

Rights and responsibilities related to **PREGNANCY, CHILDBIRTH AND ADOPTION**



INTERPRETIVE BULLETIN

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This publication discusses Alberta Human Rights Commission policies and guidelines. Commission policies and guidelines reflect the Commission's interpretation of certain sections of the *Alberta Human Rights Act (AHR Act)* as well as the Commission's interpretation of relevant case law. Case law includes legal decisions made by human rights tribunals and the courts. As the case law evolves, so do the Commission's policies and guidelines.

Commission policies and guidelines:

- ◆ help individuals, employers, service providers and policy makers understand their rights and responsibilities under Alberta's human rights law, and
- ◆ set standards for behaviour that complies with human rights law.

The information in this publication was current at the time of publication. If you have questions related to Commission policies and guidelines, please contact the Commission.

Introduction

This interpretive bulletin explains the provisions of the *AHR Act* as they apply to pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding. It also provides information about maternity leave and parental leave, which includes leave for adoptive parents. Within these areas, this interpretive bulletin informs:

- ◆ women about their rights and responsibilities in the area of employment,
- ◆ both male and female biological and adoptive parents about their rights related to parental leave from work, and
- ◆ employers about their rights and responsibilities related to preventing discrimination and the duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship.¹

Related resource for Albertans who are becoming parents

The Commission has partnered with Alberta Employment and Immigration to develop the booklet *Becoming a parent in Alberta: What you need to know about human rights, maternity and parental leave, and benefits*. The booklet answers frequently asked questions about:

- ◆ human rights protection for pregnant workers
- ◆ entitlements, rights and responsibilities of working parents-to-be
- ◆ leave that expectant mothers may take for health reasons during pregnancy and childbirth
- ◆ the difference between maternity and parental leave and benefits
- ◆ how to apply for maternity and parental leave and benefits

Contact the Commission to obtain a copy of *Becoming a parent in Alberta*.

¹ **Undue hardship** occurs if accommodation would create onerous conditions for an employer, for example, intolerable financial costs or serious disruption to a business. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that employers have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to accommodate individual needs to the point of undue hardship. To substantiate a claim of undue hardship, an employer must show that they would experience far more than minor inconvenience. For more information, see the Commission interpretive bulletin *Duty to accommodate*.

Pregnant women are protected from discrimination

The *AHR Act* protects people from discrimination on the basis of gender. This includes protection from discrimination because of:

- ◆ pregnancy,
- ◆ childbirth,
- ◆ breastfeeding,
- ◆ miscarriage² or stillbirth,
- ◆ abortion, and
- ◆ complications arising from any of the above.

The *AHR Act* also protects people from discrimination based on other protected grounds: race, religious beliefs, colour, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status and sexual orientation. Pregnant women may experience discrimination based on more than one of the protected grounds because of stereotypes about pregnancy and race, disability, source of income or family status, for example. For more information on the protected grounds, see the Commission's information sheet *Protected Areas and Grounds under the Alberta Human Rights Act* or contact the Commission.

The right to treatment without discrimination because of gender, including pregnancy and pregnancy-related issues such as breastfeeding, applies in all of the areas protected by the *AHR Act*:

- ◆ employment practices;
- ◆ employment applications and advertisements;
- ◆ residential or commercial tenancy;
- ◆ goods, services, accommodation or facilities customarily available to the public (for example, restaurants, stores, hotels or provincial government services);
- ◆ statements, publications, notices, signs, symbols, emblems or other representations that are published, issued or displayed before the public;
- ◆ membership in trade unions, employers' organizations or occupational associations; and
- ◆ equal pay. (When employees of any sex—male, female or transgender—do the same or substantially similar work, they must be paid at the same rate.)

People who believe that they have experienced discrimination that falls under the *AHR Act* may inquire at the Commission about making a human rights complaint. Most of the pregnancy-related complaints that are accepted by the Alberta Human Rights Commission fall under the area of employment practices or employment applications and advertisements.

This bulletin focuses on situations that occur in the workplace.

² *Tilsley v. Subway Sandwiches* (2001), 39 C.H.R.R. D/102 (B.C.H.R.T.)

