



SUPPORTING NURSING MOMS AT WORK

SOLUTIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION

A FACT SHEET FROM THE OFFICE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

Supporting nursing women can work, even in transportation or city service jobs. Companies have used many creative solutions to give employees time and space to express milk at work. They can be inexpensive and easy to put into place. They are also highly valued by employees and help improve employee retention, productivity, and morale.

Bottom-Line Benefits to Business

Support for employees who are nursing their children is a valued employee benefit. It is also good for the company's bottom line, yielding a **3 to 1 Return on Investment**¹ due to:

- ▶ Lower absenteeism rates of both mothers and fathers (since breastfed babies are healthier)²

- ▶ Higher retention rates (94% among employers who support nursing moms vs. national average of 59%)³
- ▶ Lower health care costs and insurance claims when infants are breastfed⁴
- ▶ Higher productivity and loyalty among workers⁵

ACA Requirements

Section 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act has been amended to provide for basic accommodations for nursing women during the work period, including:

- ▶ Reasonable time to express milk during the work day
- ▶ Private space that is not a bathroom

The law applies to businesses of all sizes, and creative solutions



abound. Learn more at the U.S. Department of Labor at www.dol.gov/whd/nursingmothers.

Simple Space Solutions

Nursing women require privacy to express milk. Permanent or flexible spaces can be created in main office buildings. Mobile facilities, such as portable lactation spaces, might be an option for women who work in



the field. Companies can also partner with nearby businesses to accommodate nursing mothers who travel as part of their job. Options include:

- ▶ Space in small office or storage areas
- ▶ Flexible space in a manager's office or employee break area
- ▶ Retrofitted portable restroom placed in safe locations
- ▶ Private vehicle with privacy coverings for the windows
- ▶ Indoor office space at the main office, fire stations, police stations, etc.

- ▶ Shared space with other businesses in the community (e.g., hotels, government buildings)

The space does not need to be large. Typically a minimum of 4' x 5' may be enough for a chair and flat surface for the breast pump. An electrical outlet is valued by moms. Signage and a well communicated policy helps protect the privacy of the employee if a locked door is not possible.

Time Solutions

Most women use their usual breaks and meal periods at work to express milk. Creative scheduling can help adjust for breaks. The time needed to express milk is around 15-20 minutes per session. If the employee has to travel a long distance to get to the space, she might need longer for her breaks. Coverage, if needed, can be provided by other employees or managers.

Storing Expressed Milk

A refrigerator is valued but not required. Moms can also store their milk in their own personal cooler.

Other Considerations

A written policy helps assure that all levels of staff have equal access to support, and that the needs of nursing moms will be respected. Include benefits of the company's support as part of new employee orientation so all employees will be aware of the company's policy. Many companies include information about the legal requirements and practical solutions in their supervisory training.



Learn More!

Jobs involving transportation and city service have found many other creative solutions for supporting nursing women at work. To learn more, check the online searchable resource, *Supporting Nursing Moms at Work: Employer Solutions* at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, Office on Women's Health at www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding-at-work.

¹Washington Business Group on Health. Breastfeeding support at the workplace. Washington, D.C.; 2000. Issue No. 2.

²Cohen R, Martek MB, Mrtek RG. Comparison of maternal absenteeism and infant illness rates among breastfeeding and formula-feeding women in two corporations. *Am J of Health Prom*; 1995. 10(2):148-153.

³Ortiz J, et al. Duration of breast milk expression among working mothers enrolled in an employer-sponsored lactation program. *Ped Nursing*; 2004. 30(2):111-119.

⁴Mutual of Omaha. Prenatal and lactation education reduces newborn health care costs. Omaha, NE: Mutual of Omaha; 2001.

⁵Galtry J. Lactation and the labor market: breastfeeding, labor market changes, and public policy in the United States. *Health Care Women Int*; 1997. 18:467-480.