

Impairment Assessment Guidelines

Third Edition

 ReturntoWorkSA



Chapter 13 – Skin system

Quick Reference Guide

Introduction

This Quick Reference Guide outlines the key differences between the First and Third Editions of the Return to Work scheme Impairment Assessment Guidelines.

The Guidelines are based mainly on the American Medical Association’s Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment (Fifth Edition) and are tailored to the South Australian work injury scheme.

This Guide is not intended to be a training package in relation to all the requirements of the Impairment Assessment Guidelines Third Edition (the Guidelines). It provides general information relating to the key changes from the Impairment Assessment Guidelines First Edition to the Impairment Assessment Guidelines Third Edition, relating to Chapter 13 – Skin System.

The information provided in this publication is for general informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the authors and publishers make no guarantees and accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions. Readers should verify details independently and use the information at their own discretion.

Relevant Resources

1. Impairment Assessment Guidelines Third Edition - Chapter 13 – Skin System [Third Edition of the Impairment Assessment Guidelines](#)
2. American Medical Association Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment Fifth Edition (AMA5) – Chapter 8 – The Skin.

Summary of Changes

- Impairment assessment reports to include detailed reasoning for the assessment and impairment rating.
- Requirement to only review the body part, or parts, relating to the work injury when assessing scars.
- Definition of what constitutes part of the face for the purposes of rating scarring.

Impairment Assessment Guidelines

Third Edition

- Information regarding The Evaluation of Minor Skin Impairment (TEMSKI).
- Definition of trophic changes when rating impairment for scarring as per TEMSKI.
- Consideration of activities of daily living (ADL) impacts when using TEMSKI.

Changes and Considerations

Skin System Clause	Description of Change and Considerations
<p>Skin System</p> <p>Preamble</p>	<p>Key Changes</p> <p>Chapter 13 preamble of the Guidelines inserts the following new requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The whole person impairment assessment report should comply with the requirements in Clauses 1.54 to 1.59 of the Guidelines. In particular, the impairment assessment report should set out the reasoning for the assessment of the work-related impairment and the relationship of the rating to the injury. <p>Considerations</p> <p>This means that the assessment report must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a rationale consistent with the methodology and content of the Guidelines (Clause 1.55), • include a comparison of the evaluation's key findings with the impairment criteria in the Guidelines (Clause 1.55), and • express the degree of impairment as a percentage of whole person impairment (Clause 1.57).
<p>Clause 13.4</p> <p>Introduction</p>	<p>Key Changes</p> <p>This Clause includes several changes from the Impairment Assessment Guidelines First Edition. It requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When assessing impairment from scars, an assessor should review the body part, or parts relating to the work injury only, and assess the scars resulting from the work injury, and any pre-existing or unrelated scarring. • When assessing scarring of the face, individual scars should be assessed separately then combined.

Impairment Assessment Guidelines

Third Edition



Government
of South Australia

ReturntoWorkSA

- When assessing scarring on a body part, or parts, other than the face, scarring is rated together as one overall impairment rather than assessing individual scars separately and combining the results affecting the relevant body part or parts.

Considerations

Attention should be made to the wording within paragraph 1 of clause 13.4, specifically the assessor should review the body part, or parts relating to the work injury only, and assess the scar(s) resulting from the work injury, and any pre-existing or unrelated scarring.

No regard is to be had to scarring that is unrelated to the body part or parts being assessed (refer to Example 1) Clause 1.28 of the Guidelines provides an excerpt from section 22(8)(c) of the *Return To Work Act 2014* which directs that impairments from the same injury or cause be assessed together. Accordingly, where there are multiple non-facial scars to be assessed that result from the same injury or cause, the scars are to be assessed together as one overall impairment rather than assessing each scar separately and combining the results (refer to Example 2).

Facial scarring:

When assessing scarring of the face, individual scars should be assessed separately then combined in accordance with Clause 13.4 of the Guidelines (refer to Example 3).

When assessing scarring to the face and to the body which result from the same injury or cause, the face will be rated separately and combined with the assessment for the non-facial scarring.

Where the assessor is considering inflammatory conditions affecting both the face and other areas of the body, the assessor needs to consider:

- Table 8-2 AMA5 *Criteria for rating permanent impairment due to skin disorders* for assessment of the non-facial skin impairment
- Table 6.1 of the Guidelines – *Criteria for rating permanent impairment due to facial disorders and/or disfigurement* for assessment of the facial skin impairment

The face is assessed separately from the rest of the body and then the assessor allocates whichever assessment is the higher impairment.

