

Summary of the Pregnant Workers Health Impact Assessment

The Kentucky Pregnant Workers' Rights Act (KYPWRA) (SB18) ensures all pregnant workers have equal access to safe and healthy working conditions. The Pregnant Workers Health Impact Assessment reviewed available information on the health impacts of working while pregnant in order to inform lawmakers and the public about these important issues.

The ability to maintain employment during pregnancy is critical for the health and wellbeing of a mother and her developing child. Income provides for food, housing, and access to health care. Allowing pregnant workers to request reasonable accommodations for the physical transitions of pregnancy can both help alleviate health concerns and allow pregnant workers to continue earning an income during this important stage of life.

Potentially risky working environments for pregnant workers may include those that require heavy lifting, bending, and standing, those that have a high risk of chemical exposure, high levels of noise, as well as those that have high temperatures and limited water.

Accommodations if requested and needed, that may protect health include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Reduce heavy lifting, bending, or standing in order to avoid preterm births and miscarriages. Provide a stool to alleviate the pain and discomfort of standing.
- Reduce exposure to chemicals, lead, and mercury in order to avoid birth defects.
- Reduce exposure to loud noises (over 80 db for extended periods of time) in order to prevent hearing loss in a child.
- Allow pregnant workers consistent access to water in order to prevent dehydration and maintain amniotic fluid for healthy development of the child.
- Allow for bathroom breaks in order to avoid urinary tract infections and the associated risk of preeclampsia and preterm birth.
- Provide a safe, private space for pumping breastmilk in order to prevent mastitis as well as provide the infant with the most nutritious source of food possible.
- Allow a postpartum employee to maintain a lighter work load in order to allow the body to heal from the physical trauma of giving birth.

Improving birth outcomes can make a positive impact for a lifetime of better health. Honoring worker requests for basic accommodations in the workplace will strengthen the health of pregnant workers, their developing child, and the health of Kentucky's workforce.

For more information about Health Impact Assessments call 502.574.8680 or email taylor.ingram@louisvilleky.gov

