

August is National Breastfeeding Month

Breastfeeding Friendly Employer Benefits

Employers play a key role in a mother and her family's breastfeeding decisions. More than half of women with infants work outside their home. Workplace support for nursing mothers is simple, cost-effective, and critical for employees' breastfeeding success. Mothers who breastfeed often miss less work because they have healthier babies. Supporting nursing mothers results in a great return on investment (almost 3:1), including lower health care costs, absenteeism, turnover, improved morale, job satisfaction, and productivity.

Breastfeeding saves money

All major medical authorities agree infants should get only human milk for their first six months. After that mothers are encouraged to continue to breastfeed up to 1-2 years of life. Studies show six months of exclusive breastfeeding leads to healthier babies and lowered risk of diabetes and obesity. Mothers meeting these goals have a lower risk of diabetes, some cancers and heart attack. If 90% of U.S. families breastfed their babies exclusively for 6 months, the U.S. would annually save \$13 billion from reduced medical and other costs.

Maine's Nursing Mothers in the Workplace Law

Many moms stop breastfeeding when they return to work. You can help change that. In 2009, Maine passed the Nursing Mothers in the Workplace law requiring:

- Employers to make a reasonable effort to provide a clean room or location, other than a bathroom, where the milk can be expressed
- Nursing mothers to be provided with unpaid break time or be permitted to use their paid break or meal time to express milk. (Most nursing breaks take about 10- 15 minutes three times a day)

Support Nursing Mothers in Your Workplace

- Create a simple policy reflecting the law and add it to the employee handbook
- Find a clean and private space, other than the bathroom, for nursing breaks
- Get creative and create a temporary space with a floor screen. The space need only be available when a woman is nursing
- Go to [Supporting Nursing Moms at Work: Employer Solutions](#)
- Post the [Department of Labor Nursing Mothers in the Workplace](#) poster where staff will see it
- Join the [Whenever Wherever Campaign](#) to show that you are a leader in supporting nursing mothers

In This Issue:

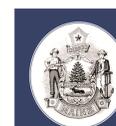
- ◆ **August is National Breastfeeding Month**
- ◆ **Sexual Violence in the Workplace**

August Health Observances

- ◆ [Children's Eye Health and Safety Month](#)
- ◆ [National Breastfeeding Month](#)
- ◆ [National Immunization Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [Psoriasis Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [National Health Center Week](#) (10-16)

September Health Observances

- ◆ [Fruits and Veggies– More Matters Month](#)
- ◆ [Healthy Aging Month](#)
- ◆ [National Food Safety Education Month](#)
- ◆ [National Preparedness Month](#)
- ◆ [Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [Prostate Cancer Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [Whole Grains Month](#)
- ◆ [National Suicide Prevention Week](#) (7-13)



Maine Center for Disease
Control and Prevention
An Office of the
Department of Health and Human Services

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

Sexual Violence in the Workplace

We've all been there: that moment where you weren't sure what to do or how to help someone. When it comes to workplace sexual violence, knowing what to do – especially as a bystander – may be helpful for your coworkers and your work environment.

Sexual violence is an umbrella term for many different types of abuse, which are committed by one or more people without the consent of the other. Victimitizations can include, but are not limited to, child sexual abuse, sex trafficking, elder sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape, sexual assault, and intimate partner sexual violence.

The most common type of sexual violence in the workplace is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment can have serious impacts on employees and the general work environment. Sexual harassment is "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature" and can be verbal, non-verbal, or physical.

Sexual harassment is illegal when perpetrated in the workplace or at school under the following conditions:

- The conduct is used to determine an employment or educational benefit
- The conduct is used to make employment or educational decisions (quid pro quo)
- The conduct interferes with the individual's work or school performance or creates a hostile, threatening or intimidating environment

Sexual harassment impacts people in different ways. If someone previously experienced sexual harassment or some type of sexual violence, it may impact them in ways it may not impact someone without such experiences.

Victims of sexual harassment may experience self-blame, feel they have no power, deterioration of personal relationships, fear of going to certain workplaces alone, a decreased quality of work, and many other effects.

In addition to the impact on the victim, there can be many impacts on the workplace, including lowered morale, time consuming investigations, distrust among employees, absenteeism, high turnover rate, and expensive lawsuits.

So What Can You Do?

- **Be an active bystander:** If something is making you or someone else uncomfortable, say something to the person creating the discomfort or to your supervisor
- **Be supportive:** If someone tells you they're being sexually harassed, believe them, and ask how you can be helpful. If appropriate, [help them work through a plan to address it](#) and talk with a supervisor or your HR department
- **Access resources:** Maine's sexual assault support centers are available to help anyone who has been impacted by sexual violence or harassment. Call 1-800-871-7741 or TTY 1-888-458-5599 for free, confidential help

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Additional Resources



Breastfeeding: We All Benefit



Department of Health and Human Services

Maine People Living Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner