

ACC – automatic, comprehensive, 24-hour injury cover

When your ACC invoice arrives in the mail, it's easy to think of ACC as just another form of tax.

True, it *is* compulsory to contribute to ACC if you work for yourself, have your own business, employ staff or earn income in New Zealand.

But another way to look at ACC is as a comprehensive package of personal injury insurance, and a potential lifeline if you or your employees have an accident and aren't able to work.

What's more, unlike other insurance products, you don't even need to bother about applying for ACC cover – its all done automatically for you!

So what cover do you have from ACC?

Comprehensive cover under ACC CoverPlus

If you're self-employed (ie, you work for yourself, with or without staff) or you're a shareholder-employee who doesn't have PAYE deducted, then you're automatically covered by ACC CoverPlus.

ACC CoverPlus gives you access to a wide range of entitlements if you get injured. The help you can get will depend on your injury and personal circumstances, but can include:

- contributions towards medical costs, such as doctor's visits, X-rays, surgery etc
- help around the home, for things like housework, personal care and childcare while you recover
- lost earnings cover in the form of weekly compensation if you can't work because of your injury – this will be based on 80% of your previous year's declared earnings (and will require you to provide evidence of your financial loss at claim time)
- help with transport costs to and from treatment
- lump sum grants and other assistance if your injury is serious.

Employees, and shareholder-employees who have PAYE deducted, have access to the same entitlements under a separate product, called ACC Workplace Cover.

Set your lost earnings cover in concrete with ACC CoverPlus Extra

If you are self-employed or non-PAYE shareholder and you are covered by ACC CoverPlus you can choose to replace this cover with ACC CoverPlus Extra.

ACC CoverPlus Extra gives you access to the same extensive range of entitlements outlined above, but it also lets you negotiate the level of lost earnings cover you need.

What's more, with ACC CoverPlus Extra you don't need to produce evidence of your financial loss at claim time.

Because under ACC CoverPlus Extra your lost earnings cover isn't tied to your previous year's declared income, it's a great option if your income last year wasn't a true reflection of your actual earnings capacity, e.g.:

- you've just started out in business
- you've minimised your income on paper for tax purposes
- your income fluctuates from year to year
- you've split your income for tax purposes.

Please note, though, that ACC CoverPlus Extra is an optional product, so you need to apply for it. Visit www.acc.co.nz/cpx to get an idea of what it will cost and apply online.

Find out how safety can save lives – and save you money

Like any insurance, what you pay for your ACC cover is largely driven by the cost of meeting the claims we receive.

One of the surest ways to reduce future levies, therefore, is to reduce injuries – which is why ACC invests time and effort into injury prevention work, both with businesses and out in the community.

It's our way of helping to contain the compliance costs on your business, while also reducing the huge personal and social costs of injury.

We also offer several financial incentives which reward workplace safety with levy discounts.

ACC Workplace Safety Discounts, for example, offers a 10% reduction on the ACC work levy for businesses involved in any of the following high-risk industries: construction, agriculture, fishing, forestry, waste, motor trades or road transport.

To qualify for the discount, you need to demonstrate a sound grasp of workplace health and safety practices, by completing a self-assessment and attending a short, free training course. You must also meet some criteria related to staff numbers and annual income. See www.acc.co.nz/wsd

Another incentive, called Workplace Safety Management Practices, offers tiered levy discounts linked to a comprehensive workplace safety audit. This is more appropriate for medium and larger businesses - more information is available at www.acc.co.nz/wsmpr

Working with you to help your business

ACC is constantly seeking to improve the way we work with businesses across New Zealand.

We recently launched our new website, www.acc.co.nz, which makes it easier to find the information you're looking for about ACC.

We also offer flexible options when it comes to paying your ACC invoices. Two types of payment plans are available if you want to spread your payments over time. And if paying your invoice in full, you can do this:

- in person, at any NZ Post Shop
- online, using a credit card or online banking
- by direct debit or
- by posting us a cheque.

Remember, too, we have a dedicated Business Service Centre, which can help you with any questions you have about ACC.

If you want to discuss any of the products or incentives mentioned in this article, or you have other queries about your cover, levies or invoices etc, get in touch with the Centre by:

- phoning 0508 426 837
- emailing business@acc.co.nz.

SIDE NOTE

Do you have the right Attitude? Does your business demonstrate a high level of commitment, innovation and support for employees with disabilities? To learn more and download an Entry Form pack about The Attitude Awards and to find out why this inspiring and memorable event attracts the support of several large organisations like ACC, visit www.disabilitytv.com/awards.

Entries close 5pm on 4 September 2009.