

Pregnant Employees Guidance

Pregnancy is not an illness!

Pregnancy can be an exciting and happy time, and need not prevent you from working or progressing with your career. Some types of work may not be suitable for new and/or expectant mothers. To address this there are legal requirements in place that require your employer to make provisions to protect your health and safety. These are the Management of Health & Safety Regulations 1999 and the Sex Discrimination act 1975. This legislation covers women who are pregnant or breastfeeding and women who have given birth in the past 6 months.

Do I have to tell my employer that I'm pregnant?

Until you have informed your employer/manager – there is no obligation for them to take any action above and beyond what is already in place for all employees. It is important that you inform your employer/manager of your pregnancy as soon as possible in order for you to get the best protection for you and your baby's health and safety.

When you must provide written notification of your pregnancy to your manager by providing a certificate from your GP or Midwife (Mat B1) showing you are pregnant no later than the end of the 15th week before your expected week of childbirth. Occupational Health recommends that it is helpful if you tell your manager as soon as you can.

What happens next?

Once you have informed your employer/manager they will perform a risk assessment to ensure that you are not exposed to any significant risk. The risk assessment will take into account the type of duties you perform and your health and stage of pregnancy. It is important to let your manager know of any further details from your doctor or midwife that may be relevant to your individual case as this may affect the risk assessment.

Depending on the outcome of this assessment, your manager may make certain changes to your work.

At TfL the risk assessment is reviewed every month and a complete reassessment carried out every three months (or before if concerns are identified).

What if I have other medical conditions?

These should be disclosed to your manager and will be taken into account at the time of the risk assessment. When a serious medical condition or complication of pregnancy has occurred, your manager may seek advice from Occupational Health. Each case will be assessed individually.

What if I don't want to tell my manager just yet?

It is understandable that you may feel worried about telling your manager very early in a pregnancy, or if you have had complications with previous pregnancies. Your

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Medical guidance notes and information

manager is there to support you and should respect your wishes to share the news with only those who are required to know. The early stages of pregnancy can affect people in different ways and to different degrees. One of the more common symptoms you may experience is morning sickness - this is more common in the first stage of pregnancy. You may find that this interferes with your ability to work at certain times of the day - this should be discussed with your manager.

Other symptoms you may experience during the early stages of pregnancy include:

- backache;
- tiredness;
- light-headedness or dizziness;
- frequent visits to the toilet.

If you do experience any symptoms that affect your ability to perform your duties – let your manager know. Often there are simple measures that can be put in place to help you continue working safely, for example, alternating sitting from standing if you have back pain. It is often a good idea to get a pregnancy book from a shop or library or ask your GP/midwife for further information about what to expect during pregnancy. Most symptoms will pass with time or develop at much later stages in your pregnancy.

Another reason where it may be helpful to inform your manager early, is where you have had early complications or serious medical conditions that have developed in pregnancy. Your manager may then seek advice from Occupational Health.

My job involves safety critical duties or training - how will my pregnancy affect this?

Your manager will cover any possible impact of your pregnancy on safety critical work in the risk assessment. In deciding whether it is appropriate to continue with work of this type, your manager may seek advice from Occupational Health. You may be asked to attend OH for an appointment to discuss medical issues.

NB: *It is very important in pregnancy, just as with medical conditions, that you inform your manager immediately if you are experiencing any symptoms that affect your ability to perform your duties or that may impact on yours or others safety.*

I work shifts or nights – will my pregnancy affect this?

If you work shifts, the risk assessment will take account of this. Being pregnant should not prevent you from working shifts or night work. However, if a new or expectant mother provides a medical certificate from her GP or Midwife which says that working nights will affect her health, then your employing manager will offer suitable alternative duties.

I think my health problems are due to risks I have been exposed to at work, should I go off sick?

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