



نظام الشارقة للسلامة والصحة المهنية  
Occupational Safety & Health Sharjah

حكومة الشارقة  
هيئة الوقاية والسلامة  
Government of Sharjah  
Prevention And Safety Authority



# Guideline

## New and Expectant Mothers

OSHJ-GL-27

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## 1 Introduction

The entity should make provisions for new and expectant mothers who continue to work during pregnancy and/or returning to work after giving birth. These provisions should aim to protect the safety and health of new and expectant mothers.

## 2 Purpose and Scope

This Guideline document has been developed to provide information to entities to assist them in complying with the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health System in Sharjah.

To achieve compliance in the Emirate of Sharjah, all entities are required to demonstrate a standard of compliance which is equal to or higher than the minimum acceptable requirements outlined in this Guideline document.

This document applies to all entities operating within the Emirate of Sharjah.

## 3 Definitions and Abbreviations

<b>Entities:</b>	Government Entities: Government departments, authorities or establishments and the like in the Emirate.  Private Entities: Establishments, companies, enterprises and economic activities operating in the Emirate in general.
<b>Risk:</b>	Is the combination of likelihood of the hazard causing the loss and the severity of that loss (consequences).
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	The systematic identification of workplace hazards and evaluation of the risks associated. This process takes existing control measures into account and identifies and recommends further control measures where required.
<b>Hazard:</b>	Anything that has the potential to cause harm or loss (injury, disease, ill-health, property damage etc).
<b>New Mother:</b>	Is a woman who, has given birth within the last six months or is breastfeeding.
<b>Expectant Mother:</b>	Is a woman who is pregnant.
<b>Welfare Facilities:</b>	Include changing, washing, rest, eating and toilet facilities that are clean and necessary for the wellbeing of employees.
<b>Wellbeing:</b>	An employee in a state of being comfortable, healthy or happy.

## 4 Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1 Entity Responsibilities

- Undertake an individual risk assessment for each new and expectant mother, identify the specific hazards and implement adequate control measures that effectively manage risks to the new and expectant mother;

- Provide information, instruction, supervision and training to new and expectant mothers on the safety and health effects of any significant risks identified and the precautions they need to take to manage these risks;
- Provide adequate resources to manage the safety and health of new and expectant mothers.

## 4.2 Employee Responsibilities

- Notify the entity as soon as possible about pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding;
- Cooperate with the entity during the risk assessment process;
- Cooperate with the entity and receive safety information, instruction, supervision and training;
- Comply with any risk control measures identified during the risk assessment process;
- Report any safety or health concerns in relation to their work activities to the entity.

## 5 Guidelines

New and expectant mothers should inform their line manager or the human resources team as early as possible of a pregnancy, subsequent birth or breastfeeding. As soon as the entity has been informed, a review of the existing risk assessments relevant to the new and expectant mother should be conducted, considering any significant risks to the safety and health of the expectant mother and her child.

### 5.1 Risk Assessment

The entity needs to assess the safety and health of an employee who is a new or expectant mother. The entity should consider the following factors, including but not limited to:

- Physical;
- Working environment;
- Mental/physical fatigue and stress;
- Chemical agents;
- Biological agents;
- Work schedules.

Where risks have been identified and assessed, the entity must take action to eliminate or reduce risks, wherever possible. If risks cannot be eliminated or reduced to acceptable levels, then the entity must consider other alternatives for the employee including:

- Adjusting the new or expectant mothers working conditions and/or working hours;
- Providing suitable alternative work, if available;
- Find alternative work outside of the place of employment to remove the new or expectant mother from the risks present.

The new or expectant mother should be consulted to ensure that the control measures identified in the risk assessment are practical for her situation.

## 5.2 Risk Assessment Review

The entity should regularly review the risk assessment to ensure any changes in the condition of new and expectant mothers are taken into account, including but not limited to:

- Concerns raised by a new or expectant mother;
- Changes to the new and expectant mothers health;
- Changes to the working environment;
- The return to work of the new mother after childbirth.

Further information on risk assessment can be found in OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control.

## 5.3 Welfare and Wellbeing

The entity should take into account the needs of new and expectant mothers, ensuring the workplace is suitable and has safe: access and egress to and from the workplace, welfare facilities and adequate workstations.

Further information on welfare and wellbeing can be found in OSHJ-CoP-15: Employee Welfare and Wellbeing.

## 5.4 Return to Work

The entity must make provision for new mothers return to work, including but not limited to:

- Consulting with the employee to identify any issues that may affect her return to work;
- Employee concerns about safety and health;
- Review of risk assessments to include employee concerns about safety and health;
- Any refresher training identified as being required.

Further information on return to work can be found in OSHJ-CoP-14: Management of OSH Illness and Disease.

## 5.5 Breastfeeding Mothers

There are other risks to consider if a new mother is still breastfeeding. These are different depending on the job she is doing but are usually associated with hazardous substances. The entity must ensure that a breastfeeding mother is not exposed to risks that could affect her or her baby.

Welfare facilities should be provided to allow breastfeeding mothers to, including but not limited to:

- Express milk;
- Store expressed milk in a suitable refrigerator;
- Be able to take rest in a suitable environment.

## 6 Training

The entity should provide training in languages and in a format that employees understand to all new and expectant mothers on any significant risks that could affect their prenatal or postnatal safety, health and wellbeing, including but not limited to:

- Changes to the working environment;
- Changes to workplace hazards;
- The return to work arrangements of the new mother after childbirth.

Periodic refresher training should be conducted to ensure employees competency is maintained, including but not limited to:

- Where training certification has expired;
- Where identified as part of a training needs analysis;
- Where risk assessment findings identify training as a measure to control risks;
- Where there is a change in legal requirements;
- Where incident investigation findings recommend refresher training.

The entity must record and maintain accurate training records of OSH training provided to employees.

Further information on training can be found in OSHJ-GL-26: Training and Competence.

## 7 Emergency Preparedness and Response

The entity should consider that in the event of an emergency evacuation the new and expectant mothers may have trouble descending flights of stairs while evacuating from the workplace. Additional measures may include, but not limited to:

- Relocating the employee workstation to reduce travel distances to emergency exits;
- Allocating a person to assist during evacuation;
- Provision of an emergency evacuation chair;
- Devising a personal evacuation plan.

Further information on emergency evacuation can be found in OSHJ-CoP-18: Emergency Preparedness and Response.

## 8 References

OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control

OSHJ-CoP-14: Management of OSH Illness and Disease

OSHJ-CoP-15: Employee Welfare and Wellbeing

OSHJ-CoP-18: Emergency Preparedness and Response

OSHJ-GL-26: Training and Competence

## 9 Document Amendment Record

<b>TITLE</b>	New and Expectant Mothers		
<b>DOCUMENT AMENDMENT RECORD</b>			
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