

MATERNITY

Summary			
This Code of Practice summarises the legal duty, common risks for new and expectant mothers and requirements for conducting a suitable and sufficient maternity risk assessment. This Code of Practice provides advice and guidance to Managers to help them to provide a safe working environment while effectively managing risks to the health and safety of new and expectant mothers. This guidance does not provide detail on maternity rights or leave entitlements and therefore should be read in conjunction with the University of Reading's Maternity Policy .			
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1 Introduction

Employers are responsible for providing a safe working environment while effectively managing risks to the health and safety of all employees through risk assessments. This is particularly important for new and expectant mothers (those who are pregnant, have given birth in the last six months or are currently breastfeeding). This is because some working conditions and processes can potentially harm them and their child.

An employee does not have to declare they are a new or expectant mother but it is in their interests to do so as soon as possible so Managers can make any necessary changes to support them and to make any necessary adjustments to working conditions.

2 Purpose and Scope

This Code of Practice aims to summarise the legal duty and requirements for conducting a suitable and sufficient maternity risk assessment and related health and safety considerations for line managers once an employee has declared they are pregnant. This guidance does not provide detail on maternity rights or leave entitlements and therefore should be read in conjunction with the University of Reading's [Maternity Policy](#) on the Human Resources web pages.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

Head of School / Function

Heads of School/Functions must ensure that arrangements are in place to confirm that all relevant workplace risk assessments sufficiently take account of significant risks to female employees, and third-parties (including contractors, students, agency staff and visitors of child-bearing age). Action should then be taken to ensure the individuals concerned are not exposed to any [significant risk](#). Significant findings of the risk assessment must be conveyed to all female employees (and students if appropriate) of childbearing age.

New / Expectant Mothers

The expectant mother and the University have a joint legal obligation to ensure that a risk assessment is undertaken as soon as pregnancy is confirmed. The main concern is to make sure that the health and safety of a pregnant mother is protected while at work and that they are not exposed to unacceptable risk. A specific

Local Health and Safety Coordinator (HSC)

Local Health and Safety Coordinators should assist and advise Managers where required to check that local risk assessments adequately consider the specific risks to new and expectant mothers.

Liaison Advisor (LA) Health and Safety Services

To provide specific advice and guidance to Schools / Functions and/or the Health and Safety Coordinator as required to assist them to sufficiently fulfil their role in line with legal requirements.

Occupational Health

The Occupational Health service can be contacted by Line Managers at any time for advice and

Vibration

Genetically Modified Organisms (Refer to [CoP 15: Genetic Modification](#))

Zoonotic diseases (See [contact wit](#))

Regulation 17 of the MHSW states that, where a new or expectant mother works nights, but provides a medical certificate from her GP or midwife saying night shifts will affect her health, her employer must suspend her from work on full pay for as long as necessary. However,

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Guidance for workers <https://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/worker/index.htm>

Infection risks for new and expectant mothers in the workplace

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/infection-mothers.htm>

Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 – Approved Code of Practice and guidance L24 <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l24.htm>

