

Guidance Notes For New and Expectant Mothers (Non-laboratory based Activities)

(Ref: QM_OHSD_OH001)

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1.0 Regulation

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSW) employers are required to take particular account of the risks to new and expectant mothers in their work activities.

Some hazards in the workplace may adversely affect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers and of their child(ren).

Risk assessment as required by the MHSW regulations should:

- Assess the risks to new and expectant mothers as well as any risks to the unborn child or child of a woman who is breastfeeding
- Do what is reasonably practicable to control these risks
- If the risks cannot be avoided, to make changes to the working conditions or hours of a new or expectant mother
- Review the assessment at regular intervals

The phrase ‘new and expectant mothers’ is used to describe a worker who is:

- pregnant (expectant mother)
- has given birth in the last six months (new mother)
- or who is breastfeeding

2.0 Responsibilities

Employers have a duty to protect staff from health and safety risks,

New and expectant mothers have a duty to protect themselves and their children. Staff who are, or believe they are pregnant must notify their employer (line manager) in writing as soon as the pregnancy is confirmed. They are also required to provide written notification if they are breast feeding so that measures can be taken to control any risks to their health and safety or that of their child.

Once advised of the pregnancy the line manager will undertake a ‘New and Expectant Mothers risk assessment with the employee. A copy of the risk assessment will be sent to Occupational Health.

3.0 Working Hours

There is no reason why new or expectant cannot work their normal hours provided that those hours are not having an adverse effect on their health or the health of their unborn child.

Changes that managers may consider, particularly for women in late pregnancy or pregnancy or pregnant women who spend long periods of



time standing, include a shorter working day, extra breaks, or flexibility in working hours to allow travel outside the rush hour period.

3.1 Night Work

If a new and expectant mother works at night and has a medical certificate from a GP or midwife stating that night work, alternative day work should be found.

4.0 Facilities and Rest Breaks

The College will endeavour to provide rest facilities for pregnant or nursing mothers. The type of facility available will vary according to the space available at each particular location.

There is no specific statutory entitlement for new or expectant mothers to take extra breaks away from their work, however additional rest breaks should be considered if doing so would avoid an identified risk to her health and safety (e.g. increasing tiredness and fatigue).

5.0 Risk Assessment

In conjunction with the person concerned, line managers should use the attached New and Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment to examine the working environment and work activities. The aim is to determine whether there are any risks present and what action is required to remove or reduce these risks.

The main risks to new and expectant mothers in non-laboratory environments are:

- slips and trips
- manual handling
- continuous standing
- prolonged sitting
- fatigue

The impact of pregnancy at work will vary during pregnancy; therefore **assessments must be regarded as live documents and regularly reviewed** to take into account aspects such as morning sickness, headaches, backache, tiredness, balance and comfort. If, as a result of the risk assessment, there is genuine cause for concern then changes in work pattern or duties will need to be considered. For further advice regarding potential changes to duties please seek advice from the Occupational Health Service



Document Control

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Status: Version 1 – Live
Date of Issue: October 2011

Revision(s) Version No.	Date of alteration and re-issue	Details of changes	Changes made by
1	21/02/2012	Filename /path changed from QM/HS/0136	Darren Ford

