

EMPLOYMENT AND EPILEPSY

FACT SHEET



EMPLOYMENT

Having epilepsy doesn't necessarily mean you can't do the job you want. However, there are things to think about that may affect your work choices.



What can affect your work options?

Your job choices may be influenced by:

- The type and frequency of your seizures
- Your seizure triggers
- The risks if a seizure happens at work
- Your employer's approach to safety and support

There are many jobs that people with epilepsy can do. What's important is making sure the job is safe for you and those around you.



Also, think about your seizure triggers...



What jobs can people with epilepsy do?

Think about:

- What do I enjoy doing?
- Would I prefer working with people, animals, plants, or technology?
- Do I prefer working indoors, outdoors, or from home?
- Would I consider studying or relocating for work?
- You might want to talk to a career advisor or a specialist employment agency for support.
- Some job websites also offer free career quizzes to help you get started.
- 👉 Try the Australian Government's [Career Quiz](#)
- Working from home is now more common, and many jobs can be done remotely. You could also consider upskilling or studying online.
- 👉 Learn more about [working from home](#)
- If you're looking to build experience, volunteering is a great option. It can help you get into paid work and grow your skills.
- 👉 Visit [SEEK Volunteer](#) to see what's available.

If stress is a trigger for you, then don't choose a stressful work environment, or if sleep deprivation is a trigger, then avoid jobs with long hours or shift work

EMPLOYMENT

Are there jobs to avoid if seizures aren't controlled?

Yes, some jobs may not be safe if your seizures are not well controlled. These include roles that involve:

- Working at heights
- Being in or near water
- Operating heavy or dangerous machinery
- Handling firearms
- Driving vehicles



Employers cannot legally refuse to employ you just because you have epilepsy. But they need to think about your safety and the safety of other employees.

Even with people who have good seizure control, some jobs are still prohibited, these include:

- a pilot
- a deckhand or fisherman
- a commercial driver e.g. a public transport or truck driver
- Australian Federal and State Police Forces require a medical examination for entry. You will need to have your driver's license for Police recruitment.
- Epilepsy may be a barrier to entry to the Australian Defence Force
- A person with epilepsy can be employed in a job that involves driving, provided they meet the criteria for driving and hold a current Australian driver's licence.
- *Note: There are strict requirements for driving large vehicles like trucks, buses, and commercial or emergency vehicles.*

An unexpected seizure or change in medication will require you to stop driving for a specified period

Keeping your job

Sometimes, people may lose their job because of their seizures, especially if there are safety concerns. Employers have a legal duty to provide a safe workplace for everyone under the Work Health & Safety Act.

If your seizures may affect your work performance, your employer is expected to make reasonable changes where possible. This could include adjusting your hours, modifying your work environment, or changing your role within the organisation until your seizures are better controlled.

LOOKING FOR WORK

Looking for work

There are many ways to find a job, including:

- Asking people you know if they have heard of any job openings
- Searching employment websites
- Looking at specific company websites on their 'careers' or 'jobs' pages
- Approaching a company you want to work for directly

Searching for a job can take time. It's natural to feel discouraged if you experience setbacks along the way.

There are employment agencies that can help find work for people with health conditions or disability. This list is not exhaustive but is a good a starting point

- [Disability Employment Australia](#) allows you to search for a provider in your area
- [APM employment services](#)
- [Australian Apprenticeships](#) Call 13 38 73 information & resources about apprenticeships & support
- [Job Access](#) Call 1800 464 800 information & advice service about employment of people with disability
- [Job Search](#) Call 13 62 68 online jobs website with job vacancies across Australia
- There are many job search websites including Seek or Career One
- [Volunteering Australia](#)
- Local colleges like TAFE offer a wide range of adult education courses



Talking to an employer

Many people with epilepsy hesitate to disclose their epilepsy due to past negative experiences. You are not obliged to disclose your epilepsy unless it affects your ability to meet the essential requirements of the job, or if seizures pose serious safety concerns.

If you don't tell your employer about your epilepsy and it does affect your ability to do your job safely, your employer may have the right to end your employment.

There are reasons for letting a potential or current employer know. For example, for an employer to meet their obligations under the WHS Act, they need to know about medical conditions that may require changes to the working environment to make it safer. Sharing this information can help your employer make adjustments to support you to stay in your role if you have, or develop, epilepsy.

If you do disclose your epilepsy, your employer must keep this information confidential and cannot share it without your consent.



When applying for a job

Some job applications or workplaces may ask you to answer medical questions. Whether or not you choose to disclose your epilepsy at this stage is a personal decision.

If you decide not to disclose, it's better to leave the section blank rather than provide false information. Giving false information on a signed medical form may have serious consequences if it is later found to be untrue.

As good practice, medical forms should be separated from the main job application. This helps ensure your medical history does not affect who gets interviewed or selected.

Some people choose to include a cover letter with their application explaining their condition and may also attach a letter from their doctor. Others prefer to mention epilepsy later in the application process or after they are offered the job.

See our [Disclosure factsheet](#).



Think carefully about when you choose to disclose your epilepsy

WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

If you experience discrimination because of your epilepsy, first, try to resolve the issue directly with your manager or persons involved first. You can ask for support from your employer's human resources team.

Any meetings in the workplace, you are entitled to take along a support person. This can be a union member, colleague, friend or family.

If this doesn't work, or if you need more help, you can contact [Fair Work Australia](#) or the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) (HRC) for free advice and guidance.

At this stage, you do not need to make a formal complaint.

If the situation cannot be resolved, you may want to seek help from your union or a legal service. You can also make a complaint to the HRC, state-based anti-discrimination body, Disability Services, or the State Ombudsman.

Most disputes are settled through discussion and negotiation, and only a very small number end up in court.

Knowing your rights and having a good understanding of seizures and epilepsy helps both you and your employer work together to find strategies that reduce the impact of epilepsy and create a safer, more supportive workplace.



If you're looking to support a staff member with epilepsy, please contact us to learn more about our [training and education services](#).

Email: education@epilepsy.org.au

Contact us on:

Phone: 1300 37 45 37

Email: epilepsy@epilepsy.org.au

[Book a telehealth appointment with an epilepsy nurse](#)

Job choice and risks to safety will depend on what your epilepsy is like and what the job involves.

Further information:

[Australian Employers Network on Disability](#)

[Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

[Disability Discrimination Act](#)

[Fair Work Ombudsman](#)

[Work Health and Safety Act](#)

Visit our website



Disclaimer: This information is given to provide accurate, general information about epilepsy. Medical information and knowledge changes rapidly and you should consult your doctor for more detailed information. This is not medical advice, and you should not make any medication or treatment changes without consulting your doctor.