



City of Everett, Massachusetts Policy Statement

Human Resources –Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

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SOURCE: Human Resources Department

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On July 27, 2017, “An Act Establishing the Massachusetts Pregnant Workers Fairness Act” was signed into law. The Act prohibits workplace and hiring discrimination related to pregnancy, childbirth, or a related condition, including, but not limited to, lactation or the need to express breast milk for a nursing child. The law further requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations in the workplace for expectant and new mothers. It is the City of Everett’s policy to comply with the provisions of the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, including the provision of reasonable accommodations when appropriate.

Under the act, Everett employees have a right to be free from discrimination based upon pregnancy or a condition related to pregnancy. The City of Everett shall not take any adverse action against an employee on the basis of pregnancy or related medical condition, or for requesting or using an accommodation for pregnancy or related medical condition.

Examples of adverse actions include: denying employment opportunities based on pregnancy or related conditions; requiring an employee who is pregnant or has a pregnancy related medical condition to accept an accommodation that the employee chooses not to accept; requiring an employee to take leave if other reasonable accommodation can be provided without undue hardship; making pre-employment inquiry of a job applicant related to pregnancy, childbirth, or a related condition; and, when the need for a reasonable accommodation ceases, failing to reinstate the employee to the original employment status or to an equivalent position with equivalent pay and accumulated seniority, retirement, fringe benefits and other applicable service credits.

Reasonable Accommodations:

An employee working for the City of Everett has a right to reasonable accommodation with respect to pregnancy and/or any condition resulting from pregnancy, so that the employee may perform the essential functions of the job, unless the requested accommodation will cause an undue hardship on the City of Everett.

These accommodations can include, for example: frequent or longer paid or unpaid breaks; time off to recover from childbirth or complications from pregnancy, with or without pay; acquisition or modification of equipment or seating; temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous position; job restructuring and/or modified work schedule; light duty and/or assistance with manual labor; and private non-bathroom space for expressing breast milk.

The City of Everett may request documentation from the employee’s health care provider(s) about the need for a reasonable accommodation, except in the cases of requests for: more frequent restroom, food or water breaks; seating; limits on lifting more than 20 pounds; and private non-bathroom space for expressing breast milk.

Contact the Human Resources Department at 617-394-2280 with questions about, or requests for reasonable accommodation under, the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.

MCAD Guidance
PREGNANT WORKERS FAIRNESS ACT
Issued 1/23/2018

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (“the Act”) amends the current statute prohibiting discrimination in employment, G.L. c. 151B, §4, enforced by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD). The Act, effective on April 1, 2018, expressly prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, such as lactation or the need to express breast milk for a nursing child. It also describes employers’ obligations to employees that are pregnant or lactating and the protections these employees are entitled to receive. Generally, employers may not treat employees or job applicants less favorably than other employees based on pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions and have an obligation to accommodate pregnant workers.

Under the Act:

- Upon request for an accommodation, the employer has an obligation to communicate with the employee in order to determine a reasonable accommodation for the pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition. This is called an “interactive process,” and it must be done in good faith. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment that allows the employee or job applicant to perform the essential functions of the job while pregnant or experiencing a pregnancy-related condition, without undue hardship to the employer.
- An employer must accommodate conditions related to pregnancy, including post-pregnancy conditions such as the need to express breast milk for a nursing child, unless doing so would pose an undue hardship on the employer. “Undue hardship” means that providing the accommodation would cause the employer significant difficulty or expense.
- An employer cannot require a pregnant employee to accept a particular accommodation, or to begin disability or parental leave if another reasonable accommodation would enable the employee to perform the essential functions of the job without undue hardship to the employer.
- An employer cannot refuse to hire a pregnant job applicant or applicant with a pregnancy-related condition, because of the pregnancy or the pregnancy-related condition, if an applicant is capable of performing the essential functions of the position with a reasonable accommodation.
- An employer cannot deny an employment opportunity or take adverse action against an employee because of the employee’s request for or use of a reasonable accommodation for a pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition.
- An employer cannot require medical documentation about the need for an accommodation if the accommodation requested is for: (i) more frequent restroom, food or water breaks; (ii) seating; (iii) limits on lifting no more than 20 pounds; and (iv) private, non-bathroom space for expressing breast milk. An employer, may, however, request medical documentation for other accommodations.
- Employers must provide written notice to employees of the right to be free from discrimination due to pregnancy or a condition related to pregnancy, including the right to reasonable accommodations for conditions related to pregnancy; in a handbook, pamphlet, or other means of notice no later than April 1, 2018.

- Employers must also provide written notice of employees' rights under the Act: (1) to new employees at or prior to the start of employment; and (2) to an employee who notifies the employer of a pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition, no more than 10 days after such notification.

The foregoing is a synopsis of the requirements under the Act, and both employees and employers are encouraged to read the full text of the law available on the General Court's website here:

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2017/Chapter54>.

If you believe you have been discriminated against on the basis of pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition, you may file a formal complaint with the MCAD. You may also have the right to file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission if the conduct violates the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, which amended Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Both agencies require the formal complaint to be filed within 300 days of the discriminatory act.

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www.mass.gov/mcad/