



Pregnant Employee Safety Checklist

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When you are made aware that an employee is pregnant, the next step is to schedule a meeting between the pregnant employee and the office/safety manager. During this meeting, the employee should be reminded of the potential risks to the developing fetus that exist in the workplace. Such risks may include:

- radiation exposure;
- handling hazardous chemicals/drugs (e.g. pesticides, hormones, chemotherapeutic agents, etc.);
- exposure to anesthetic gases – especially during “hard-to-scavenge” procedures such as masking and waste anesthetic gases;
- exposure to infectious or zoonotic diseases – especially when handling fractious animals (e.g. rabies, tetanus, lyme disease, salmonellosis, leptospirosis, chlamydiosis, etc.); and
- over-exertion associated with lifting/restraining patients.

Employees should also be advised to seek medical advice from their obstetrician regarding the potential workplace risks.

Remember to keep a written record of all meetings with employees. The following form can assist with making sure all appropriate steps are taken with regards to the pregnant employee.

While employers have a duty to make reasonable accommodations for pregnant employees, when such accommodations are recommended in writing by the employee’s doctor, employers must remember that the decision as to whether to avoid workplace hazards during pregnancy remains in the sole discretion of the employee. It is unlawful for employers to prohibit an employee from working in her usual capacity simply because she is pregnant.

The employer, however, can take some comfort in the fact that many of the risks that exist in veterinary practices can be minimized by following proper safety precautions (which should already exist in the form of written Practice policies). Indeed, the news of an employee’s pregnancy is a good opportunity for employers to review the Practice’s safety policies and ensure that all employees are following them.

Once the employee is fully informed of the potential risks and has had an opportunity to seek the advice of her doctor, the employee may:

- elect to continue to work in the same position with no accommodations (except, perhaps, for the use of a fetal radiation monitor);
- seek to continue to work in the same position with accommodations as recommended in writing by her doctor (e.g. no radiation exposure; no lifting over 20 pounds, etc.);

- seek to work in a different position (e.g. in an administrative position) based on the written recommendation of her doctor; or
- elect to take a leave of absence based on the written recommendation of her doctor.

Employers should be prepared, however, for the possibility that things will change as the employee's pregnancy progresses. For example, the employee who elects to continue on with her work unchanged will undoubtedly find later in her pregnancy that it is difficult, if not impossible, to continue to lift/restrain patients. As a result, the employer should encourage the employee to come forward with all concerns or requests at any time. The employer should also reassure the employee that the Practice is open to the possibility of making reasonable accommodations to the employee's duties, as recommended in writing by the employee's doctor, down the road.

If the employee requests a transfer to a more administrative position, her request should be accommodated if:

- there is a position available;
- the employee is qualified for such position; AND
- the value of the accommodated position to the employer is similar to the value of the pregnant employee's original position.

Note that an employer is under no obligation to create a new position for its pregnant employees. When considering a pregnant employee's request for a change of position, the employer should also be mindful of the Practice's employee manual in relation to disability to ensure that it is acting in a consistent manner and treating all of its disabled employees in similar fashion.

[Insert Hospital Name]

Pregnant Employee Safety Checklist

Name: **Date Employee advised**
Job Title: **Hospital of Pregnancy:**
Leave Start Date: **No of weeks of pregnancy**
Leave End Date: **(gestation):**

I. Workplace Risks (check all that apply)

- Radiation
- Handling hazardous chemicals/drugs
List of chemicals:
- Exposure to anesthetic gases
List of exposures:
- Exposure to zoonotic diseases
List of exposures:
- Over-exertion associated with lifting/restraining patients
- Other risks
Details:

II. Risk Discussion Meeting with Employee

Date: _____

- Discuss each workplace risk above
- Advise employee to seek medical advice from obstetrician regarding workplace risks
- Request in writing recommendations from employee's Doctor
- Set date for follow up meeting with employee

III. Follow Up Risk Discussion Meeting with Employee

Date: _____

- Review employee doctor recommendations with employee
- Discuss plan for accommodations (if any) for continued employment while pregnant
- Set progress meetings with employee to see if additional accommodations are necessary as pregnancy progresses (Please advise employee if additional accommodation is necessary prior to meeting date, employee should tell employer immediately)

**** File in Employee Medical File****
DO NOT put in Personnel File