Clause 13.5

Key Changes

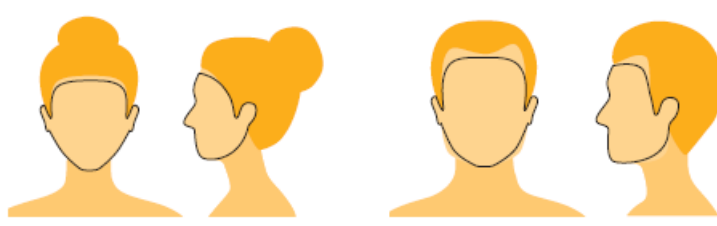
Impairment Assessment Guidelines

Third Edition



Government of South Australia

ReturntoWorkSA

	<p>Directs the assessor to use Table 6.1 in the Ear, Nose and Throat Related Structures chapter for assessment of facial disfigurement (including scarring).</p> <p>Note 2 at the bottom of Table 6.1 directs: For cases of facial disfigurement (which can include scarring), the assessor may alternatively refer to the TEMSKI table, if that is considered more appropriate, given the nature of the disfigurement.</p> <p>Considerations</p> <p>When rating facial disfigurement and scarring, the assessor can choose to rate the impairment with reference to Table 6.1 in the ENT chapter or by reference to the TEMSKI table in the Skin chapter (refer to example 3) with reasoning provided in the report as to the choice made and the rationale for making that choice.</p>
<p>Clause 13.6</p> <p>Introduction</p>	<p>Key Changes</p> <p>For the purpose of this chapter, the face should be defined as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The face includes the ears (anterior and posterior), with the upper limit the highest frown line, i.e. the attachment of the frontalis muscles, the lower is the chin and the lower border of the mandible.</i> <p>Considerations</p> <p>Refer to the illustration provided in the Guidelines (as per below) for further understanding of how 'face' is defined:</p>  <p>Scarring which extends beyond the limits of the face will be assessed separately as non-facial scarring and combined with the assessment for the facial scarring.</p>
<p>Clauses 13.9</p> <p>Introduction</p>	<p>Key Changes</p> <p>This Clause states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Table 13.1 for The Evaluation of Minor Skin Impairment (TEMSKI) can be used to assess scarring and other skin conditions.

Impairment Assessment Guidelines

Third Edition

	<p>This Clause refers to Table 13.1 in the Guidelines.</p> <p>Considerations</p> <p>The TEMSKI may be used by an assessor (who is not accredited in the Skin body system but who is accredited in the use of TEMSKI) for determining skin impairment from 0 – 4% WPI associated with the injury which they are rating.</p> <p>Skin impairment from the TEMSKI greater than 4% WPI must be assessed by an assessor who has undertaken the requisite training in the assessment of the Skin body system.</p>
<p>Clause 13.10</p> <p>Introduction</p>	<p>Key Changes</p> <p>This Clause requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is a matter for the assessor (rather than the requestor) to determine the best method to be applied in the assessment and whether or not the assessor is to utilise the TEMSKI table for the assessment. <p>Considerations</p> <p>In the permanent impairment assessment report, the assessor should include the method selection (i.e. whether or not the TEMSKI table is used for the assessment), this should be reasoned, including a description provided in terms of the method and its relationship to the injury.</p>
<p>Clause 13.11</p> <p>Introduction</p>	<p>Key Changes</p> <p>This Clause requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An assessor who uses the TEMSKI table should apply a best fit approach, noting the information at the bottom of Table 13.1 in the Guidelines. <p>The information at the bottom of Table 13.1 (<i>Table 13.1: For The Evaluation of Minor Skin Impairments (TEMSKI)</i>) referenced in clause 13.1 reads:</p> <p>“This table uses the principle of ‘best fit’. You should assess the impairment to the whole skin system against each criteria and then determine which impairment category best fits (or describes) the impairment.</p> <p>A skin impairment will usually meet most, but does not need to meet all, criteria to ‘best fit’ a particular impairment category. The assessor must provide detailed reasons as to why this category has been chosen over other categories.</p> <p>Refer to 13.8 to 13.15 regarding application of this table.”</p> <p>Considerations</p>

Impairment Assessment Guidelines

Third Edition

	An assessor who uses the TEMSKI should consider Clauses 13.11, 13.12, 13.13, 13.15 and 13.18.
Clause 13.12 Introduction	<p>Key Changes</p> <p>This Clause requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The assessor must be satisfied that the criteria within the chosen category of impairment best reflect the skin disorder being assessed.• The assessor must provide detailed reasons as to why this category has been chosen over other categories. <p>Considerations</p> <p>The permanent impairment assessment report should provide reasoning regarding the chosen category of impairment as per this clause.</p>
Clause 13.13 Introduction	<p>Key Changes</p> <p>This Clause requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For the purpose of the TEMSKI scale, trophic changes mean trophic changes on the skin resulting from interruption of nerve supply and may include changes in hair growth or sweating, sensation, changes in skin texture, tone, colour or temperature but it is confined to trophic changes arising from scarring. <p>Considerations</p> <p>The assessor should consider trophic changes arising from scarring when assessing minor skin impairments using TEMSKI and reflect this in the permanent impairment assessment report.</p>
Clause 13.18 Introduction	<p>Key Changes</p> <p>This Clause requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When using TEMSKI and assessing the ADL (activities of daily living) impact, the effects on ADL must directly relate to the scarring and not to other factors and be described in the report. <p>Considerations</p> <p>Table 13.1 makes reference to ADLs as follows:</p> <p>3-4% WPI: Minor limitation in the performance of a few ADL AND exposure to chemical or physical agents (e.g. sunlight, heat, cold, etc.) may temporarily increase limitation</p>

