

Protecting Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

- Know Your Rights in the District of Columbia -



Accommodations for Pregnancy, Childbirth and Breastfeeding

The Protecting Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PPW) requires District of Columbia employers to provide reasonable workplace accommodations for employees whose ability to perform job duties is limited because of pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or a related medical condition.

The employer must engage in good faith and in a timely and interactive process to determine the accommodations.

Types of Accommodations

Employers must make all reasonable accommodations,* including but not limited to:

- More frequent or longer breaks;
- Time off to recover from childbirth;
- Temporarily transferring the employee to a less strenuous or hazardous position;
- Purchasing or modifying work equipment, such as chairs;
- Temporarily restructuring the employee's position to provide light duty or a modified work schedule;
- Having the employee refrain from heavy lifting;
- Relocating the employee's work area; or
- Providing private (non-bathroom) space for expressing breast milk.

Prohibited Actions by Employers

Employers may not:

- Refuse an accommodation unless it would cause significant hardship or expense to the business;
- Take adverse action against an employee for requesting an accommodation;
- Deny employment opportunities to the employee because of the request or need for an accommodation;
- Require an employee to take leave if a reasonable accommodation can be provided; or
- Require employees to accept an accommodation unless it's necessary for the employee to perform her job duties.

Certification from Health Care Provider

The employer may require an employee to provide certification from a health care provider indicating a reasonable accommodation is advisable. The certification must include: (1) the date the accommodation became or will become medically advisable; (2) an explanation of the medical condition and need for a reasonable accommodation; and (3) the probable length of time the accommodation should be provided.

Filing a Complaint of a Violation

If you believe an employer has wrongfully denied you a reasonable accommodation or has discriminated against you because of your pregnancy, childbirth, need to breastfeed or a related medical condition, you can file a complaint within one year with the DC Office of Human Rights (OHR). To file a complaint, visit:

- **Online** at ohr.dc.gov; or
- **In-Person** at 441 4th Street NW, Suite 570N, Washington, DC 20001.

A case can also be initiated through the Department of Employment Services (DOES) Office of Wage and Hour Compliance by calling (202) 671-1880. All cases must be filed and investigated by OHR. Once OHR issues a decision, a DOES administrative law judge will decide if a violation of the statute occurred. The DOES decision may be appealed to the DC Office of Administrative Hearings.

* A "reasonable accommodation" is one that does not require significant difficulty in the operation of the employer's business or significant expense for the employer, with consideration to factors such as the size of the business, its financial resources and the nature and structure of the business.