials required (tap washers, batteries, globes etc) or any other costs such as removal of rubbish. It is best if you talk to your service provider about any additional costs before work commences.

### For information or assistance

If you wish to discuss any aspect of the service you are currently receiving please contact your service provider. Your service provider's telephone number is listed on your Care Plan.

If you believe your needs have changed and/or your situation needs to be reviewed please contact the VHC assessment agency on **1300 550 450**<sup>^</sup>.

# Home and Garden Maintenance, *continued*

## Other Factsheets

Other Factsheets related to this topic include:

- *HAC03 Information for Veterans about the Veterans' Home Maintenance Line service*
- *HCS01 About Veterans' Home Care*
- *HCS04 Your Rights and Responsibilities*
- *HCS05 Waiver of Copayments for Veterans' Home Care Services*
- *HCS06 Domestic Assistance*
- *HCS08 Personal Care*
- *HCS09 Information for Health Providers*
- *HCS10 Coordinated Veterans' Care Social Assistance*
- *HCS11 Providing Feedback or Complaints on Veterans' Home Care Services*
- *HIP120 Eligibility for Assessment for Veterans' Home Care Services - Information for Providers*
- *HSV06 Respite Care*
- *HSV40 Aged Care - Carer Support Programs*
- *HSV101 Coordinated Veterans' Care Program*

## Disclaimer

The information contained in this Factsheet is general in nature and does not take into account individual circumstances. You should not make important decisions, such as those that affect your financial or lifestyle position, on the basis of information contained in this Factsheet. Where you are required to lodge a written claim for a benefit, you must take full responsibility for your decisions prior to the written claim being determined. You should seek confirmation in writing of any oral advice you receive from DVA.

## More information

All DVA Factsheets are available from DVA offices, and on the DVA website at [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au)

DVA General Enquiries telephone number: 133 254 (metro)  
or FreeCall 1800 555 254 (regional callers).

Use a normal landline phone if you can. Mobile phone calls may cost you more.

You can send an email to DVA at: [GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au](mailto:GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au)

Note: \* Use a normal landline phone if you can. Mobile phone calls may cost you more.

^ If a landline telephone is not available, a mobile phone can be used to contact DVA on **133 254**. The caller will be advised of the regional VHC assessment agency number they are required to call to conduct the assessment.