Employment standards and employment insurance also protect women and provide benefits

In addition to being protected by human rights law, pregnant women are protected in the workplace by provincial employment standards. Women who meet requirements may also receive federal Employment Insurance maternity benefits, which are administered by Service Canada.

The *Employment Standards Code* allows for maternity leave for women who are eligible and parental leave for women and men who are eligible. An employee must have 52 consecutive weeks of employment with their employer to be eligible for maternity and/or parental leave under the *Employment Standards Code*. This requirement applies to both full-time and part-time employees. The *Employment Standards Code* also requires the employer to reinstate the employee in the position they occupied before the leave, or to provide them with alternative work of a comparable nature.

This bulletin offers selected information related to employment standards and employment insurance. For a more comprehensive discussion of these topics, see the booklet *Becoming a parent in Alberta* or contact the relevant organizations listed in the *Related resources* section of this bulletin.

Definitions

In this publication:

- ◆ **Pregnancy** refers to pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, miscarriage or stillbirth, abortion, and complications arising from any of these conditions.
- ◆ **Medical leave or medical leave due to pregnancy** refers to leave that a woman takes at any time before, during or after her pregnancy (see definition of pregnancy above) when her doctor determines that she is medically unable to work. During this time, she may decide to access her earned employee health benefits before using employment insurance maternity benefits if she qualifies.
- ◆ **Maternity and parental leave** refer to leave that pregnant women and new parents, including adoptive parents, are entitled to under the *Employment Standards Code* if they meet certain requirements. For more detailed information about maternity and parental leave, see the section *Common questions about maternity leave and parental leave* in this publication.


Human rights law protects women from discrimination based on pregnancy

In Alberta, it is contrary to the *AHR Act* to discriminate in the workplace based on a woman's pregnancy. It is also contrary to the *Act* to refuse to accommodate pregnancy-related issues in the workplace. However, there may not be a contravention of the *Act* if discrimination would be reasonable and justifiable in the circumstances or if accommodation would create undue hardship for the employer. For more information about reasonable and justifiable discrimination and about undue hardship, see the Commission interpretive bulletins *When is discrimination not a contravention of the law?* and *Duty to accommodate*.

In most cases, it is contrary to the *AHR Act* to:

- ◆ treat women differently or create conditions that discriminate against women or make them feel unwelcome because of their pregnancy;
- ◆ deny women the decision to breastfeed in public or at work, or refuse to accommodate breastfeeding;
- ◆ ask women on job applications or in job interviews if they are pregnant or plan to have children;
- ◆ refuse to hire women because they are pregnant or breastfeeding;
- ◆ fire, lay off or demote women because they are pregnant or breastfeeding;
- ◆ fire, lay off or demote women because of absenteeism due to medical issues during pregnancy;
- ◆ fail to accommodate, to the point of undue hardship, medical restrictions placed on a woman because of her pregnancy;
- ◆ deny a woman the opportunity to request a leave from her employment because of pregnancy;
- ◆ deny a woman the decision of when she will begin a valid medical leave due to pregnancy;
- ◆ prevent a woman from using her benefit plan for a medical leave while she is on a leave due to pregnancy;
- ◆ deny a woman the use of any earned overtime or vacation time before, during or immediately after she starts a leave due to pregnancy, if this option is available to other employees (If granting overtime or earned vacation time would cause the employer undue hardship, it may be acceptable for the employer to deny this use of earned overtime or vacation time.); or
- ◆ ask a woman to pre-pay her benefit premiums, or to pay the employer's share of premiums while on sick leave during maternity or parental leave (see the *Definitions* section of this publication).

More subtle actions on the part of the employer, such as groundless criticism of a woman's work, will also be discriminatory if they are based on her pregnancy or a pregnancy-related issue such as breastfeeding. Employers must ensure that pregnancy does not result in a female employee becoming the brunt of demeaning practical jokes, teasing or a poisoned work environment.



In addition, systemic discrimination (a pattern of discriminatory behaviours, policies or practices that are part of the structure of the organization) may have a negative impact on a pregnant employee. For instance, requiring an employee to work consecutive years before she can move to the next pay level could have a negative impact on an employee who takes a leave due to pregnancy and who otherwise would be advancing to the next pay level.

