

Are you pregnant or a new parent?



Learn about your rights
in the workplace.

Congratulations!

In Minnesota, soon-to-be, new and nursing parents have legal protections to help keep them safe and healthy in the workplace.

That means it's your right to work safely during pregnancy, take pregnancy and parental leave and to express milk when you return to work.

Know your rights. Speak up. Most employers are willing to comply with laws that support their pregnant and lactating employees. If they are unwilling, we can help you.



State laws to support working parents and employers cover three categories:

1. Pregnancy at work

2. Pregnancy and parental leave from work

3. Expressing milk at work



1. Pregnancy at work

Staying healthy at work is important when you're pregnant, both for you and your baby. If you are pregnant, it's your right to request, and your employer must provide:

- ◆ more frequent or longer restroom, food and water breaks;
- ◆ seating; and
- ◆ limits on lifting more than 20 pounds.

You have the right to request other workplace changes when you have been given advice from a health care provider or doula. This may require you to have a conversation with your employer about your request.

Other changes may include temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous job, modification in work schedule or tasks, temporary leave of absence or leave for prenatal care. You may also choose to use sick leave for prenatal care. There may be limited exceptions to these employer requirements.

Good to know:

Your employer cannot require you to adjust your working conditions because you're pregnant.

2. Pregnancy and parental leave from work

By law, you may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during or following pregnancy. Unlike the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, you have a right to this leave regardless of the size of your employer or the amount of time for which you've worked for that employer.

Pregnancy and parental leave may be taken for:

- ◆ incapacity due to pregnancy or related health conditions;
- ◆ childbirth or adoption; or
- ◆ bonding time by a birthing or non-birthing parent after the birth or adoption of the child.

You can choose when the leave will begin, but it must be taken within 12 months of the birth or adoption. The amount of leave may not be reduced by any leave taken for prenatal care. You may use employer-provided benefits, such as sick leave or disability leave, if you are sick during pregnancy or to recover after childbirth.

Good to know:

Minnesota's paid family and medical leave law, which provides paid time off during or following a pregnancy, goes into effect Jan. 1, 2026.

3. Expressing milk at work

Breastfeeding improves well-being and reduces health care costs. If you decide to express milk at work, your employer must provide:

- ◆ break times to express milk; and
- ◆ a clean, private and secure area to express milk that:
 - is not a bathroom;
 - is shielded from view;
 - is in close proximity to the work area;
 - is free of intrusion from coworkers and the public; and
 - has access to an electrical outlet.

There may be limited exceptions to these employer requirements.

You can choose when to express milk based on your needs, whether that means expressing milk during an existing paid break, during an existing unpaid break, such as a meal break, or during some other time.

Good to know:

Your employer can't reduce your compensation or require you to make up time for breaks taken to express milk at work.

How to start the conversation

Ready to share the news with your employer? Follow these tips.

Don't wait. Begin the conversation early to help yourself and your employer.

Be positive. Approach the news as a win-win for both you and your employer.

Speak up. It's OK to tell your employer your needs and rights.

Bring a coworker. You may want to consider bringing a coworker to join the discussion about your needs and rights.

Be informed. Share this brochure with your employer, human resources manager, coworkers or workplace advocates.

Know your rights. An employer may not retaliate, or take negative action, against an employee for asserting their legal rights.

If you have concerns about speaking directly with your employer, contact us for help.

Good to know:

Discrimination because of pregnancy is prohibited under the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Where to go for more support

Contact us:

- ◆ if you have questions or need more information;
- ◆ if your employer is unwilling to comply with the law.

We're here to help you — and to protect your rights!



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