

ADVICELINE

Frequently asked questions

What is AdviceLine?

AdviceLine is a fully funded confidential legal advice service on employment issues for managers in the Victorian public health system. It is a quick and simple way for managers to check that they are taking the best action to avoid or minimise the risks and costs associated with employment issues. The service provides up to two hours fully funded legal advice per employment issue. The advice is fully funded by VMIA at no cost to your organisation.

Who can access the AdviceLine service?

The program was piloted in late 2015 with a group of 40 regional Victorian hospitals. Feedback from the pilot hospitals was very positive and in 2016 AdviceLine was made available to all Victorian public hospitals and regional and district health services.

How do I access AdviceLine?

Call AdviceLine on 9032 3008 or email adviceline@vgso.vic.gov.au.

What sort of matters should be referred to AdviceLine?

AdviceLine offers legal advice on employment issues that may arise through instances in the workplace such as bullying, general protections, discrimination and unfair dismissal. The service focuses on the practical steps that an employer can take in a particular situation to either avoid a legal dispute or to minimise the risks and costs associated with any such dispute.

Is the service confidential?

Information and advice under the AdviceLine service is completely confidential between the workplace relation lawyer and the organisation.

How much does it cost?

AdviceLine is a fully funded service (ie no cost) and provides up to two hours of legal advice per enquiry.



When I speak to AdviceLine who will be providing my advice?

AdviceLine is staffed by experienced Victorian Government Solicitor's Office workplace relations lawyers who have professional expertise in legal aspects across the range of workplace issues.

What if I have a very complex problem?

Informed early intervention may assist in preventing an issue from escalating or increasing in difficulty. The aim of AdviceLine is to avoid or reduce the cost and frequency of employment disputes by identifying the legal risk associated with a dispute. AdviceLine lawyers will advise when an issue is out of scope, or if a particularly complex matter in an organisation requires further or specialist assistance.

What if I have other matters and need advice?

AdviceLine is restricted to workplace employment issues. Other matters should be pursued through the usual practices and arrangements of an organisation.

Why has AdviceLine been set up?

AdviceLine has been established in recognition that employment issues can be complex, time-consuming and highly sensitive. It is also acknowledged that legal advice can be perceived as difficult to understand and expensive.

AdviceLine offers fully funded confidential legal advice around employment issues which may assist in pre-empting some matters from escalating but at least ensure the best and correct actions are taken. This will mean the risks and costs associated with employment issues is minimised.

The AdviceLine pilot project revealed that users appreciated:

- the quick and responsive access to expert employment law advice.
- the service was available to a range of different departments and levels within organisations including human resources, general counsel and senior executives.

Who operates AdviceLine? Is it a government service?

AdviceLine is an initiative of VMIA in conjunction with the Victorian Government Solicitor's Office (VGSO). These two organisations are statutory authorities established by the Victorian Government to provide services and expertise to public sector agencies.

VMIA provides risk advice and insurance services to government departments, statutory authorities and agencies, as well as hospitals, tertiary institutions, health centres, community service organisations, national parks, museums and cemetery trusts. VMIA also covers particular infrastructure such as state roads, rail and bridges.

VGSO is the government's primary source for strategic advice and practical legal solutions. Their expertise includes whole of government issues, statutory interpretation and issues requiring a high level of understanding of Victorian Government. VGSO also represents the state in litigation.