



# Maintenance Agreements

After purchasing your device, maintenance agreements are an easy way to help you take care of your hearing device.

## What is a maintenance agreement?

Maintaining your hearing device and buying batteries can be costly. Maintenance agreements are an optional agreement between you and your hearing practitioner where, for an annual fee, your hearing practitioner will supply batteries and service and repair your hearing device for 12 months under the Hearing Services Program (the program).

## Do I have to enter into a maintenance agreement if I have a hearing device?

No, it is not compulsory for you to enter into a maintenance agreement. If you choose not to, the full cost of batteries, servicing and repairs will be paid at your own expense. These costs can add up quickly and can easily exceed the cost of the annual maintenance agreement fee. While the choice is yours, entering into a maintenance agreement is highly recommended.

## How do I enter into a maintenance agreement?

If you are interested in entering into a maintenance agreement you should speak with your hearing practitioner. They will advise you of the costs related to your maintenance agreement. In most cases, your hearing practitioner will request payment of the maintenance agreement fee at your first follow-up appointment, and annually thereafter.

## How much does a maintenance agreement cost?

If you enter into a maintenance agreement you will be required to pay an annual fee. You should speak with your hearing practitioner to discuss the fees associated with your maintenance agreement.

In most cases, the annual fee for Top-Up devices is generally more than those charged for a free to client device. If you have a Top-Up device you should negotiate the annual fee with your hearing practitioner.

## I am a Gold or White (hearing specific) Department of Veterans Affairs' (DVA) card holder. Do I have to pay the Maintenance Fee?

If you hold a Gold or White (hearing specific) DVA card and have chosen a free to client device, you are exempt from paying the annual maintenance agreement fee. These charges are fully subsidised by DVA. This exemption **does not** apply to Top-Up devices. If you have chosen a Top-Up device, you will be expected to contribute to the cost of your annual maintenance agreement. Discuss these costs with your hearing practitioner.

## **Am I able to enter into a maintenance agreement if I am no longer eligible to receive services under the program?**

If you have previously received services under the program, and have been fitted with a hearing device as part of these services, you will be able to access minor maintenance services for your device, even if you lose your eligibility. However you will only be entitled to receive limited minor maintenance for your hearing device, which includes cleaning, replacement of minor parts (such as tubing) and repair to or replacement of your ear mould. This will be provided free of charge for a period of five years, commencing on the date that you lost your eligibility. The replacement of major electronic components within your device and the provision of batteries for use with your device are not classified as minor maintenance, and will not be covered by the program if you lose eligibility.

## **If I change hearing practitioner, do I need to enter into a new maintenance agreement?**

It is not always practical to stay with the same hearing practitioner for the life of your hearing device. If you need to change hearing practitioners, you should contact the **Office of Hearing Services Client Line (1800 500 726)** to discuss your options. If you do change to a new hearing practitioner, and you have a current maintenance agreement, your existing agreement will continue with your new hearing practitioner. You will not be required to enter into a new maintenance agreement or pay another fee until the anniversary date you changed to the new hearing practitioner. At this time you can choose to enter into a new maintenance agreement with your new hearing practitioner.

I am unable to visit my hearing practitioner, what can I do?

If you are unable to visit your hearing practitioner it may be possible to enter into a maintenance agreement with postal options. This will allow you to post your hearing device to your hearing practitioner for repairs or maintenance. You may also be able to make arrangements for your hearing practitioner to post batteries to you on a regular basis.

These options should be discussed directly with your hearing practitioner, as different hearing practitioners will have different policies around this issue. Alternatively a friend or relative may be able to access batteries and maintenance on your behalf.

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**Office of Hearing Services**

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