



CHANGES TO HOME GARDEN MAINTENANCE LAWN MOWING SERVICES – VETERANS' HOME CARE (VHC)

For Veterans' Access Network

Talking Points

- Previously, lawn mowing was only approved for eligible VHC clients where a health and safety hazard existed.
- Following a 2020-21 DVA review, the Repatriation Commission agreed to the provision of non-safety related lawn mowing services.
- Lawn mowing services are provided as part of the home and garden maintenance services package. There is no change to the 15 hours per year service limit for home and garden maintenance.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What are the changes to VHC home and garden maintenance?

A. VHC clients can now receive non-safety related lawn mowing services, where there is an assessed need. Lawn mowing services are provided under the VHC home and garden maintenance services. Lawn mowing can be one-off or on a regular/scheduled basis.

Previously, lawn mowing services could only be provided where a health and safety hazard existed, this requirement has been removed.

Q. How can I get my lawns mowed?

A. If you are not a current VHC client, contact the VHC Assessment Agency on 1300 550 450 to request an assessment for VHC services.

If you are an existing VHC client, the VHC Assessment Agency will assess your need for lawn mowing services at your next biannual assessment. If you have an urgent need for lawn mowing services, you can call the VHC Assessment Agency on 1300 550 450 to discuss your needs.

If you are assessed as needing lawn mowing services, they can be added to your home and garden maintenance service plan.

Q. How often can I get my lawns mowed?

Eligible VHC clients can receive up to 15 hours per year of home and garden maintenance services. This includes lawn mowing, gutter cleaning, changing light bulbs, external window cleaning and minor repairs that can be completed by a handyman.

Where there is an assessed need, VHC clients can decide which services they would like to receive to utilise the 15-hour per year services limit. You can discuss the amount of time that you would like to allocate to lawn mowing with your assessment agency during your assessment.

Q. Are there any other changes to home and garden maintenance services?

A. No. There are no other changes to home and garden maintenance, or any other VHC services.

Q. How can I receive additional lawn mowing services if my home and garden maintenance service limit is exhausted?

If you require additional lawn mowing services, you may be able to access these services through your local community or ex-service organisations.

You may also wish to contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 to apply for an assessment to receive services, which can include lawn mowing. If you already receive services through My Aged Care, you may wish to discuss your eligibility to receive lawn mowing services with your provider.

Q. What if I need more than 15 hours of home and garden maintenance per year?/ Why can't I receive more than 15 hours home and garden maintenance per year?

Eligible VHC clients can receive a maximum of 15 hours per year of home and garden maintenance services. This service limit is legislated under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 Treatment Principles*.

Additional hours can only be approved by DVA under exceptional circumstances, for example clearing of debris following a severe storm or natural disaster.

Q. Will DVA increase the service limit for home and garden maintenance to allow for more frequent lawn mowing services

A. DVA is not currently considering increasing the service limit for home and garden maintenance services. Any changes to the VHC service limits would require a decision of government and legislative changes. DVA will continue to monitor uptake of lawn mowing services to determine the impact this change is having on HGM.

Q. I have heard that some other VHC clients receive more than 15 hours per year lawn mowing services. Why can't I receive the same?

A. The service limit of VHC home and garden maintenance is 15 hours per year.

DVA clients may also receive lawn mowing services through other DVA or Government programs, such as My Aged Care, or through community and ex-service organisations.

Q. I have been told that my service provider cannot deliver my lawn mowing services. What should I do?

A. If you have been advised that your service provider doesn't have capacity to deliver lawn mowing services, please contact your VHC Assessment Agency on 1800 200 422 to discuss the matter.

DVA is aware that there are some areas where VHC service providers are currently unable to meet demand for lawn mowing services. Following the introduction of general lawn mowing, service providers will continue to improve their capacity to deliver lawn mowing services over time. DVA is also seeking to engage new service providers in regions where there are known service gaps. We appreciate your patience as we make these adjustments.

Q. Can I choose my own non-VHC service provider to deliver the lawn mowing services? / Can I seek reimbursement for private arrangements with lawn mowing providers?

A. No. VHC services can only be provided by a contracted VHC service provider. DVA cannot reimburse you for any services you choose to seek privately outside of the VHC program.

Q. Why can't I have an arrangement like DVA clients under the Household Services program have?

A. While the VHC and Household Services programs provide similar services, they differ in their intent, the legislation by which they are governed and their service delivery model.

The Household Services program provides **compensation** for DVA clients with an accepted service-related condition under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) or the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) that impacts on a person's ability to manage household tasks. Household Services clients source their own providers. The providers can invoice DVA directly or the client can seek reimbursement for the services. This is consistent with other MRCA/DRCA compensation arrangements.

VHC operates under the *Veterans' Entitlements (VEA) Act 1986* and people with a Veteran Gold Card or a Veteran White Card (for an accepted service-related injury or condition) are eligible to be assessed for services. VHC Services are based on an assessed need and **services do not need to be related to an accepted service-related condition**. VHC services are delivered through contracted service provider arrangements.

Unfortunately due to the differences in legislation, VHC clients cannot source their own services provider and seek reimbursement from DVA. We working to better align entitlements and compensation for all DVA clients across each of the three pieces of legislation which DVA clients have accepted service related condition.