



*Helping working families make it work.*

## **Know Your Rights: Protecting Pregnant Workers Fairness Act of 2014**

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### **District of Columbia**

#### **+ What is the purpose of the act?**

- An employer must provide reasonable workplace accommodations for workers whose ability to perform the functions of a job are affected by pregnancy, childbirth, a related medical condition, or breastfeeding.

#### **+ What is a “reasonable accommodation”?**

- “Reasonable accommodation” means any change in the work environment or in the way things are normally done that does not cause undue hardship in the operation of the employer’s business.

#### **+ What are some examples of reasonable accommodations?**

- The law specifically includes the following accommodations:
  - More frequent or longer breaks;
  - Time off to recover from childbirth;
  - Acquisition or modification of equipment or seating;
  - Temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous position, or light duty, or a modified work schedule;
  - Having the employee refrain from heavy lifting;
  - Relocating the employee’s work area;
  - Providing private (non-bathroom) space for expressing breast milk.
- Your employer should respond to your request for accommodation in a timely manner, and should participate in good faith in the process of determining a reasonable accommodation for you.

## **Do I have to provide medical certification?**

- Maybe. Your employer may require you to provide a certification from your doctor concerning your needs, but only if a medical certification is required of other employees with temporary disabilities.
- The medical certification should include:
  - The date the reasonable accommodation has or will become needed;
  - An explanation of your medical condition and the need for accommodation because of the condition;
  - The duration that the accommodation must be provided to you.

## **Is my employer covered?**

- Yes. Under this law, if you work in D.C., your employer is required to make reasonable accommodations related to pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions unless it can prove that providing a particular accommodation causes an undue hardship.

## **Can my employer fire me for needing an accommodation to do my job?**

- No. Under the new act, your employer is prohibited from firing or demoting you because you request or use a reasonable accommodation.
- Your employer must reinstate you to your original job or to an equivalent position once you no longer require accommodation.

## **Need legal assistance?**

- This fact sheet is intended to provide general information about legal rights in the workplace. For legal advice about your own individual situation, please consult an attorney.
- First Shift Justice Project can advise you on these issues for free or low-cost. Please contact us at [lbrown@firstshift.org](mailto:lbrown@firstshift.org) or consult our website: [www.firstshift.org](http://www.firstshift.org).