

# Directive Concerning the Protection of Pregnant Women and Women during Breast-Feeding

## 1. Aim

During pregnancy, a woman and her child are more sensitive to hazards and to stress linked to the work environment and conditions. Certain physical, chemical or biological agents can have a serious impact on the development of the foetus or can cause a miscarriage. Towards the end of pregnancy, an arduous workload (by carrying heavy objects, maintaining a standing position or inappropriate work hours) can also lead to the same consequences. The same applies to certain chemical or biological agents during the period of breast-feeding.

Thus, the employer must occupy pregnant or breast-feeding women in a way so that their health and that of the infant are not compromised. He/she must consequently adapt the work conditions. This directive sets the measures to be taken and the responsibilities concerning the protection of pregnant women during maternity.

The present directive concerns situations of pregnancy, suspected pregnancy and breast-feeding.

## 2. Responsibility

- The department presidents are responsible for the setting up and the monitoring of the present directive.
- It is the role of the “Health and Security” unit which is directly associated with the Administrative Management (<http://ww3.unifr.ch/selog/fr/sante-securite/>) to control the correct implementation of the directive.

## 3. Information

- All women appointed or matriculated at the Faculty of Science and Medicine (SciMed Faculty) must be informed about the potential influence of their work environment and the type of their work on the evolution of their foetus. They shall know the measures taken by our Faculty to protect pregnant or breast-feeding women and of the sources of information at their disposal.
- Newly matriculated female students must be informed, with the help of a fact sheet, of this directive during a meeting about general security organised in each department.
- Newly appointed female staff must be informed of this directive by their direct superior or by the department security delegate. The present directive together with a form shall be added to the documents relating to the job position. The direct superior and the appointee shall attest, by signature, that they have read and understood this directive.
- The Dean’s Office is responsible for the publication of the same information on the Faculty web pages (<http://www3.unifr.ch/scimed/fr/safety/maternity>).
- At the entrance to each laboratory, a notice is made available by the « Health and Security » unit of the Administrative Management indicating the risks involved and the names of the persons of trust available to pregnant women
- Pregnant women are not allowed to work in a laboratory until a workplace physician or a workplace hygienist have carried out a risk analysis.
- It is strongly recommended that a pregnant woman inform her direct superior of her condition as quickly as possible. She can do this through a person of trust for pregnant women (see below) or by addressing the “Health and Security” unit directly.

## 4. Activities considered hazardous or arduous during pregnancy

Edict 822.111.52 of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) lists the following activities considered to pose a risk to pregnant women:

- Moving heavy objects
- Exposure to cold, heat, humidity and noise
- Exposure to biological hazards (micro-organisms)
- Exposure to ionising radiation
- Exposure to electro-magnetic fields
- Exposure to hazardous chemical substances
- Exposure to hazardous biological substances

Work activities which expose women to hazardous chemical or biological substances can have an impact on the health of a breast-fed infant. All other activities or environments that could involve a hazard to the foetus or to the infant must of course be taken into consideration as well.

## 5. Protective measures

- The superior or security delegate of the department is responsible for that the work activities and work environment to which the pregnant or breast-feeding worker is exposed do not present any risks to the foetus or infant. If a risk analysis for maternity has not been established for the post or activity in question, then one must be carried out.
- Pregnant women are not allowed to work in a laboratory until a workplace physician or a workplace hygienist have carried out a risk analysis for their post or their activities.
- The risk analysis is the responsibility of the “Health and Security” unit of the University of Fribourg and is coordinated by the workplace hygienist ([santé-secutité@unifr.ch](mailto:santé-secutité@unifr.ch)) who, if necessary, mandates competent persons (workplace physician, IST, etc.).
- The corresponding analysis report shall be presented to the department president and the pregnant or breast-feeding woman in question within 2 weeks after the request for the analysis has been filed.
- During the elaboration of the risk analysis, the pregnant or breast-feeding worker is not authorised to carry out the activities for which the risk analysis has been requested, or to enter the corresponding laboratories.
- If the risk analysis confirms that the activities or work environment of the pregnant or breast-feeding worker pose a risk to the foetus or infant, protective measures must be taken. Such measures will be set in the report concerning the risk analysis and may go as far as banning certain activities or the access to certain laboratories. If the employer cannot assign an equivalent non-hazardous activity to the pregnant woman, the worker is entitled to the payment of 80% of her salary.
- The worker’s superior or the security delegate of the department is responsible for setting up and for the routine control of the protective measures.
- Departments can, a priori, ban certain activities or the access of pregnant or breast-feeding women to certain laboratories.
- The protective measures set out by and based on the risk analysis are mandatory.
- The effectiveness of the required special protective measures (except those of a total ban of certain activities or the presence in certain laboratories) shall be reviewed at regular intervals of up to three months at most. These reviews are organised by the “Health and Security” unit. If the reviews conclude that the protective measures do not achieve the required objectives, the employer loses the right to assign these activities to pregnant women.

## 6. Persons of trust

- Each department concerned shall designate a person of trust as well as a substitute, which female pregnant workers or students can consult for matters concerning pregnancy or suspected pregnancy. This person of trust can also give relevant information to breast-feeding workers, but is not authorised to carry out any risk analysis.
- If necessary and if problems concerning the set up or the review of the protective measures arise, the person of trust can, with the consent of the pregnant worker, consult the Dean or the workplace hygienist of the “Health and Security” unit of the Administrative Management ([santé-securite@unifr.ch](mailto:santé-securite@unifr.ch)).

## References

- 822.11.52 Ordonnance du DEFR sur les activités dangereuses ou pénibles en cas de grossesse et de maternité (2001, état 01.07.2015) : <https://www.admin.ch/opc/fr/classified-compilation/20002241/index.html>
- Commentaire de l’Ordonnance 1 relative à la loi sur le travail, Chapitre 5: Protection spéciale des femmes, Section 2: Protection de la santé en cas de maternité, Art. 62 Activités dangereuses ou pénibles en cas de grossesse et de maternité.
- DEFR, Secrétariat d’état de l’économie (SECO) (2016) Maternité – Protection des travailleuses

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