



# Support of Pregnant/Post-Natal/Breast Feeding Staff or Students Policy

Version Number	Update Details	Person Responsible	Date	Policy Number
1.0	New Policy	Rod Walhse	02/06/2024	MEDSPPNDFS01
1.0	Reviewed No Changes	Rod Walshe	03/04/2026	MEDSPPNDFS01
Review Date:	03/04/2027			

*This policy is reviewed annually or when there are significant changes in legislation or accreditation requirements*

## Contents

1.0 Background.....	2
2.0 Commencement of Responsibility .....	2
2.1 Risk Assessment .....	2
2.3 Fitness for Work Placements .....	6
2.4 Supportive Work Environment .....	7

## 1.0 Background

This document is designed to outline the policy of Medical Ambulance Service in relation to Pregnant, Post Natal and/or Breastfeeding employees/students. We are conscious that pregnancy is a part of normal everyday life and is not an illness. Our priority at all times is the health and wellbeing of both the mother and her developing child.

## 2.0 Commencement of Responsibility

The responsibilities of Medical Ambulance Service towards a Pregnant, Post Natal or Breastfeeding Employee/Student will only apply once the following two conditions are met:

1. The employee/student informs Medical Ambulance Service that she is pregnant, post-natal or breastfeeding (this can be in person or by arranging for her doctor to contact Medical Ambulance Service)  
*and*
2. They must provide an appropriate medical certificate/letter from her doctor of her condition (in the case of pregnancy) or birth date (in the case of being Post Natal and/or Breastfeeding)

For the avoidance of doubt, the following definitions apply:

1. A *pregnant employee* means an employee/student who is pregnant
2. An *employee who is breastfeeding* means an employee/student who, having given birth not more than 26 weeks previously, is breastfeeding
3. A *post-natal employee* means an employee who gave birth not more than 14 weeks previously

## 2.1 Risk Assessment

In order to protect the health of any employee/student covered by any of the definitions in the previous section, Medical Ambulance Service has carried out a risk assessment to determine the suitability of Ambulance-based work/placements.

A summary of the risks involved for each of the definitions above are as follows:

*1. Pregnant Employee/Student:*

- a. Physical shocks (seatbelt)
- b. Vibration (moving vehicle on roadways)
- c. Handling of a load (patients, equipment, etc.)
- d. Noise (Vehicle Sirens)
- e. Radiation (X-Ray rooms/areas)
- f. Biological Agents (body fluids, bacteria, viruses, etc. from patient interaction and facility encounters)
- g. Chemicals (medications, limited exposure to carbon monoxide while in garages)
- h. Rubella (potential exposure should patients be encountered who have contracted Rubella)
- i. Post PET Scan patients (Risk of Radiation exposure up to 12 hours after scan)

*2. Employee/Student who is Breastfeeding:*

- a. Physical shocks (seatbelt)
- b. Vibration (moving vehicle on roadways)
- c. Handling of a load (patients, equipment, etc.)
- d. Noise (Vehicle Sirens)
- e. Radiation (X-Ray rooms/areas)
- f. Biological Agents (body fluids, bacteria, viruses, etc. from patient interaction and facility encounters)
- g. Chemicals (medications, limited exposure to carbon monoxide while in garages)

*3. Post Natal Employee/Student:*

- a. Physical shocks (seatbelt)
- b. Vibration (moving vehicle on roadways)
- c. Handling of a load (patients, equipment, etc.)
- d. Noise (Vehicle Sirens)
- e. Radiation (X-Ray rooms/areas)
- f. Biological Agents (body fluids, bacteria, viruses, etc. from patient interaction and facility encounters)
- g. Chemicals (medications, limited exposure to carbon monoxide while in garages)

Additionally, it should be noted that the following *Aspects of Pregnancy that May Affect the ability to Work* and may pose additional issues for Pregnant Employees/Students:

