

HS31 New and Expectant Mothers | Standard Operating Procedure

1. Background information

1.1. Introduction/Purpose

1.1.1. This guidance and the associated risk assessment are designed to ensure employees are not exposed to anything dangerous or hazardous that could affect their health and safety or that of their child.

1.1.2. This also ensures SOAS adequately meets its legal obligations. Staff should ensure they are familiar with the contents of the Health and Safety Policy.

1.2. Definitions

1.2.1. New or Expectant Mother – A ‘new or expectant mother’ refers to a woman who is pregnant, has given birth in the last six months or is breastfeeding.


1.2.2. Given Birth – The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 defines ‘given birth’ as a term for a person who has delivered a child or, after 24 weeks of pregnancy, a stillborn child.

1.3. Roles and Responsibilities

1.3.1. The Role of SOAS is outlined below:

- 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 their working conditions and/ or working hours. If this is not possible -
 - Action 2: Offer suitable alternative work (with no deduction to pay) if available. If this 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.

- The Employment Rights Act 1996  states that suitable alternative work should be offered before suspension from work. The alternative work must also align with the terms and conditions of the employee's regular working duties.

2. Main Content

2.1. Risk Assessments

2.1.1. Risk assessments 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
 - Movement and posture
 - Manual handling
 - Shocks and vibrations
 - Loud noises
 - 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 restrooms)
 - Mental and physical fatigue due to 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

2.1.2. The Health and Safety Executive suggests 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 consequently believes the working environment has a very low risk in this area.

2.1.3. As well as this, the risk from physical agents is limited. Physical agents include shock, vibration, movement, lifting and manual handling, excessive noise and extremes of temperature.

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

3. Appendices

Appendix A: Risk Assessment Form

- The below Risk Assessment Form for new and expectant mothers should be completed by the member of staff and their line manager.
- A risk assessment should be carried out for ALL pregnant staff members.
- A review of the Risk Assessment should be carried out if the current one is no longer valid or if there have been any significant changes. As part of this process, both parties should regularly monitor and review the assessment in the workplace, considering any risks that may occur at different stages of the pregnancy.
- The risk of damage to an unborn child may rise at different stages of pregnancy from any process, working condition or physical, biological or chemical agents. Dexterity, agility, coordination, speed of movement and reach may become impaired as the pregnancy progresses.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Name:

Job Title:

Line Manager:

Department:

No of weeks of pregnancy:

Date:

HAZARD	RISK YES	NO	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION
1. Does the individual's job involve: Reaching Stretching Repetitive Twisting Lifting/carrying loads			Use of a mechanical aid. Adapt or automate tasks. Avoid or reduce the time spent carrying out the duties. Ask a colleague if they can assist. 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 carrying out the duties. Consider temporary redeployment.
3. Does the work process involve working with /in extreme temperatures.			Avoid prolonged exposure to extreme temperatures. Consider temporary redeployment.
4. Is the individual exposed to volumes of noise e.g., 80dB (A) or more?			Avoid prolonged exposure to noise by using PPE or noise reduction methods. Provide quiet rest facilities. <i>It is best to avoid noise exposure completely, therefore, temporary redeployment will be most beneficial.</i>
5. Is the individual exposed to shocks/ vibration? Low-frequency vibration			A separate risk assessment should be undertaken for staff at risk from assault.

Whole body vibration Single shocks (attack or assault)			<i>It is best to avoid exposure to shocks and vibration completely, therefore, temporary redeployment will be most beneficial.</i>
6. Is the individual working at significant heights or within confined spaces?			Avoid working at significant heights and in confined spaces in later stages of pregnancy (5 months, or when the individual feels unable to do so). Consider temporary redeployment.
7. Is the individual working hours resulting in a feeling of consistent fatigue?			Adjust the working hours temporarily. Adjust/ alter shift patterns. Increase the frequency of breaks.
8. Does the individual feel isolated or distressed by work?			Discuss a potential resolution with the relative line manager. Consider counselling services.
9. Does the individual travel for large parts of the working day?			Adjust the working hours temporarily. Adjust/ alter shift patterns. Increase the frequency of rest breaks.
HAZARD	RISK YES	NO	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
10. Does the individual travel overseas for their work?			Adjust/ reduce the amount of overseas travel temporarily. Discuss a potential resolution with the relative line manager.
11. Is non-ionising or ionising radiation present or used in any of the work processes that the individual may be exposed to?			Unless a local procedure document specifies guidance, temporarily redeploy the individual.

<p>12. Is the individual working with chemical agents, such as carbon monoxide, lead or its derivatives, mercury or its derivatives or substances labelled R40,46,61,63,64*.</p> <p>If so, please list the chemicals used, including possible routes of entry, that the individual is exposed to.</p>			<p>Refer to local guidance and COSHH Assessments.</p> <p>Consider reducing the length of exposure (based on risk assessment of the substance), temporary redeployment or mechanical processes (fume cupboard) to reduce potential exposure.</p> <p><i>If in any doubt, avoid exposure.</i></p>
<p>13. Is the individual working with biological agents?</p> <p>Please list the biological agents, including possible routes of entry, that the individual is exposed to in the course of their work.</p>			<p>Refer to local guidance and COSHH Assessments.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>If in any doubt, avoid exposure.</i></p>

* 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 – many causes harm to an unborn child

R63 – the possible risk of harm to an unborn child

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

Document History

Version	Published	Owner	Status	Review Date / Schedule	Notes / Changes
V1	Feb 23	Estates and Property Services	Approved by Health & Safety Committee – Feb 23	Annual review or when dictated by incident or legislation.	First Issue