

Guidance and Risk assessment for New and Expectant Mothers (version Feb 2018)

Introduction

The term “new or expectant mother” refers to a woman who is pregnant, has given birth in the last 6 months or is breastfeeding.

The MHSWR 1999 definition of “Given birth” is described as having delivered a living child or, after 24 weeks of pregnancy, a stillborn child.

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance and associated risk assessment is to ensure that employees are not exposed to risks which could affect their health and safety or that of their child and so that SOAS can meet its legal obligations.

Staff should also ensure that they are familiar with the contents of the Health and Safety Policy.

Remedial action

If a significant health and safety risk is identified for a new or expectant mother, which goes beyond the normal level of risk found outside the workplace, SOAS must take the following actions:

- **Action 1:** Temporarily adjust her working conditions and / or working hours; or if that is not possible
- **Action 2:** Offer her suitable alternative work (at the same rate of pay) if available; or if that is not possible
- **Action 3:** Suspend her from work on paid leave for as long as necessary to protect her health and safety, and that of her child.

However, the [Employment Rights Act 1996](#) provides that, where appropriate, suitable alternative work should be offered (on the same terms and conditions) before any suspension from work.

Risk Assessment and review

The below Risk Assessment Form for New and Expectant Mothers should be completed in discussion between the member of staff and their line manager. *It is important that a risk assessment is carried out for ALL pregnant staff members*

A review of the Risk Assessment should be carried out if either party line suspect that the current one is no longer valid or there have been significant changes to anything it relates to. As part of that process, both parties should regularly monitor and review the assessment in the workplace, taking into account possible risks that may occur at different stages of your pregnancy.

This is important because the risk of damage to the unborn child may rise at different stages of a pregnancy from any process, working condition or physical, biological or chemical agents. For example, your dexterity, agility, co-ordination, speed of movement and reach may be impaired because of your increased size as the pregnancy progresses.

Any workplace risk assessment must specifically consider any risks to the health and safety of a new or expectant mother, or that of her baby.

Possible risks include:

Physical agents

- Movements and postures
- Manual handling
- Shocks and vibrations
- Noise
- Radiation (ionising and non-ionising)
- Compressed air and diving
- Underground mining work

Biological agents

- Infectious diseases

Chemical agents

- Toxic chemicals
- Mercury
- Antimitotic (cytotoxic) drugs
- Pesticides
- Carbon monoxide
- Lead

Working conditions

- Facilities (including rest rooms)
- Mental and physical fatigue, working hours
- Stress (including post-natal depression)
- Passive smoking
- Temperature
- Working with visual display units (VDUs)
- Working alone

- Working at height
- Travelling
- Violence
- Personal protective equipment
- Nutrition

The Health and Safety Executive advise that some physical, biological and chemical agents may affect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers. SOAS has assessed the possible risks from biological and chemical agents and believe that the general working environment has a very low risk in this area.

Likewise, the risk from physical agents is limited. (Physical agents include shock, vibration, movement, lifting and manual handling, excessive noise and extremes of temperature).

The risk of each agent should be considered against the working environment of the new or expectant mother.

Guidance for New and Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment Form

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Name:

Job Title:

Line Manager:

Department:

No of weeks of pregnancy:

Date:

HAZARD	RISK		POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION
	YES	NO	
1. Does the individual's job involve: Reaching? Stretching? Repetitive Twisting? Lifting/carrying loads?			Use of a mechanical aid. Adapt or automate tasks. Avoid this part of the job or reduce the length or time spent doing it Can colleagues offer help with loads? Consider temporary redeployment.
2. Does the job involve: Standing for long periods? Static postures?			Rotate the individual into other tasks and roles. Alternate between standing and sitting tasks. Increase the frequency of breaks Reduce the frequency of time spent undertaking the task. Consider temporary redeployment.
3. Does the work process involve working with /in extremes of temperature?			Avoid prolonged exposure to extremes of temperature. Consider temporary redeployment.
4. Is the individual exposed to volumes of noise e.g., 80dB (A) or more?			Avoid prolonged exposure to noise, use PPE and noise reduction methods. Provide quiet rest facilities. <i>It is best to avoid noise exposure in pregnant staff completely therefore consider temporary redeployment as best option.</i>
5. Is the individual exposed to shocks and vibration? Low frequency vibration Whole body vibration Single shocks (attack or assault)			A separate risk assessment should be undertaken for staff at risk from assault. It is best to avoid exposure to shocks and vibration in pregnant staff completely therefore consider temporary redeployment as best option.
6. Is the individual working at heights or confined spaces?			Avoid working at height and confined spaces in later stages of pregnancy, i.e., 5 months onwards or before if the individual feels unable to do so. Consider temporary redeployment as the best option.
7. Does the individual work hours that are causing her to feel fatigued?			Adjust working hours temporarily. Adjust/alter shift patterns. Increase frequency of breaks.
8. Does the individual feel isolated or distressed by work?			Encourage individual to discuss with her line manager to find resolution. Refer individual to counselling services.
9. Does the individual undertake travelling or driving for large parts of her working day?			Adjust working hours temporarily. Adjust/alter shift patterns. Increase frequency of rest breaks.

HAZARD	RISK YES	NO	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
10. Does the individual travel overseas for large parts of her work?			Adjust/reduce the amount of overseas travel temporarily. Encourage individual to discuss with her line manager to find resolution.
11. Is non-ionising or ionising radiation present or used in any of the work processes that the individual may be exposed to or involved in?			Unless a local procedure document specifies guidance: Avoid and/or temporarily redeploy the individual away from the process
12. Is the individual working with chemical agents? e.g., carbon monoxide, lead or its derivatives, mercury and its derivatives, substances labelled R40,46,61,63,64*. Please list the chemicals used (and possible routes of entry) that the individual is exposed to in the course of their work.			Refer to local guidance and COSHH Assessments. Consider reducing the length of exposure (based on risk assessment of the substance), temporary redeployment or mechanical processes (fume cupboard) to reduce the potential exposure or adapting the task. <i>If in doubt avoid exposure.</i>
13. Is the individual working with biological agents? Please list the biological agents (and possible routes of entry) that the individual is exposed to in the course of their work.			Refer to local guidance and COSHH Assessments. Consider reducing the length of exposure (based on risk assessment of the substance), temporary redeployment or mechanical processes (fume cupboard) to reduce the potential exposure or adapting the task. <i>If in doubt avoid exposure.</i>

* To identify chemical R40-64 refer to the material safety data sheet.

R40 - can cause possible irreversible effects

R46 – may cause heritable genetic damage

R61 – may cause harm to unborn child

R63 – possible risk of harm to unborn child

R64 – may cause harm to breastfed babies / may cause harm to unborn child

HAZARDS NOTED	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIONS	DATE FOR REVIEW
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		

Completed by:

Name:

Signature:

Employee name:

Signature: