RISK ASSESSMENT FOR PREGNANT WORKERS GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS

Background

Being pregnant or a new mother does not prevent you from working and developing your career. Many women work while they are pregnant and return to work while they are breastfeeding.

In some workplaces there are risks that may affect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers and that of their child, and there are specific laws that require employers to protect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers.

Regulations

Specific laws relating to new and expectant mothers at work are mainly contained in:

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSW) which require employers to protect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers;

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 which require employers to provide suitable rest facilities;

The Equality Act 2010 which provides protection to pregnant women and those on maternity leave against discrimination. Depending on the circumstances, this can include failing to carry out a risk assessment under MHSW regarding a pregnant worker;

The Directive applies to three groups of women; those who are pregnant, those who have recently given birth and those who are breast feeding.

General Duties

The law requires employers to assess risks to all its employees including new and expectant mothers.

Pregnancy should not be equated with ill health. It should be regarded as part of everyday life and its health and safety implications can be adequately addressed by normal health and safety management procedures.

Definitions

1. "New or expectant mother" means a worker who is pregnant, who has given birth within the previous six months or who is breast feeding.

2. "Given birth" is defined as "delivered a living child or, after 24 weeks, a stillborn child".

What You Need to Do

Upon notification, either verbal or written *(check this),* that a member of staff is pregnant, a risk assessment of their job must be carried out by the manager of the area/department where the individual works. If necessary you can contact the Health and Safety Team or HR for further advice on carrying out a risk assessment.

If necessary confirmation of the pregnancy can be requested from a GP or midwife.

The assessment should look at the physical, biological and chemical effects of a pregnant worker's job.

If the assessment reveals a significant risk that cannot be removed or controlled the following steps must be taken:

Step 1 - temporarily adjust her working conditions and/or hours of work or, if it is not reasonable to do so or would not avoid the risk

Step 2 - offer her suitable alternative work at her current rate of pay if any is available or, if that is not feasible, you must …

Step 3 - suspend her from work (giving her paid leave at her current rate of pay) for as long as necessary to protect her safety or health or that of her child.

Night Workers

If a night worker produces a medical certificate stating that night work could affect her health or safety you must either:

Step 1 - offer her suitable alternative daytime work at her current rate of pay if any is available or, if not reasonable.

Step 2 - suspend her from work (give her paid leave at her current rate of pay) for as long as is necessary to protect her health or safety.

Review of Risk Assessment

Once the initial risk assessment has been carried out it will be the responsibility of the manager to review the risk assessment as necessary. The pregnant worker should also be encouraged to bring any changes to her job or her condition to the manager's attention.

If not required to do so earlier, the assessment must be reviewed when the individual reaches her 29th week of pregnancy.

Return to Work Following Birth

On return to work it will be necessary for the manager to review the risk assessment.

It may be necessary to carry out a further risk assessment if the new mother is:
(a) breast feeding, or
(b) recovering from a caesarean section.

HAZARD GUIDANCE:

Hazards and potential injuries to consider when completing your assessment in addition to those identified in the general risk assessment:

(Please note: this is not an exhaustive list)

Hazard:	Potential injuries may include:
Movements & Postures: ❖ Awkward movements ❖ Restricted space ❖ Long periods of standing or sitting	❖ Backache ❖ Swollen abdomen ❖ Dizziness ❖ Fainting
Manual Handling: ❖ Awkward and heavy loads ❖ Post-op or internal stitches	❖ Over-use of abdominal muscles ❖ Backache ❖ Breast discomfort (Breastfeeding)
Vibration & Noise: ❖ Regular exposure to low frequency vibration e.g. driving or riding in off-road vehicles ❖ Prolonged exposure to noise	❖ Increased risk of miscarriage ❖ Tiredness
Behaviour: ❖ Known behaviours of physical abuse	❖ Bruising; ❖ Cuts ❖ Harm to unborn child
Infectious Diseases: ❖ Exposed to infectious disease i.e. chicken pox ❖ German measles, Hepatitis B, HIV	❖ Transfer of infection to unborn child ❖ Birth defects
Exposure to Hazardous Substances: ❖ Inappropriate use of cleaning materials ❖ Exposure to carbon monoxide	❖ Illness; ❖ Harm to unborn child
Use of equipment; ❖ Prolonged use of display screen equipment	❖ Backache
Lack of welfare facilities: ❖ No access to toilets or rest area ❖ No access to washing facilities ❖ No access to refreshments	❖ Illness ❖ Stress
Occupational Stress, fatigue and working hours: ❖ Shift work or excessive hours ❖ Work load / pressure ❖ Pregnancy anxiety	❖ Illness ❖ Stress

Other hazards may include:
Known / Pre-existing Medical Conditions which may be disclosed by the New / Expectant mother including any advice from her Midwife, GP or Consultant.

* Please note this list is guidance only and is not an exhaustive list of all hazards likely to be encountered.

Some of the features of pregnancy which you may want to take into account in doing your risk assessment:

Aspects of Pregnancy	**Factors in Work**
Morning sickness	Early shift work Exposure to nauseating smells
Backache	Standing/manual handling/posture
Varicose veins	Standing/sitting
Haemorrhoids	Working in hot conditions
Frequent visits to the toilet	Difficulty in leaving job/site of work
Increasing size	Use of protective equipment Work in confined areas Manual Handling
Tiredness	Overtime Evening Work
Balance	Problems of working on slippery, wet surfaces
Comfort	Problems of working in tightly fitting spaces
Dexterity, agility, co-ordination, speed of movement and reach; all may be impaired because of increasing size.	

Additional guidance for schools

Work-related violence including pupil aggression

It may be harmful if a woman is exposed to the risk of violence at work during pregnancy, when she has recently given birth or while she is breastfeeding. It can lead to detachment of the placenta, miscarriage, premature delivery and underweight birth, and may affect the ability to breastfeed.

This risk particularly affects employees in direct contact with parents and pupils who may be aggressive. Heads should consider -

- Providing adequate training and information for staff.
- Improving the design or layout of the workplace.
- Changing the design of the job - e.g. avoiding lone working, maintaining contact with workers away from work base.

If Heads cannot significantly reduce the risk of violence, they should offer pregnant women and new mothers suitable alternative work.

All school staff must act to prevent children harming themselves or others, but pregnant employees should assess the risks to themselves and/or their unborn child before becoming involved in any restrictive physical intervention, and should use other measures if they consider the personal risk is too high.

Heads should review the work undertaken by new or expectant mothers who may need to use physical control measures to restrain children, and should consider moving them to less hazardous work.

Playground and pupil related accidents

Pregnant workers and others in schools may face risks from accidental collisions with children at play or break times, or in corridors. This may lead to injury and worry about potential consequences of, for example, a fall following a playground collision.

Heads should consider these risks when allocating work, and should look at how work is organised, for example by moving supervision points in playgrounds to reduce the risk of collisions, and ensuring pregnant women are not put at risk of being knocked over during pupil movement times.

Assign a Risk Rating

A risk rating is used to identify significance and prioritise actions. When awarding a risk rating, take into account the controls already in place to minimise the risk.

Risk rating is a combination of the **severity** of the exposure to the hazard and how **likely** exposure to the hazard is to occur.

Multiply the severity number by the likelihood number to arrive at the risk factor for each hazard.

This will produce a number between 1 and 25. This number will give an indication of the extent of the risk and therefore the priority. The higher the number, the greater the priority and risk and therefore the more resources which may be needed to control the risk

LIKELIHOOD	SEVERITY					Suggested timescales
	1 No injury	**2** Minor	**3** Moderate	**4** Major	**5** Tragic	
1 Rare	1	2	3	4	5	No immediate action
2 Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10	Action within 12 months
3 Likely	3	6	9	12	15	Urgent action
4 Highly Likely	4	8	12	16	20	
5 Frequent	5	10	15	20	25	

Guide to Likelihood:

Level	Descriptor	Description
1	Rare	This event may occur in exceptional circumstances
2	Unlikely	Do not expect it to happen but is a foreseeable event
3	Likely	The event occurs occasionally
4	Highly Likely	The event occurs regularly
5	Frequent	The event occurs frequently

Guide to Severity:

Level	Descriptor	Actual or Potential Impact on Individual(s)
1	No injury	No injury or adverse outcome
2	Minor	Short-term injury or illness that is resolved with no medical intervention required
3	Moderate	Injury or illness which is resolved with medical intervention
4	Major	Serious injury or illness which results in time-lost and medical intervention
5	Tragic	Death or long-term / permanent injury or illness.

Risk Rating and Priority

1 - 5	Low risk, action should be taken to reduce the risk if reasonably practicable
6 - 10	Medium risk, is a significant risk and would require an appropriate level of resource
12 - 25	High risk may require considerable resource to mitigate. Control should focus on elimination of hazard, if not possible control should follow the hierarchy of control.

Control measures should be based on the priority rating and determined as reasonably practicable, therefore you may take into consideration the time, effort and cost of implementing the control measures.

This means that where the resources needed to implement control measures are high and the resultant risk reduction would be low it may not be considered to be 'reasonably practicable' to implement these measures.

