

This fact sheet provides an overview of the Illinois law that protects your rights on the job when you are pregnant, plus information on where you can go for help.

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Pregnancy and Employment

UNDER ILLINOIS LAW

As of January 1, 2015 no pregnant worker in Illinois should have to choose between having a healthy pregnancy and her job.

Know Your Rights!

It is illegal for an employer with one employee or more to fire, refuse to hire, or refuse to provide a temporary accommodation because a woman:

- is pregnant
- is recovering from childbirth, or
- has a medical or common* condition relating to pregnancy or childbirth.

Reasonable Accommodations

Employers have to allow employees who are pregnant or new mothers to adjust their work life with what is called a “reasonable accommodation.” This could include:

- bathroom breaks
- breaks for rest or water
- help with manual labor or lifting items
- a chair to sit on
- private space for pumping breast milk
- temporary change to duties, schedule or work environment
- time off for medical appointments or medical leave

The employer does not have to provide an accommodation if it causes them an “undue hardship,” such as being prohibitively expensive or disruptive.

Unwelcome Accommodations

An employer may not force an employee:

- to take a leave she does not want when another reasonable accommodation is available
- to accept an accommodation she does not want

Notice and Enforcement

Employers must post a Notice about this law where notices to employees are customarily posted.

The Notice, prepared by the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) that enforces this law, can be found at www.illinois.gov/dhr in English and Spanish.

The Notice provides IDHR contact information, and a form for filing a charge with them—which must be filed within 180 days of the action that violated this law.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

If your employer punishes you for being pregnant, or refuses to give you a reasonable accommodation, you can share your story with us and we may be able to assist you.

Visit womenemployed.org/share-your-workplace-story.

*Common conditions of a healthy pregnancy are those that do not rise out of a medical diagnosis, such as needing more bathroom and water breaks.