



Thermoregulatory Dysfunction Energy Subsidy Scheme

1 July 2019

The Thermoregulatory Dysfunction Energy Subsidy Scheme ('the scheme') was introduced to assist financially disadvantaged persons with thermoregulatory dysfunction, or their dependants, to offset the energy costs associated with controlling the temperature in their home under specialist medical advice.

For the purpose of the scheme, *thermoregulatory dysfunction* is defined as significant loss of a person's capacity to control body temperature, and the medical conditions which result in the affected person being at risk of serious detriment to their general health and bodily function, when exposed to extremes of environmental temperatures.

The subsidy of \$721 per annum is paid annually in advance by Electronic Funds Transfer ('EFT') directly into a cheque or savings account nominated by the applicant.

Eligibility for the Subsidy

To be eligible to receive the subsidy, the applicant must hold one of the following means-tested concession cards:

- **Pensioner Concession Card** (*issued by either Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs*); or
- **Health Care Card** (*not including the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card*); or
- **Health Care Interim Voucher.**

The Office of State Revenue ('OSR') will require your authorisation to confirm the status of your means-tested concession card with Centrelink and the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Information regarding Pensioner Concession Cards and Health Care Cards is available from the Department of Veterans' Affairs or Centrelink.

The applicant may be either –

- **the patient** who requires heating and/or cooling for their own use; or
- **the guardian or primary caregiver** of a person who utilises the energy for heating and/or cooling in their own home.

Where an applicant is a child, or an adult who holds one of the above-mentioned concession cards but is unable to sign the application form due to age or disability, the guardian or primary caregiver may sign the form on their behalf provided they explain their reasons for doing so.

To be eligible under this scheme, the applicant must meet at least two of the three qualifying criteria and be certified by a treating doctor who has been treating them for at least three months.

Medical authorisation

The medical authorisation must be completed and signed by the treating physician or specialist. The Public Utilities Office will require the authorisation of the applicant and the treating physician to view medical records for the purpose of reviewing the applicant's entitlement under the scheme.

Qualifying Conditions

To be eligible for the subsidy, at least two of the following criteria must be met. Please note, the qualifying criteria have been updated to reflect current medical opinion and persons with previously accepted conditions may no longer be eligible for the subsidy.

1. A medical condition with an evidence-based association with the deterioration of this condition in temperature extremes. For example, severe cases of spinal cord injury, stroke, brain injury, neurodegenerative disorders, multiple sclerosis and familial disautonomia.¹
2. Loss of skin integrity or loss of sweating capacity. For example, significant burns to greater than 20 per cent of body surface area, severe inflammatory skin conditions and some rare forms of disordered sweating.
3. Objective reduction of autonomic regulation and physiological functioning at extremes of environmental temperatures (excessive sweating, heart rate increases or changes in blood pressure) resulting in dehydration, dizziness or fainting.

Permanent medical condition

If the applicant's condition is permanent, the treating physician may certify this on the form by ticking the appropriate box and providing a copy of the medical report confirming that it is a permanent condition. Permanent registration for the scheme will be provided to applicants with the following health conditions:

- Severe autonomic dysfunction, specifically:
 - High spinal transection;
 - Familial disautonomia; or
 - Progressive neuro-genetic degenerative conditions.
- Extensive loss of skin integrity, with burns to over 50 per cent of the body surface area.

How to Apply

The '[Thermoregulatory Dysfunction Energy Subsidy Scheme Application Form](#)' must be completed in full, and the authorisation and declaration signed by the applicant and patient, as applicable.

Application forms can be obtained from www.finance.wa.gov.au or by phoning the Energy Subsidies Enquiry Line on 08 9262 1373.

Due to the changes to the Qualifying Conditions that came into effect from 1 September 2018, all subsidy recipients excluding those currently classified as having a permanent medical condition will be required to recertify at their anniversary date to ensure ongoing eligibility.

The medical authorisation must be completed in full by the treating physician.

To ensure payment is made in a timely manner, please provide the relevant bank account details **as they appear on the applicant's bank statement**. This includes the name of the bank, the branch location, the BSB and account number, and the name of the account holder. If you are unsure about any of these details please contact your bank for assistance.

If your subsidy is approved, payment will be made into the nominated bank account within 10 working days.

Where the patient lives in a form of supported accommodation such as a hostel, caravan park or similar, a copy of an invoice or similar document showing that the patient is individually billed and pays for measured energy usage may be requested.

¹ A genetic disorder affecting individuals' automatic (involuntary) bodily responses, including sweating.

The OSR has the right to decline an application (or demand repayment of any subsidy already paid) in situations where it is the Commissioner's reasonable opinion that false or misleading information has been provided or where the eligibility criteria have not been met. Applicants may seek review of such a decision.

Renewing your Application

Each year a renewal letter will be mailed to the applicant on the anniversary date of the application. This letter will require the application to be renewed and any changes to the applicant's circumstances or application details to be provided. It is important that the OSR is notified if the applicant's postal, email and/or residential address changes to ensure the renewal letter is received.

If your subsidy is approved, payment will be made into the nominated bank account within 10 working days.

Every two years the patient's medical condition will need to be recertified by the treating physician to confirm ongoing eligibility under the scheme, unless the condition is permanent.

Further Information

Further information regarding the scheme is available on the OSR website at www.finance.wa.gov.au or by phoning the Energy Subsidies Enquiry Line on 08 9262 1373.

Contact the Office of State Revenue

Office	Office of State Revenue 200 St Georges Terrace PERTH WA 6000	Enquiries	www.osr.wa.gov.au/EnergySubsidiesEnquiry
		Website	www.finance.wa.gov.au
Postal	Office of State Revenue GPO Box T1600 PERTH WA 6845	Telephone	08 9262 1373

Note: The information contained in this THERMOREGULATORY DYSFUNCTION ENERGY SUBSIDY SCHEME FACT SHEET is issued for guidance purposes only. It is not an exhaustive explanation of the scheme. Further information may be obtained by contacting the Office of State Revenue.