Advice may need to be sought from the Health and Safety Team

Risk Assessment

Site / Premises / Department:

Description of Situation / Tasks:

Risk Assessment number:

Individual's Name:

Due Date:

Date of Assessment:

Ref	PHYSICAL AGENTS	Yes	No	N/A	Risk (H/M/L)	Details / Comments / Recommendations
NM 01	Is there a requirement to stand continuously for long periods at a time?					
NM 02	Is there a requirement to sit continuously for long periods at a time?					
NM 03	Is the person working in a confined space (room or workstation)?					
NM 04	Do the place(s) of work allow flexibility for changes in posture?					
NM 05	Is excessive movement or a high degree of postural change required?					
NM 06	Does the movement pose a risk e.g. frequent or excessive bending, stretching and twisting?					
NM 07	Is there a need to use ladders / steps to reach items or access the workplace?					
NM 08	Is any manual handling of loads involved, which might introduce a risk of injury?					
NM 09	Is there exposure to shocks, vibration or movement?					
NM 10	Will there be exposure to high noise levels?					

Ref	PHYSICAL AGENTS	Yes	No	N/A	Risk (H/M/L)	Details / Comments / Recommendations
NM 11	Is there any exposure to ionising radiation (including radiation from the sun)?					
NM 12	Is there exposure to non-ionising electromagnetic radiation (NIEMR)? (Electromagnetic fields and waves)					
Ref	**BIOLOGICAL AGENTS**	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Risk (H/M/L)**	**Details / Comments / Recommendations**
NM 13	Is there a greater likelihood of exposure to bacteria or viruses, other than that normally faced from living in the community? (E.g. Hepatitis B, rubella, chickenpox, HIV, herpes, TB, typhoid.), Laboratory workers, Health care workers, First Aiders, Cleaning Staff					
NM 14	Has employee had Hepatitis B inoculation?					
	CHEMICAL AGENTS	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Risk (H/M/L)**	**Details / Comments / Recommendations**
NM 15	Can exposure occur to substances labelled R40, R45, R46, R61, R63 or R64? (See Safety Data Sheet for details of products being used).					
NM 16	Can exposure occur to any other substance that warns of hazards to new and expectant Mothers?					
NM 17	Can exposure occur to mercury or mercury derivatives?					
NM 18	Can exposure occur to cytotoxic drugs?					
NM 19	Can exposure occur to substances marked ‘Sk’?					
NM 20	Can exposure occur to carbon monoxide? (Particularly in confined/enclosed areas?)					
NM 21	Can exposure occur to lead or lead derivatives?					

New & Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment H&S GUIDANCE

	WORKING CONDITIONS	Yes	No	N/A	Risk (H/M/L)	Details / Comments / Recommendations
NM 22	Is there ready access to rest facilities?					
NM 23	Is there easy access to toilets?					
NM 24	Is there easy access to appropriate facilities for breast-feeding mothers?					
NM 25	Is there a requirement to work night shifts?					
NM 26	Does the work involve shifts, long hours or overtime?					
NM 27	Is there an opportunity to take regular breaks?					
NM 28	Is there a risk of mental and physical fatigue from any of the above?					
NM 29	Occupational / Personal Stress - Do they have any concerns about work or other issues, which may be causing anxiety? Do you suffer post natal depression?					
NM 30	Is the person working in an area where they are exposed to cigarette smoke?					
NM 31	Is there exposure to extremes of temperature i.e. Cold or Heat?					
NM 32	Does the work involve using display screen equipment (VDUs)? (e-passport DSE E-learning)					
NM 33	Is there a requirement for the person to work alone?					
NM 34	Is working at height required? (i.e. a height that unless control measure were taken, a fall would result in an injury).					
NM 35	Is there a requirement to travel? Local / National/ International?					

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	WORKING CONDITIONS	Yes	No	N/A	Risk (H/M/L)	Details / Comments / Recommendations
NM 36	Is there a likelihood of being exposed to violence in the course of their duties?					
NM 37	Is there a requirement to work with equipment or machinery that may pose a risk?					
NM 38	Does any element of the work require the wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?					
NM 39	Can or will the PPE continue to be able to be worn correctly as pregnancy progresses?					
NM 40	Are there adequate accessible facilities and opportunities for person to take refreshments at regular intervals?					
NM 41	Have the person(s) concerned been involved as part of this assessment?					
NM 42	Are there any other areas, which the employee feels is relevant which have not been covered or about which they would like further information?					
NM 43	Are there any other concerns regarding the person's well-being?					
NM 44	Do you have access to Nutritional Food?					

Ref.	Further Details / Comments

Assessors Signature Managers Signature Employees Signature

New & Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment H&S GUIDANCE

Risk Assessment

Site / Premises / Department:

Description of Situation / Tasks: **Risk Assessment number:**

Individual's Name:

Date of Assessment:

Ref	Further Action Required / Recommendations	Action By	Priority H / M / L	Target Date	Accepting Signature(s)	Date Completed	Review Date

Managers Acceptance:

Name (please print):	School/ Department:	Signature:	Date: