



Talking to Your Supervisor about Lactation Needs

Compiled in conjunction with the Lactation Advocacy Committee

Whenever possible, we recommend that you talk to your supervisor before you go on FMLA or parental leave about your intention to express or pump breast milk while at work. This gives your supervisor time to help identify an appropriate location to express or pump that will work for you, and you can begin to plan how to incorporate times for expressing or pumping into your workday with your supervisor before your leave.

Addressing the Need for Breaks to Pump

- Minnesota State Statute¹ and federal law² require that an employer make an effort to arrange for a private location, other than a bathroom stall, where an employee can express or pump breast milk and provide break times to do so.
- The University of Minnesota strives to foster a workplace that helps all employees manage both their work obligations and their personal responsibilities, such as expressing or pumping breast milk for an infant. Ultimately, this approach benefits employees.³

Identifying an Appropriate Location to Pump

- **Private and secure.** The room needs to provide some privacy (while all designated lactation spaces at the University, including at system campuses, are lockable, temporary lactation spaces should also be lockable), with available window blind(s), an outlet to power the pump, a small table, and a chair. Ideally, a lactation room has a sink nearby to rinse pumping equipment and a refrigerator within walking distance to store breast milk.
- **Near your work location.** This will allow you to return to work promptly after pumping.

¹ Minnesota State Statute regarding accommodations for pumping at work
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=181.939>

² The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Sec 4207, Public Law 111-148, requires an employer to provide "a reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for 1 year after the child's birth each time such employee has need to express the milk". In addition, the employer should provide, "a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk."
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ148/pdf/PLAW-111publ148.pdf>, last retrieved, February 22, 2013

³ University of Minnesota Board of Regents Policy regarding Employee Work-Life and Personal Leaves, <https://regents.umn.edu/policy/human-resources>

- **Sanitary.** A bathroom stall is *not* an appropriate place to pump and is *not* acceptable by statute. A bathroom is unsanitary, which increases the risk of illness in your infant and may cause you to be absent from work more often.

Pumping and Completing Your Work

The time that is needed to express or pump milk is different for every individual. A person with a newborn infant who is returning to work will typically be able to maintain a sufficient milk supply by pumping or expressing for approximately 15–20 minutes, three times, during a regular eight-hour day (though some individuals may require more or less frequent pumping or expressing). Depending on the location of the pumping room, you may need to add travel time to the estimated break time.

With a little bit of planning, work environments should be able to provide adequate break time each day for an employee to express or pump milk and maintain their supply. As the infant gets older, a person may need to pump or express breast milk less frequently.

Additional Resources

- [Office for Women's Health Breastfeeding Information Page](#)
- [Pregnant@Work from the Center for WorkLife Law](#)
- [Information and Resources for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Students, Staff and Faculty](#)

Questions? Contact the [Lactation Advocacy Committee](#) at uofmlac@umn.edu or your local Human Resources representative.