**We have a duty to protect new and expectant mothers from anything at work that might adversely affect them or their unborn child.**

In most cases the hazards which a particular workplace or activity presents do not change as a result of pregnancy, however the mother and/or child may become more vulnerable. Our responsibilities commence from the time KCC is notified of pregnancy and extends to six months after the birth - and all the time the mother is breastfeeding.

Women who find they are pregnant should tell their line manager as soon as possible and line managers must notify HR without delay. It is necessary to carry out an assessment of the expectant mother’s work and working conditions and take steps to minimise the risks to her and her unborn child. Line managers should complete the new and expectant mothers risk assessment with the staff member.

### Scope

This guidance applies in respect of all expectant and new mothers.

### The why, what and how

Pregnancy should not be equated with ill health. It is part of everyday life, and the health and safety implications can be adequately addressed by normal health and safety management.

Most women work while they are pregnant and many return to work while still breastfeeding.  Some hazards in the workplace may affect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers and of their unborn children. The phrase “new and expectant mother” applies to an employee who is pregnant, has given birth within the past six months, or is breastfeeding.

We are required to take particular account of risks to new and expectant mothers when assessing work activities. Where risks cannot be avoided by other means, changes must be made in working conditions or hours, suitable alternative work offered or, if this is not possible, she must be given paid leave for as long as necessary to protect her health and safety or that of her new or unborn child.

Management regulations require managers to take action when notified in writing of the pregnancy. They also allow managers to request a certificate from a medical practitioner or midwife confirming the pregnancy.

Useful documents on KNET/KELSI

* new and expectant mothers risk assessment
* display screen self assessment form.

External documents

The documents below can be found on the HSE website:

* The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
* The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
* Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002
* Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
* Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

Other useful topics which can be found on the HSE website:

* driving at work
* infection risks to new and expectant mothers in the workplace
* managing for health and safety
* manual handling
* risk assessment
* violence at work
* working alone.