

**W<sup>3</sup>AP** (Read as Triple W AP) - stands for "Women Workers Welfare Advocacy Program", a program lodged with the Women Workers Development Division (WWDD) of the Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns (BWSC). All advocacy initiatives pertaining to the Family Welfare Program, the anti-sexual harassment, and other related laws that affect women workers shall be published under this program. This maiden issue focuses on the setting up of the lactation stations as provided for in the newly enacted "Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act of 2009". The contents of this material will be particularly helpful to Human Resource managers, as they will be guided in how to set up or operationalize the provisions of said law.

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## SETTING UP A WORKPLACE LACTATION STATION : a guide for employers and family welfare committees

**A** lactation station is one of the low-cost family-friendly facilities an employer can put up at the workplace for the benefit of employees. Anything a company can do to add benefits to an employee's working life helps to attract people and retain people. Breastfeeding mothers who wish to continue breastfeeding their children after they resume their work have special needs. A lactation station provides safe and healthful working conditions for women workers taking into account their maternal functions, thus, promoting the constitutional provision of providing facilities and opportunities to enhance their potential in the service of the nation. A recently passed law, [Republic Act 10028 or the "Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act of 2009"](#) which amended RA 7600 or the "Rooming-in and Breastfeeding Act of 1992," adopts a national policy to encourage, protect and support the practice of breastfeeding. Specifically, this law requires establishments to set up lactation stations in the workplace and provide compensable time for breastfeeding and lactation periods.



Breastfeeding is nature's way to nourish and protect young infants. The many benefits of exclusive breastfeeding to the child specifically in the first 6 months are irreplaceable. The positive effects for the working breastfeeding mother are equally rewarding.

For the child, exclusive breastfeeding reduces infant deaths caused by common childhood illnesses such as diarrhea and pneumonia as well as hasten recovery during a bout of illness. Breastmilk provides all the energy and nutrients that an infant needs during the first 6 months. For the working breastfeeding mothers, some of the positive effects are the delay in the resumption of normal ovarian cycles and the return of fertility in most women. Breastfeeding mothers lose their weight gained during pregnancy more quickly because they are using more calories to produce milk.

For the establishment, some of the positive effects are:

- Less absenteeism among workers
- High employee productivity
- Greater company loyalty
- High employee morale
- Improved ability to attract and retain valuable employees
- Family-friendly image in the community



### WHAT THE MANAGEMENT CAN DO

(MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LACTATION STATIONS)

Three (3) simple steps to implement lactation support include the provision of the following:

#### TIME

- Flexible working hours
- Compensable lactation breaks for expression of breast milk in addition to regular time-off for meals

#### SPACE

- Private clean space to express milk (but not to be located in the toilet and free from contaminants or hazardous substances)

### WORKPLACE LACTATION STATION



- Small refrigerator or appropriate cooling facilities for storage of expressed breast milk
- Sink with running water
- Electrical outlets for breast pumps
- Small locker to store equipment
- Small table and comfortable seats

(more)

**WHAT THE MANAGEMENT CAN DO (continued)**

**SUPPORT**

- Have a written policy (see sample below)
- Designate a staff member to implement, monitor and evaluate the policy
- Ensure that staff are supportive of breastfeeding mothers
- Ensure behavior change by providing breastfeeding mothers the following:
  - \* ante natal breastfeeding orientation sessions/counseling
  - \* post natal follow-up
- Provision of IEC materials regarding lactation management, maternal nutrition and proper nourishment

- Conduct a weaning survey: when the mother has finished breastfeeding, get her to fill out a survey about what was helpful and what could have made things easier. Similarly, a survey with the rest of the staff about how they felt should also be conducted.

Does supporting breastfeeding or breastmilk expression in the workplace assist or hinder their work and in what way? This will help in making improvements or coming out with best practices in the workplace.

**Suggested steps to set-up and implement the workplace lactation station**

- Conduct meetings with the Family Welfare Committee or any plant-level body or structure with workers and management representatives
- Determine if there is need among the workers
- Agree on the policy to be implemented
- Enlist the help of experts in the area of breastfeeding or breastmilk expression, nutritional needs

**WHAT IS A WRITTEN POLICY?**

Here's a sample written policy which the establishment may adopt according to their specific needs and agreements.



(Company name)

**Breastfeeding Policy**

(Company) recognizes the importance of breastfeeding for both mother and baby and hereby supports and promotes breastfeeding.

(Company) provides facilities and the support necessary to enable mothers in their employment to balance breastfeeding / breastmilk expression with their work.

Provision of facilities and support includes:

- Lactation breaks. Lactation breaks are compensable breaks. (Company) will allow mothers to express breast milk in the designated company lactation station during breaks or as the need arises.
- Flexibility for breastmilk expression breaks. There is flexibility for mothers to take lactation breaks during their workday. These can be negotiated between the mother, employee representative and supervisor.
- Facilities include: clean, private area, with comfortable chair, hand washing facilities, storage area for coolers, a refrigerator
- Access to breastfeeding information. Staff and employees are made aware of this policy. All women who are going on maternity leave will be provided with information on how they can combine breastfeeding and work once they return to work.

Employees who are considering breastfeeding can make arrangements for use of the breastfeeding facilities and other supports before going on maternity leave. She has to notify the HR Department and the Clinic of her intent to use the breastfeeding and other arrangements by filing up the form applying for use of lactation facilities.

(Company Name)

**Application for Use of Lactation Facilities**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Employee No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth of Baby \_\_\_\_\_

I confirm that I will be breastfeeding my child and I intend to avail of the lactation facilities and break arrangements from (date) \_\_\_\_\_ to (date) \_\_\_\_\_.

I declare that the information given above is true and complete. I agree that when I stop to breastfeed my child, I will notify the management accordingly.

Signature of Employee \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Noted or Conformed \_\_\_\_\_  
 HR or Designated Officer

**Information for this material are adapted from various sources such as :**

*www.womens\_health.org.nz; www.la lecheleague.org; www.women's\_health.org; breastfeeding policy of Meritlux Industries, Phils. Inc. (Sta Rosa, Laguna); Family Planning Saves Lives, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (c) 2009 Population Reference Bureau.*