Aspect of Pregnancy	Factors in Work	Medical Ambulance Service Observations
Morning Sickness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Early shift work</li> <li>- Exposure to nauseating smells</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shifts can commence from 06:00 onwards</li> <li>- Due to the nature of work carried out and the patients/facilities involved, exposure to a range of nauseating smells is largely unavoidable</li> </ul>
Backache	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Standing/manual handling/posture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Manual handling of loads is an unavoidable part of the work</li> <li>- Some of the postures required while treating patients may place pregnant employees/students at an increased risk of developing backache/back pain</li> </ul>
Varicose Veins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Standing/sitting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shifts can frequently involve long transport journeys which would, by their nature, involve prolonged periods of sitting in the saloon of an ambulance, which may place pregnant employees/students at an increased risk of developing Varicose Veins</li> </ul>
Frequent visits to the toilet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Difficulty in leaving job/site of work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Due to the nature of the work, it may not be possible to visit the toilet as frequently as may be required, particularly where long transport journeys are involved</li> </ul>

Aspect of Pregnancy	Factors in Work	Medicall Ambulance Service Observations
Increasing size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of protective clothing and uniforms</li>   <li>- Work in confined areas</li>   <li>- Manual handling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protective clothing and uniforms are made available while carrying out a shift on our ambulances. The availability of the required sizes may have to be pre-arranged to ensure suitability. Due to the cost of clothing, this may not be deemed reasonably practicable.</li>   <li>- The saloon of an ambulance can pose a restricted working area, which can be uncomfortable in certain circumstances</li>   <li>- Manual handling of equipment and patients is an unavoidable aspect of ambulance work. While aids are used to reduce the risk, the increasing size and physical changes associated with pregnancy will see the risks involved increased</li> </ul>
Tiredness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overtime</li>   <li>- Evening and night work, shift work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Due to the nature of the work, it may be required for staff to carry out overtime at the end of their shift</li>   <li>- Workdays generally involve twelve-hour shifts but can increase to up to fifteen hours on occasions. This can include shifts carrying on into evenings and/or night periods</li> </ul>

Aspect of Pregnancy	Factors in Work	Medicall Ambulance Service Observations
Balance	- Problems of working on slippery, wet surfaces	- Multiple floor surfaces can be encountered while working on ambulances, including potentially slippery and wet surfaces.
Comfort	- Problems of working in tightly fitting workspaces	- The saloon of an ambulance can pose a restricted working area, which can be uncomfortable in certain circumstances
Dexterity, agility, coordination, speed of movement and reach may be impaired because of increasing size	- Problems of working in tightly fitting workspaces	- The saloon of an ambulance can pose a restricted working area, requiring dexterity and coordination

## 2.3 Fitness for Work Placements

Due to the nature of the working environment (ambulance-based and remote from bases), it must be noted that it is **not** possible for Medicall Ambulance Service to ensure that Pregnant, Post Natal and/or Breastfeeding Employees/Students are able to lie down to rest in appropriate conditions. Where an employee/student requires such facilities, it will be inappropriate for her to be on shift with Medicall Ambulance Service.

In order to carry out work/placement with Medicall Ambulance Service, it will be necessary for any employee/student who is Pregnant, Post Natal or Breastfeeding to provide Medicall Ambulance Service with a letter from their Doctor (only *Obstetrician* or *General Practitioner* acceptable), stating that they have read this document and they are stating that the employee/student is medically fit to carry out work/placement. Due to the evolving nature of pregnancy, it may be necessary for this to be repeated as the pregnancy develops.

## 2.4 Supportive Work Environment

Medicall will endeavour to ensure that all approaches under this policy are to be undertaken in the most supportive manner possible. Employees and Students are to be supported as much as possible in their work and to ensure that they are given as much autonomy as possible in decisions made around their work environment, whilst prioritising and maintaining their Health and Safety. Light Duties should always be considered as an option for staff or students.