YOUR RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS AS A PREGNANT EMPLOYEE

DFEH

YOUR EMPLOYER* HAS AN OBLIGATION TO:

- Reasonably accommodate your medical needs related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions (such as temporarily modifying your work duties, providing you with a stool or chair, or allowing more frequent breaks);
- Transfer you to a less strenuous or hazardous position (if one is available) or duties if medically needed because of your pregnancy;
- Provide you with pregnancy disability leave (PDL) of up to four months (the working days you normally would work in one-third of a year or 17 1/3 weeks) and return you to your same job when you are no longer disabled by your pregnancy or, in certain instances, to a comparable job. Taking PDL, however, does not protect you from non-leave related employment actions, such as a layoff;
- Provide a reasonable amount of break time and use of a room or other location in close proximity to the employee's work area to express breast milk in private as set forth in the Labor Code; and
- Never discriminate, harass, or retaliate on the basis of pregnancy.

FOR PREGNANCY DISABILITY LEAVE:

- PDL is not for an automatic period of time, but for the period of time that you are disabled by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition. Your health care provider determines how much time you will need.
- Once your employer has been informed that you need to take PDL, your employer must guarantee in writing that you can return to work in your same or a comparable position if you request a written guarantee. Your employer may require you to submit written medical certification from your health care provider substantiating the need for your leave.
- PDL may include, but is not limited to, additional or more frequent breaks, time for prenatal or postnatal medical appointments, and doctor-ordered bed rest, and covers conditions such as severe morning sickness, gestational diabetes, pregnancy-induced hyper-tension, preeclampsia, recovery from childbirth or loss or end of pregnancy, and/or post-partum depression.
- PDL does not need to be taken all at once but can be taken on an as-needed basis as required by your health care provider, including intermittent leave or a reduced work schedule.
- Your leave will be paid or unpaid depending on your employer's policy for other medical leaves. You may also be eligible for state disability insurance or Paid Family Leave (PFL), administered by the California Employment Development Department.
- At your discretion, you can use any vacation or other paid time off during your PDL.
- Your employer may require or you may choose to use any available sick leave during your PDL.
- Your employer is required to continue your group health coverage during your PDL at the same level and under the same conditions that coverage would have been provided if you had continued in employment continuously for the duration of your leave.
- Taking PDL may impact certain of your benefits and your seniority date; please contact your employer for details.

NOTICE OBLIGATIONS AS AN EMPLOYEE:

- Give your employer reasonable notice. To receive reasonable accommodation, obtain a transfer, or take PDL, you must give your employer sufficient notice for your employer to make appropriate plans. Sufficient notice means 30 days advance notice if the need for the reasonable accommodation, transfer, or PDL is foreseeable, or as soon as practicable if the need is an emergency or unforeseeable.
- Provide a written medical certification from your health care provider. Except in a medical emergency where there is no time to obtain it, your employer may require you to supply a written medical certification from your health care provider of the medical need for your reasonable accommodation, transfer or PDL. If the need is an emergency or unforeseeable, you must provide this certification within the time frame your employer requests, unless it is not practicable for you to do so under the circumstances despite your diligent, good faith efforts. Your employer must provide at least 15 calendar days for you to submit the certification. See if your employer has a copy of a medical certification form to give to your health care provider to complete.
- Please note that if you fail to give your employer reasonable advance notice or, if your employer requires it, written medical certification of your medical need, your employer may be justified in delaying your reasonable accommodation, transfer, or PDL.

ADDITIONAL LEAVE UNDER THE CALIFORNIA FAMILY RIGHTS ACT (CFRA):

Under the California Family Rights Act (CFRA), if you have more than 12 months of service with an employer, and have worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12-month period before the date you want to begin your leave, you may have a right to a family care or medical leave (CFRA leave). This leave may be up to 12 workweeks in a 12-month period for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of your child, or for your own serious health condition or that of your child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, grandparent, grandchild, or sibling. Employers may pay their employees while taking CFRA leave, but employers are not required to do so, unless the employee is taking accrued paid time-off while on CFRA leave. Employees taking CFRA leave may be eligible for California's Paid Family Leave (PFL) program, which is administered by the Employment Development Department (EDD).

If you have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or retaliation at work, or have been improperly denied PDL or CFRA leave, file a complaint with DFEH.

TO FILE A COMPLAINT

Department of Fair Employment and Housing
dfeh.ca.gov
Toll Free: 800.884.1684
TTY: 800.700.2320

If you have a disability that requires a reasonable accommodation, DFEH can assist you with your complaint. Contact us through any method above or, for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing or have speech disabilities, through the California Relay Service (711).

*PDL, CFRA leave, and anti-discrimination protections apply to employers of 5 or more employees; anti-harassment protections apply to employers of 1 or more.

This guidance is for informational purposes only, does not establish substantive policy or rights, and does not constitute legal advice.