

Have an employee returning to work and breastfeeding?

How to Make it Work



Working and Breastfeeding

In the United States, Mothers Have a Right to Express their Milk During the Workday

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Section 7

Employers **are** required to provide “reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for 1 year after the child’s birth, each time the employee needs to express the milk.” Employers are also required to provide “a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.”

Employers **are not** required to pay nursing mothers for breaks taken for expressing milk. However, where employers already provide paid breaks, the employer must pay an employee who uses those breaks to express milk.

Any employee, who is “discharged or in any other manner discriminated against” because, for instance, he or she has filed a complaint or cooperated in an investigation, may file a retaliation complaint.



Benefits to Supporting Breastfeeding Employees

- **Employee attraction and retention:** Women make up 50% of the current workforce. Half of those women are of childbearing age. More women are choosing to breastfeed. Mothers are looking for workplaces that support breastfeeding.
- **Financial benefits to employers:** Breastfeeding support programs are being increasingly implemented in various workplaces. Some of those workplaces report a \$3 return on investment for each \$1 spent.
- **Lower healthcare costs:** Breastfeeding carries proven short and long-term health benefits for both mothers and babies. Medical prescription costs alone are cut by 50%.
- **Improved workplace satisfaction:** Higher morale and improved productivity are found among breastfeeding mothers.
- **Less absenteeism:** Studies have shown that breastfeeding mothers have lower rates of absenteeism from work compared to formula feeding mothers.
- **Demonstrates employers’ citizenship and social responsibility:** Breastfeeding support identifies a socially responsible organization that cares for the health and wellbeing of children, mothers, families and the community.



Steps to Supporting Breastfeeding Employees

Basic needs of breastfeeding employees are minimal. Below are some basic steps for supporting breastfeeding employees.

- Privacy for milk expression
- Flexible breaks and work options
- Education
- Support



Lactation Support Checklist

Basic

- **Space:** Shielded from view that is not in a bathroom
- **Break Time Provided:** Allow reasonable unpaid breaks for up to 1 year

Even Better

- **Space:** With a locking door; comfortable chair; electric outlet and running water
- **Break Time:** Allow breaks **paid** for up to 1 year
- **Employer Support:** Access to educational resources, lactation support, onsite childcare, hospital grade multi-user pump

Once the program is in place, it should be widely promoted with potential users, colleagues, supervisors and managers. A number of ways to promote the program are outlined below.

- Open house for the lactation room
- Print newsletter or web based newsletter
- Promotional packet for pregnant employees and partners
- Word of mouth
- Lunch and learns
- Employee benefit mailers
- Company-wide mailing or e-mail
- Poster and bulletin promotion

For more information on how to make a lactation program work at your business, visit:

www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding-at-work



 <http://aabnetwork.org>

For additional information contact AABN at 414. 617.3441

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