It is the responsibility of the union as well as the employer to uphold human rights laws in Alberta. Unions and employers are jointly responsible for ensuring that collective agreements comply with the *AHR Act* and do not discriminate based on pregnancy.

Employers have a responsibility to accommodate pregnant employees


An employee's pregnancy may prevent her from doing part of her job. This does not mean that pregnant employees should not or cannot continue to work. The *AHR Act* requires employers in Alberta to accommodate an employee's pregnancy to the point of undue hardship, including modifying the workplace so that employees can continue to work.

Employers are expected to make sincere efforts to the point of undue hardship³ to accommodate pregnant or breastfeeding employees. Accommodation could include:

- ◆ changing a pregnant employee's job duties if her pregnancy prevents her from performing parts of her job. For example, a pregnant store clerk who, for health reasons, is restricted from lifting more than ten pounds cannot be asked to carry boxes heavier than that weight. Another employee may be able to do this task temporarily. The pregnant employee would then be expected to assume additional less physically demanding duties in exchange for not carrying heavy boxes.
- ◆ providing a flexible work schedule to accommodate the needs of an employee who is pregnant or breastfeeding. This may include time off for medical appointments, arranging for an employee to work from home, flexible hours, providing a quiet space for breastfeeding or allowing a female employee to arrange her scheduled breaks to breastfeed her child.
- ◆ ensuring that female employees are permitted to have their infants brought in to breastfeed in the workplace or to take time to breastfeed outside the workplace.
- ◆ ensuring that a pregnant employee has full access to any earned benefits such as illness or vacation leave.
- ◆ ensuring that a pregnant employee has equal access to workplace opportunities. For instance, in one case,⁴ a school refused to consider a teacher's application for a vice-principal position because she was going to be on maternity leave for the first part of the school year. The Court of Queen's Bench found that keeping the position open for the pregnant teacher would cause some inconvenience, but that accommodating the teacher's pregnancy would not result in an undue hardship for the school board.
- ◆ making other reasonable changes in the workplace that have been recommended by the doctor of a pregnant or breastfeeding employee.

³ See footnote 1.

⁴ *Woo v. Alberta (Human Rights and Citizenship Commission)*, 2003 ABQB 632, 49 C.H.R.R. D/510



Accommodation should begin as a discussion between the employee and the employer. Each case is unique and will require that both parties cooperate and communicate their concerns and needs in order to achieve a successful accommodation. Employees are expected to cooperate with an employer's sincere efforts to accommodate particular needs arising from pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Negative comments or reactions from customers or staff about an employee's pregnancy or breastfeeding are not, in and of themselves, a reason to fire, lay off, or demote her. Negative comments can result in harassment. It is the employer's duty to protect a pregnant employee from this form of discrimination.

An employer cannot force a pregnant employee to begin leave due to pregnancy earlier than she chooses, unless required by her doctor for medical reasons. Women have the right to work when they are pregnant and may choose to work as close to their due date as medically possible. The only exception to this is when the employee's duties cannot be modified to accommodate her pregnancy. If an employer can show that accommodating an employee's pregnancy would cause the employer undue hardship (such as safety concerns), then the accommodation may not be possible. If this situation occurs, the pregnant employee should be allowed to take any other paid options available to her such as earned overtime, vacation leave, sick leave, short-term disability, or long-term disability.

For more information about accommodating pregnant employees, see the *Related resources* section of this bulletin.


Human rights and labour decisions about breastfeeding

A breastfeeding mother may need to alter her work hours or take a break during the day at a certain time in order to breastfeed her baby. The employer should accommodate an employee's needs related to breastfeeding unless the employer can demonstrate that accommodation would cause an undue hardship for the employer. In a 2007 decision,⁵ the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found that it would not have caused Bell Canada undue hardship to allow its employee Ms. Cole to leave work at 4 p.m. each day to breastfeed her baby. Bell Canada had initially treated the request as a medical disability claim and asked Ms. Cole to provide a medical note to substantiate her claim that she needed to have a shift that ended at 4 p.m. each day. The tribunal said, "In my view, in the absence of any evidence that would lead the employer to doubt the sincerity of the female employee's assertion (i.e. that she has an infant whom she is nursing), she should not have to prove to her employer that nursing her child is necessary."

Decisions by courts and human rights tribunals have supported a woman's right to breastfeed in the workplace and in public. In a 1997 decision,⁶ the British Columbia Human Rights

⁵ *Cole v. Bell Canada* 2007 CHRT 7

⁶ *Poirier v. British Columbia* (1997) 29 C.H.R.R. D/87 (B.C.H.R.T.)



Tribunal found that Ms. Poirier’s employer discriminated against her by not allowing her to breastfeed her child in the workplace and at a public seminar sponsored by her employer.

In a January 2001 decision,⁷ an arbitrator in Alberta ruled that an employer’s refusal to permit employee Ms. Degagne to breastfeed her child in the workplace constituted discrimination on the basis of gender. In his decision, the arbitrator said “discrimination on the basis that a woman is breastfeeding is a form of sex discrimination.” Ms. Degagne had requested permission to have her child brought into the workplace to breastfeed. When her request was denied, she asked for a six-month leave of absence to continue breastfeeding, which was also denied. Her employer, Carewest Cross Bow, terminated Ms. Degagne when she did not return to work at the end of her maternity leave. The arbitrator ordered Carewest to reinstate Ms. Degagne and issue back pay to cover her loss of wages and benefits.

Women on leave due to pregnancy have the same rights to medical benefits as other employees

As a general principle, once an employer decides to provide an employee benefit package, the employer is required to do so in a non-discriminatory manner. Employees on leave due to pregnancy have a right to access the same benefit plans that other employees can access. As long as these benefits would usually be open to other employees who are on a leave, they must also be available to employees on leave due to pregnancy. The Alberta Court of Queen’s Bench⁸ stated that, during medical leave, women who are on leave due to pregnancy are entitled to the same benefits as other workers on sick leave.

Benefit plans differ from one employer to another. Some employers administer their own sick leave plans, such as salary continuance plans, and others have short-term or long-term disability insurance plans administered by insurance companies. Employers should ensure that their plans do not discriminate against employees taking valid medical leave due to pregnancy and that employees are informed of existing benefit plans and how to apply for them.


Women are entitled to access earned sick leave benefits for medical leaves during pregnancy if this option is available to other employees on leave

Employees who pay all or part of their employee benefit premiums may choose to continue to pay their portion of those premiums for the time they are on non-medical leave due to pregnancy. An employer cannot require an employee who is on leave due to pregnancy to pre-pay these premiums.⁹ Normally, the employee and the employer continue to pay the same portions they paid while the employee was working, following the same schedule

⁷ *Carewest and H.S.A.A. (Degagne) Re* (2001) 93 L.A.C. (4th) 129 (Alberta)

⁸ *Alberta Hospital Association v. Parcels* (1992) 17 C.H.R.R. D/167 (Alta. Q.B.)

⁹ See footnote 8.



of payments. However, in some cases, if an employee chooses to maintain some or all of the employee benefits while on leave due to pregnancy, the employer could require the employee to pay both the employer and employee portions of the premiums. An employer could do this if it normally requires all employees who choose to maintain employee benefits while on other types of voluntary leave (such as sabbatical) to pay both the employee and employer portions of the premium.

A pregnant woman may access her sick leave benefit plan from work during the time she has a valid medical reason for being absent from work. This may occur before or after the birth of the child and will vary in length for each woman depending on her situation. A medical leave of some duration, whether long or short, is expected with any pregnancy.

The Supreme Court of Canada¹⁰ laid out basic principles that prohibit discrimination in providing sick leave benefits during pregnancy:

- ◆ Pregnancy is a valid reason for absence from the workplace.
- ◆ Pregnancy should be compensated by an employer's existing disability plan, where such a plan exists.
- ◆ If an employer compensates employees during sick leave but excludes pregnant women from similar sick leave benefits, the employer is discriminating against pregnant women.


