



Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

SIRAGUSA
ACCOUNTANTS & ADVISERS



Car expenses



To claim a deduction for a work-related expense:

- You must have spent the money yourself and weren't reimbursed.
- The expense must directly relate to earning your income.
- You must have a record to prove it.

What can I claim?

If you use your own car for work purposes, you can claim a deduction using either the cents per kilometre method or logbook method. This may be a car you own, lease or hire under a hire-purchase agreement. You generally do not own or lease the car if you use it under a salary sacrifice or novated lease arrangement.

✓ **You can claim** a deduction for car expenses if you use your car to:

- perform your work duties
- attend work-related conferences or meetings away from your normal workplace
- travel directly between 2 separate places of employment if neither of the places is your home
- travel from your normal workplace to an alternative workplace (and return)
- travel from your home to an alternative workplace, then to your normal workplace.

Remember

- ✗ **You generally can't claim** the cost of [trips between home and work](#), even if you live a long distance from your usual workplace or work outside normal business hours.
- ✗ **You can't claim** a deduction for a car expense that has been reimbursed.

✓ In limited circumstances, **you can claim** the cost of trips between home and work, where:

- you had shifting places of employment (that is, you regularly work at more than one site each day before returning home)
- you carry bulky tools or equipment for work and all of the following apply
 - the tools or equipment are essential to perform your employment duties and you don't carry them merely as a matter of choice
 - the tools or equipment are bulky – meaning that because of their size and weight they are awkward to transport and can only be transported conveniently by the use of a motor vehicle
 - there is no secure storage for such items at the workplace
- [your home was a base of employment](#) (that is, you were required to start certain work activities at home and travel to a workplace to complete those work activities).

How to calculate your car expenses

There are 2 methods you can choose from to calculate your deduction for car expenses.

Cents per kilometre method

If you use the cents per kilometre method, your claim is based on a set rate per kilometre.

You:

- can claim a maximum of 5,000km for work-related kilometres per car
- don't need receipts for your expenses (e.g., fuel receipts)
- do need a record to show how you calculate your work-related kilometres (e.g., using a diary or the [myDeductions](#) tool in the ATO app)
- need to be able to show that you own the car.

The cents per kilometre rate covers all car expenses including decline in value, registration and insurance, maintenance, repairs and fuel costs. You can't add these, or any other car expenses, on top of the rate when calculating your deduction.

Logbook method

The logbook method allows you to claim the work-related portion of your actual car expenses. Expenses you can claim include running costs such as fuel, oil and servicing, registration, insurance and the decline in value.

- ✗ **You can't claim** capital costs, such as the purchase price of your car, the principal of a loan to buy it, or any improvement costs (e.g. adding tinted windows).

You need records for all other car expenses, including evidence that you own the car and odometer readings at the start and end of the period you used the car during the year.

To work out your work-related use percentage, you need a valid logbook and the odometer readings for the start and end of the logbook period. Your logbook:

- needs to show a continuous 12-week period that represents your travel
- needs to show the destination and purpose of every journey, the odometer reading at the start and end of each journey, and the total kilometres travelled
- is valid for 5 years (unless your circumstances change – e.g., you change jobs)
- can be a paper logbook, or can be kept electronically by using the [myDeductions](#) tool in the ATO app.

i Tip: if you're using the logbook method for 2 or more cars, you'll need to keep a separate logbook for each car. The logbooks must be kept for the same 12-week period.

- ✓ **You can claim** fuel and oil costs, based on either actual receipts, or an estimate of the expenses using odometer records that show readings from the start and the end of the period you used the car during the income year.

Remember

A car is a motor vehicle that carries a load of less than 1 tonne and fewer than 9 passengers (including the driver). This means motorcycles, trucks, minibuses, some utes, and similar vehicles are not cars. You can claim the actual expenses for work-related travel in these vehicles.

If you use someone else's car, you can claim a deduction for actual costs you incur that relate to your work use.

If using the actual expenses method, you will need to keep records of all expenses and your work-related use.

i This is a general summary only.

For more information go to ato.gov.au/carexpenses or speak to a registered tax professional.