Impairment Assessment Guidelines

Third Edition



Government of South Australia

ReturntoWorkSA

	<p>5-9% WPI: Limitation in the performance of few ADL (INCLUDING restriction in grooming or dressing) AND exposure to chemical or physical agents (e.g. sunlight, heat, cold, etc.) may temporarily increase limitation or restriction.</p> <p>Assessors may also consider <i>Table 1-2 Activities of Daily Living Commonly Measured in Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) Scales, AMA5, p4.</i></p>
--	---

Examples:

Example 1:

The assessor receives a request for separate assessments of the skin with the impairments resulting from separate and distinct injuries: -

Date of injury	Injury to be assessed	Determination status
18/6/21	Left knee scar	Accepted
19/4/23	Right shoulder scar	Accepted

- The request letter advises of a history of prior scarring to the right knee from a joint replacement, but the assessor will have no regard to this scar as it is to a different body part to that being assessed.
- The assessor will provide an assessment for the left knee scar by comparing the features of the scar to the TEMSKI table. The assessor will have no regard to the right shoulder scar in providing this assessment as it relates to a different injury or cause.
- The assessor will provide a separate assessment for the right shoulder scar by comparing the features of the scar to the TEMSKI table. The assessor will have no regard to the left knee scar in providing this assessment as it relates to a different injury or cause.
- Detailed reasoning will be provided in the report as to the reasoning for the chosen value from the TEMSKI table over other values.
- Separate summary tables would be provided in the report (examples below):

Body part	% WPI All Assessed Impairments	%WPI Pre-existing or unrelated impairments	%WPI Work Injury impairment
Skin – left knee	1	0	1

Body part	% WPI	%WPI	%WPI
-----------	-------	------	------

Impairment Assessment Guidelines

Third Edition



Government of South Australia

ReturntoWorkSA

	All Assessed Impairments	Pre-existing or unrelated impairments	Work Injury impairment
Skin – right shoulder	1	0	1

Example 2:

The assessor receives a request for assessments of scarring to the right shoulder and right elbow with both scars reported to result from the same injury or cause: -

Date of injury	Injury to be assessed	Determination status
20/2/23	Right elbow scar	Accepted
20/2/23	Right shoulder scar	Accepted

- The request letter advises of a history of prior scarring to the right elbow from ORIF surgery following a fracture.
- As both the scars to the elbow and shoulder stem from the same injury or cause, the assessor will be required to rate them together as one overall impairment rather than assessing the individual scars separately and combining the results.
- The assessor will also need to consider the prior right elbow scar in relation to the overall assessment for the skin and in relation to the assessment of pre-existing impairment as it is to one of the same body parts as that being assessed.
- The assessor will therefore consider the scarring related to the right shoulder, the right elbow subject scar and the right elbow ORIF scar with reference to the TEMSKI table and provide one overall assessment.
- The assessor will then provide a separate assessment for the prior ORIF right elbow scar with reference to the TEMSKI table and deduct same from the overall assessment as pre-existing impairment.
- Detailed reasoning will be provided in the report as to the reasoning for the chosen values from the TEMSKI table over other values.
- One summary table would be provided (example below):

Body part	% WPI All Assessed Impairments	%WPI Pre-existing or unrelated impairments	%WPI Work Injury impairment
Skin – right elbow and shoulder	2	1	1

Example 3: -

The assessor receives a request for an assessment of scarring to the face due to an assault:

Impairment Assessment Guidelines

Third Edition

Date of injury	Injury to be assessed	Determination status
01/11/22	Multiple facial scars	Accepted

- Upon examination, the assessor identifies scars to the forehead, the left cheek and the left mandible.
- The assessor will assess each scar separately with reference to Table 6.1 in the ENT chapter of IAG3 or, alternatively with reference to the TEMSKI table depending on the nature of the scars, and which method is considered most appropriate.
- Detailed reasoning will be provided in the report for method selection and for the chosen value of each scar.
- The separate assessments for each scar will be combined with reference to the Combined Values Chart of AMA5 to provide an overall assessment.
- One summary table would be provided (example below):

Body part	% WPI All Assessed Impairments	%WPI Pre-existing or unrelated impairments	%WPI Work Injury impairment
Facial scarring	5	0	5