

8. New & Expectant Mothers' Risk Assessment

Version Number	1	Date Created	11/2020	Replaces	4/2017
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Policy

The Board of Directors and the Chief Executive of the Society recognise their responsibility for carrying out a separate risk assessment for new and expectant mothers under the Management of Health and Safety Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1999. In order to fulfil their obligations, they have introduced the following control measures.

Procedure

Where a colleague brings to the attention of the business that they are a new or expectant mother (pending written evidence if required), the business will carry out a pre-set risk assessment that will take into account the work activities and work routine of the colleague concerned.

Manager's Responsibility & Guidelines

The manager is responsible for carrying out a risk assessment in accordance with the policy as soon as practical once informed. Managers must review the risk assessment, and make any necessary changes to the work (including the use of hazardous substances, display screen equipment etc.) of any colleague who:

- Has provided written evidence that she is pregnant.
- Is nursing or breast feeding a new born infant.
- Has given birth in the last six months (this includes all live births and any stillbirth, including termination, after the 24th week of pregnancy).

New & Expectant Mothers' Risk Assessment

This information is aimed at managers who have colleagues who are new or expectant mothers. It gives advice about the hazards of work activities which need to be reviewed when a colleague informs the business that she is pregnant.

Some aspects of work can affect the safety of women who are pregnant or have recently given birth. In some circumstances there may also be a risk to the child. For instance, those who are pregnant are at an increased risk of injury when lifting and carrying.

Therefore, managers must assess the risks associated with all work activities, paying particular attention to:

- Use of display screen equipment.
- Driving during the late stages in the pregnancy.
- Mental and physical fatigue.
- Manual handling.
- Standing or sitting in one position for prolonged periods.
- Shift work, evening / night work, overtime.
- Work on slippery or wet surfaces.
- Exposure to infectious diseases or lead.

The assessments must be regularly reviewed throughout the term of the pregnancy and any period of breast-feeding.

Ergonomics

Studies have shown that the two aspects of work which most frequently worry pregnant women are lifting and standing for long periods of time. In order to address those concerns, managers should look at the layout of the workplace, the work organisation and the colleague's work activities.

Display Screen Equipment

Display screen equipment needs to be comfortable to use. As a woman's pregnancy develops and her shape changes, the workstation needs to be kept under review to ensure that it is being adapted to allow for the changes needed.

Health and Safety Executive guidance reiterates that there is no risk of radiation from display screen equipment. If reassurance is needed, arrange an appointment with a member of the Health & Safety Team.

Manual Handling

The amount, weight and frequency of items to be lifted and carried must be reconsidered. Storage arrangements should also be reviewed to minimise stretching and bending. Hormonal changes will affect their body. In addition, changes in size and the altered centre of gravity may lead to postural problems, backache and greater susceptibility to injury when involved in manual handling tasks.

The risk will be reduced if the weight of items used is reduced. There are other activities that will be more hazardous as the pregnancy develops. For example, as size increases, agility reduces and balance alters, so work on ladders and on slippery surfaces may become more difficult to achieve safely.

Work Organisation

Many colleagues work shift patterns. Bear in mind that the colleague could suffer from morning sickness and unusual tiredness. If you are able to give the colleague some control over the way work is organised that could help reduce stress and lower their blood pressure.

Rest Facilities

Rest facilities and seating should be provided for all colleagues (this can be at their desks) but it is particularly important for those who are pregnant. They need to be able to take breaks and change their position to avoid over-tiring muscles.

Other Controls

If the suggested controls cannot be put in place, other potential controls might include:

- Step 1: Temporarily adjust working conditions and / or hours of work. If this is not reasonable or would not alter the risk faced, then;
- Step 2: Offer suitable alternative work if any is available; or if that is not feasible;
- Step 3: Ask for further guidance from PSG or the Health & Safety Team.



Society Health & Safety Policies and Procedures

The assessment must be signed by both the manager and the colleague to show that it has taken place.

This assessment must be reviewed at various times throughout the term of the pregnancy using the Society's ML2 form as a guide to aid the review.

For further information, please contact your relevant HR Advisor who will be able to provide further advice or refer to Colleague Connect.