



GUIDELINE	
Pregnancy and Safe Work	
Scope (Staff):	All pregnant employees
Scope (Area):	Child and Adolescent Health Service (CAHS)

Aim

This guideline provides an overview of issues to be considered in order to ensure the health and safety of pregnant employees who have confirmed and declared that they are pregnant to their line manager.

Risk

Breach of legislative requirements including Duty of Care under the WA [Occupational Health and Safety Act 1984](#) and WA [Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 1996](#).

Key Points

- CAHS has statutory obligations under Section 19 of the [Occupational Health and Safety Act 1984](#) to provide, as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy workplace for all employees.
- CAHS adopts a proactive approach to risk assessment to identify where risks need to be controlled and provides guidance to management and staff on implementing adequate control measures.
- Employees have a right to cease or refuse to carry out work if they have a reasonable concern that carrying out the work would expose them to a serious risk to their Health and Safety.

Potential Workplace Hazards During Pregnancy

- During pregnancy issues such as the following may need to be considered in relation to work duties:
 - prolonged standing and sitting;
 - heavy physical workloads;
 - working under hot conditions;
 - frequent bending, stooping or reaching above shoulder height;
 - working with hazardous substances;
 - contact with certain communicable diseases;
 - exposure to radiation; and
 - exposure to environments that have increased risk of patient aggression.

Safe Work Options during Pregnancy

- The options for accommodating the needs of pregnant employees shall be determined on a case by case basis following consultation between the employee and their manager, with medical guidance as required.
- If a pregnant employee's needs are unable to be accommodated in her current role / position, some options to consider include:
 - modified duties;
 - transfer to an alternate position;
 - part time work; and
 - utilisation of leave entitlements.

Roles and Responsibilities

Employee

- The employee is responsible for:
 - seeking advice from a doctor and providing certification of work restrictions to the manager/supervisor in a timely manner if unable to carry out normal duties; and
 - providing a certificate of fitness from their doctor to continue working within 6 weeks before or after childbirth.

Manager / Supervisor

- The Manager or Supervisor is responsible for:
 - being familiar with, and referring to, the CAHS [Fitness for Work](#) Policy and the relevant sections in the Agreement in regards to providing safe work options for pregnant employees if required;
 - conducting the CAHS Pre-Assessment Hazard Checklist for Pregnant Employees and the Action Plan Form (always recommended, if a pregnant employee will experience any of the listed [potential workplace hazards during pregnancy](#) or other hazards that may be cause for concern);
 - Refer to [Appendix 1 Pre-Assessment Hazard Checklist for Pregnant Employees](#).
 - Refer to [Appendix 2 Risk Assessment and Action Plan Form for Pregnant Employees](#).
 - managing any change in the employee's job as a result of the risk assessment findings and review the assessment as required; and
 - where there are specific concerns the manager / supervisor should consult with Human Resources, OSH or the relevant Director.

OSH Department

- The OSH Department is responsible for:


- o Providing OSH advice and support.

Related internal policies, procedures and guidelines
Occupational Health and Safety (CAHS Policy Manual)
Chemical, Hazardous Substances and Dangerous Goods Management (CAHS Policy Manual)
Hazard and Incident Reporting (CAHS Policy Manual)
Fitness for Work (CAHS Policy Manual)

References
Occupational Health and Safety Act 1984
Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 1996
Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981 57A
ARPANSA (Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency)

Useful resources
CAHS Employee Hazard/Incident Form

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

File Path:	W:\Safety & Quality\CAHS\Policy\POLICY MANAGEMENT - Area Health Service\CAHS Policy_Word\CAHS.OSH.PregnancyAndSafeWork.docx				
Document Owner:	Executive Director, Corporate Services				
Reviewer / Team:	CAHS Workforce Services, OSH Department				
Date First Issued:	July 2012	Last Reviewed:	November 2018	Review Date:	November 2021
Approved by:	CAHS Corporate Governance Committee			Date:	27 November 2018
Endorsed by:	Executive Director, Corporate Services			Date:	27 November 2018
Standards Applicable:	NSQHS Standards:  NSMHS: 2, 8.				
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Appendix 1: Pre-Assessment Hazard Checklist for Pregnant Employees

- Prior to completing the [Risk Assessment and Action Plan Form \(Appendix 2\)](#) with the pregnant employee, the following issues should be considered:
 - Morning sickness – often worse in morning but can occur at other times of day.
 - Back ache – may be aggravated by manual task activities, standing or sitting for prolonged periods.
 - Increased physical size – may make it difficult to use equipment or workstations comfortably, without adjusting furniture.
 - Increased bladder function – more frequent trips to toilet requiring employee to be within easy access of facilities.
 - Increased tiredness – causing an inability to work long hours or sustain prolonged physical or mental effort.
 - Change in blood pressure – may cause dizziness or faintness during more frequent or prolonged physical effort.

Physical

Hazard	Risk	Possible Controls
Poor movement & posture	Injury, dizziness, fatigue, backache, headache, pain, discomfort	Adapt work equipment & furniture, redesign workstations, avoid long periods of manual task, standing or sitting, and ensure uniform allows unrestricted movement.
Manual tasks	Injury	Alter the task, or load, provide handling equipment.
Excessive Noise	Increase in blood pressure	Remove noise, relocate staff.
Radiation	Injury to unborn child	Avoid use of equipment, avoid exposure, correct work procedures for protecting staff. ALARA principle, time distance shielding controls.
Patient Aggression	Injury to unborn child	Reallocation of staff away from aggressive patients.

Biological

Hazard	Risk	Possible Controls
Vaccine preventable diseases	Acquisition of vaccine preventable diseases can have profound effects on the developing foetus. Staff must discuss the risk with their Obstetrician	Antenatal screening and serological proof of immunity. Adherence to Standard and Transmission Based Precautions. All pregnant staff should have the annual influenza vaccine.

Chemical

Hazard	Risk	Possible Controls
Hazardous	May cause cancer &/or	Check occupational exposure limits,

substances labelled: R40, R45, R46, R49, R61, R63, R64, R68	effect unborn child	avoid exposure, safe systems of work, use of PPE.
Mercury	Affect unborn child, slow growth, disrupt nervous system	Prevent exposure, technical measures, use of PPE, safe systems of work, use of PPE.
Antimitoxic (cytotoxic) drugs	Genetic damage, may cause cancer	Avoid exposure, safe systems of work, use of PPE, disposal arrangements, reallocate task.

Environmental

Hazard	Risk	Possible Controls
No facilities	Fatigue, infections, kidney disease	Furniture to sit or lie down, drinking water, toilet, wash facilities, use of refrigerator.
Long working hours	Mental/physical fatigue, stress, increased blood pressure	Adjust working hours & working conditions, rest breaks, change shift pattern, reallocate work tasks.
Occupational stressors	Stress related illness, anxiety, depression, increased BP	Adjust working hours & working conditions, support of staff.
Cold/heat extremes	Heat stress, dehydration, low blood pressure	Rest areas, refreshment breaks, drinking water, control of building temperature.
Personal safety/ working alone	Injury, miscarriage, premature delivery	Means of communication, buddy system, review workplace layout, reallocate tasks.
Driving	Vibration, stress, discomfort	Short journeys, reallocate tasks, access to facilities, means of communication.

Appendix 2: Risk Assessment and Action Plan Form for Pregnant Employees

Department:	Date:
Pregnant employee (name & job title):	
Completed by (name & job title):	

Hazard	Actions Required
Physical:	
Biological:	
Chemical:	
Environmental:	

Has the recommended action been agreed? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Manager's name (print, sign & date):	Date:
Pregnant employee (print, sign & date):	Date: