



PREAMBLE

Harvard University recognizes the importance and benefits of breastfeeding for both working mothers and their infants, and in promoting a family-friendly work environment.

The Harvard community has and shall continue to support the efforts of working mothers to bridge work and family responsibilities during child bearing years. While not all mothers will nurse their infants (due to choice or medical issues), and not all nursing mothers will continue to nurse following their return to work, supervisors should plan operations around a mother returning to work after childbirth with the expectation that she will take lactation breaks as provided in these Guidelines.

Harvard is committed to supporting a mother's choice to breastfeed her baby while pursuing her career. The University provides access to lactation rooms on the Cambridge, Longwood, and Business School campuses. The lactation rooms are available to all Harvard-affiliated nursing mothers (faculty, academic appointees, staff, students and their breastfeeding spouse/domestic partners). These Guidelines also provide information for requesting or creating a new lactation room.

GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are intended to provide employees, supervisors and property managers with the tools necessary to establish a flexible and common-sense framework for meeting the needs of working mothers and children in the Harvard community while maintaining necessary work unit operations.

These guidelines are also intended to comply with the nursing mother provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (PPACA) and its nursing mother amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Lactation Breaks – *It shall be a practice of schools and units across the University to provide reasonable and appropriate break time for nursing mothers to express milk.*

- a) In order to accommodate the scheduling and operational needs of the school/unit, a nursing mother who intends to utilize lactation breaks upon her return to work should indicate her intention to do so during her maternity leave if possible, and preferably no later than one week prior to returning to work. A nursing mother should notify her immediate supervisor, who may consult with local human resources officers if needed.
- b) Breaks are expected to be reasonable in frequency and in length. Experience suggests that one to three breaks per day, generally lasting from 20 to 40 minutes per break, can be expected. However, individual experiences can vary from these general guidelines. Factors for determining the reasonableness of lactation break frequency and duration can include but are not limited to (1) the physical needs of the mother, (2) the type of lactation space and (3) the proximity of the lactation space to the nursing mother's normal work location.
- c) It is expected that flexibility surrounding lactation needs will continue for at least 12 months following the birth of the child. However, local units are encouraged to work with individual nursing mothers that intend to continue expressing milk during the working day beyond this period.

Lactation Facilities – *The University shall endeavor to make suitable facilities available for nursing mothers. Qualifying facilities do not include bathrooms and must be “shielded from view and free from intrusion from” non-nursing coworkers and the public.*

- a) Nursing mothers may use private offices when suitable or available, and may make reasonable, temporary and low/no-cost modifications if necessary (e.g., installing temporary paper curtains over a glass door or window).
- b) Nursing mothers may choose to use University-provided lactation rooms at various locations across campus when possible (visit the Office of Work/Life on HARVie for locations). Lactation rooms are generally single purpose and must be inaccessible for non-nursing coworkers or the general public when in use.
- c) Property managers or other interested parties (e.g., administrators, nursing mothers) should contact the Office of Work/Life to obtain additional guidance on creating and/or maintaining a suitable facility for this purpose.

Compensation – *Lactation breaks are unpaid, but may be supported through the use of flexible scheduling, certain forms of paid time off or compensatory time.*

- a) Supervisors and nursing mothers should explore all options for supporting lactation breaks, including the use of a flexible schedule.
- b) For example, a nursing mother should coordinate paid break time and/or the unpaid lunch hour (where applicable) to fashion appropriate lactation breaks throughout the workday. Guidelines on [flexible work schedules](#), with appropriate consideration given to operational needs of the work unit, should be taken into account by the nursing mother and her supervisor in such instances.
- c) Alternatively, nursing mothers may utilize paid time off (personal or vacation) or compensatory (“comp”) time for lactation purposes.
- d) If flexible scheduling cannot be achieved and accrued time is not available, a nursing mother can utilize unpaid breaks for lactation purposes. Nursing mothers and administrator should coordinate with local human resources for further assistance with this option, or with local human resources and the Office of Work/Life to explore alternatives.

Special Circumstances – *Where medical conditions may require additional considerations, the University’s other leave policies or legal requirements may provide additional options for nursing mothers. Harvard University welcomes persons with disabilities to participate in its work/life programs and services. If you anticipate a need for reasonable accommodation(s) or have questions about the physical access of the lactation rooms provided, please contact University Disability Services.*

Additional Resources – *Have questions? Contact the following offices with questions about these guidelines and best practices.*

Office of Work/Life

University Place, 3rd Floor South (124 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge)
(617) 495-4100

email: worklife@harvard.edu

web: http://harvie.harvard.edu/Work_Life_Balance/

Local Human Resources representatives

University Disability Services

Holyoke Center, Suite 935 (1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge)
(617) 495-1859 / (617) 495-4801 TTY / (617) 495-8520 (Fax)

email: disabilityservices@harvard.edu

web: <http://www.accessibility.harvard.edu>

Office of Labor & Employee Relations

University Place, Suite 480 South (124 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge)
(617) 495-2786

Web: <http://laborrelations.harvard.edu>

For Union members: Your local union representative

Area Trades Council: (617) 769-1877

HUCTW: (617) 661-8289

HUSPMGU: (617) 495-4040

HUPA: (617) 495-1212

SEIU Local 615: (617) 878-7504

UNITE!HERE Local 26: (617) 426-1515

Community members may also want to consult with external guidance, including:

United States Department of Labor, Wage & Hour Division,

[Fact Sheet #73 – Break Time for Nursing Mothers Under the FLSA](#)

Notes on Revisions to these Guidelines

Version 2.0: Effective on October 1, 2012, these Guidelines were amended to include a Preamble emphasizing the importance of ensuring an orderly and supported transition back into the workplace for new mothers. Section (b) of the guideline on Compensation was also amended to include a link to the University's online guidance for flexible work schedules. The section on Special Circumstances was also amplified to better highlight employee options.