

Draft Breastfeeding Workplace Policy



A policy guide for businesses prepared by the
Breastfeeding & Child Nutrition Foundation

July 2018



BREASTFEEDING

Healthy Employees. Healthy Babies. **Healthy Business.**

“Lack of exclusive breastfeeding has been shown to be a drain on family resources, not only paying for the costs of artificial milk substitutes, but also for extra cost of illness and lost wages due to absences associated with child illness. Breastfeeding contributes to a more stable workforce as it reduces staff absenteeism.”

Committing to a Breastfeeding Workplace Policy is not just the right thing to do, it's smart for business. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life to achieve optimal growth, development and health. Research has shown that breastfeeding has benefits for the nursing mother and promotes healthy development of a baby's brain, immune system and physiology. Exclusive breastfeeding also has a protective effect against obesity and noncommunicable diseases later in life. This reinforces that breastfeeding is not solely a women's issue, it is a community issue and has wide ranging physical, social and economic impacts.

A breastfeeding friendly workplace with a robust Breastfeeding Workplace Policy will experience benefits including:

- Lower absenteeism
- Higher productivity and loyalty
- Improved public relations and corporate social responsibility



Policy

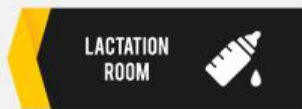
In acknowledgement of the health benefits breastfeeding provides to both mother and child, employers shall support breastfeeding employees on their return to work by creating work environments that facilitate breast milk expression during work hours.

Employers endorsing this policy shall create a supportive work environment for breastfeeding employees, where all management and employees are encouraged to be accepting and positive towards their breastfeeding colleagues.

Any form of discrimination or harassment against breastfeeding mothers in the workplace is impermissible and will not be tolerated. This policy shall be clearly communicated to all current employees and new employees, as part of the employee induction programme. Employees will also be reminded of this policy when applying for maternity leave.

Employer Responsibilities

Breastfeeding employees who choose to continue providing milk for their infants after returning to work shall receive:



Access to a Lactation Room

A private room, that is not a restroom or a toilet stall, designated for the safe and comfortable expression of milk during working hours.

The room will be clean, well-ventilated and have a lockable door, comfortable chair, table, electrical

outlet, wastebasket, adequate lighting and access to hot and cold running water and soap. Information on breastfeeding support services will also be available. Employees may also express milk in their own private office or in another location agreed upon with their supervisor if that is their preference. Expressed milk may be stored at work, in refrigerators provided by the company or personal coolers/cooler bags.



Milk Expression Breaks

Mothers should be allowed time (15-20 minutes) to express breast milk at least twice during a work day. Breastfeeding employees may use their normal breaks and mealtimes to breastfeed or express milk during a work day.

If employees require additional time beyond their usual breaks they may use personal leave or come to an agreement with their supervisor regarding how any additional time taken may be made up.



Breastfeeding Equipment

Each breastfeeding employee is responsible for purchasing and maintaining her own breast pump equipment. Milk should be stored and breast pump equipment should be cleaned.

Large organisations that recognise the importance of breastfeeding should consider requests to provide employees with access to a hospital grade breast pump, especially if they have a large complement of female employees of childbearing age. In such cases any employee using the workplace breast pump must use and maintain their personal milk collection kit and clean this equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.



Education

Breastfeeding education will be provided to all employees. Human Resources will ensure that all employees, especially pregnant employees, are made aware of the information and support available with regards to breastfeeding and returning to work.

This will enable employees to make informed decisions about child nutrition and facilitate the creation of a supportive work environment for breastfeeding mothers.



Staff Support

Managers and work colleagues should assist in creating and providing a supportive work environment for breastfeeding employees.

Human Resources, senior management and supervisors are responsible for making employees aware of the breastfeeding workplace policy and for negotiating breaks and practices that help facilitate each employee's goals for the nutrition of their child. Managers should be trained in how to support the needs of breastfeeding employees.

Employee Responsibilities



Communication with Supervisors

Employees who wish to express milk during work hours shall keep supervisors informed of their needs so that appropriate accommodations, which satisfy the needs of both the employee and the employer, can be made.



Maintenance of Milk Expression Areas & Cleaning of Breast Pump Equipment

Breastfeeding employees are responsible for keeping all areas where milk is expressed clean.

This involves keeping the designated lactation room and any other areas where milk expression may occur clean and tidy for the next user. All breast pump equipment must be cleaned in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.



All expressed milk should be clearly labelled with its owner's name and the date it was collected so that employees can easily identify their expressed milk and do not inadvertently take another employee's breast milk.

Each employee is responsible for the proper storage and transportation of her own milk, whether using a designated refrigerator or a personal cool bag. A personal cool bag is recommended for milk storage, even where additional storage within a designated refrigerator is available.



If more than one breastfeeding employee needs to use the designated lactation room, employees can negotiate the milk expression times that are most convenient or best meet their needs using a sign in log.



Ideas for Small Businesses

The Breastfeeding & Child Nutrition Foundation (BCNF) recognises that small businesses may face additional challenges when implementing initiatives to support breastfeeding employees due to limited space. Here are some ideas that may help smaller employers adapt workplaces to support breastfeeding employees:

- Give employees greater flexibility by offering flexible hours, reduced hours, longer lunch hours or the option to work remotely.
- Make at least one office available at intervals during the day. If necessary, install blinds for privacy and add a comfortable chair.
- Where multiple businesses are located in close proximity, such as in the same building or complex, resources could be pooled to lease or equip a private room designated for employees wishing to breastfeed or express milk.
- Where space is limited consider assessing whether it would be possible to reorganize office space to accommodate a private breastfeeding area.
- A first aid room can also double as a lactation room.
- Where a private room is unavailable provide screens and “Do not disturb” notices to breastfeeding employees to make cubicles more private.