In Alberta, employers are required by law to continue to pay employee benefit premiums during the medical leave portion of the employee's leave due to pregnancy if they normally pay for employee benefit premiums when their employees become ill or injured while on a non-medical leave. An employer can ask a pregnant employee to provide relevant information on her medical condition to confirm she is under medical treatment, as in any other medical absence. (For more information about medical information in the workplace, see the Commission interpretive bulletin *Obtaining and responding to medical information in the workplace*.)

Medical leave of some duration, whether long or short, is expected with any pregnancy.

Employers cannot require women to start a maternity leave instead of sick leave

An employer cannot decide which portion of a woman's absence from work because of her pregnancy is medical leave and which portion is maternity or parental leave as defined in the *Employment Standards Code*. This decision depends on the individual woman's pregnancy and birth experience as well as her personal choice. Two Ontario human rights cases addressed this issue.

¹⁰ *Brooks v. Canada Safeway Ltd.* (1989) 59 DLR 321 (S.C.C.)



In one case,¹¹ an employee who had not requested maternity leave was nevertheless placed on an unpaid maternity leave by her employer following the birth of her child. Dr. Crook had chosen to have her child while on vacation. She had not intended to take a maternity leave. After the birth of her child, she became ill. Her employer decided to place her on maternity leave, rather than allow her access to her sick leave benefits while she was absent from the workplace due to illness. Dr. Crook made a human rights complaint.

The Ontario board of inquiry that heard the case cited *Brooks v. Canada Safeway Ltd.*,¹² in which the court stated, “if an employer . . . enters into the field of compensation for health conditions and then excludes pregnancy as a valid reason for compensation, the employer has acted in a discriminatory fashion.” The board of inquiry agreed with the Ontario Human Rights Commission that “an inherent component of the right to equal treatment is the ability of the individual to make a choice as to how and whether benefit options will be utilized. To force a woman to apply for government benefits under UI [employment insurance] rather than to receive benefits owing to her by virtue of her employment because the employer misguidedly believes it is better for her would be to ‘imprison her in privileges.’” The board concluded that, where a woman does not request maternity leave, her employer cannot unilaterally place her on such a leave.

In another case,¹³ an employee made a number of allegations against her employer, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. One of the allegations was that the employer had discriminated against her by denying her sick leave benefits because of her pregnancy. The Ontario Human Rights Commission relied on the *Brooks* case for the proposition that pregnancy is a valid reason for absence from work. The board of inquiry summarized the law: “An employee has the right to choose whether she will apply for maternity leave under the *Employment Standards Act* or apply for employment benefits, including sick leave. An employer who denies sick leave benefits in those circumstances is in breach of his obligation under the [*Human Rights*] Code to provide a workplace free from discrimination on the basis of sex.”

The board found that there had been a breach of the Ontario *Human Rights Code* concerning the denial of sick leave benefits. The sick leave provisions of the policy were applied unequally to pregnant women in that, except for pregnancy, all other employees were eligible for benefits after 20 days of service. However, benefits were denied to pregnant women for pregnancy-related illnesses. The employer acted promptly to amend the discriminatory aspects of its policy and paid the complainant the sick pay due to her under the policy.

¹¹ *Ontario Cancer Treatment & Research Foundation v. Ontario (Human Rights Commission)* (1998), 34 C.C.E.L. (2d) 56 (Ont. Div. Ct.); upholding *Crook v. Ontario Cancer Treatment & Research Foundation* (No.3) (1996), 30 C.H.R.R. D/104 (Ont. Bd. of Inquiry)

¹² *Brooks v. Canada Safeway Ltd.* (1989) 59 DLR 321 (S.C.C.)

¹³ *Wight v. Ontario* (No. 2) (2000) C.H.R.R. Doc. 00-130 (Ont. Sup. Ct.)



Common questions about maternity leave and parental leave

1. Who is eligible to take maternity leave and parental leave under the *Employment Standards Code*?

Full-time and part-time employees who have worked at least 52 consecutive weeks for their employer are eligible.

2. How long are maternity leave and parental leave under the *Employment Standards Code*?

- ◆ Birth mothers are eligible to take up to 52 weeks of unpaid job-protected leave (15 weeks of maternity leave plus 37 weeks of parental leave).
- ◆ Fathers are eligible to take up to 37 weeks of unpaid job-protected parental leave after the birth of a child.
- ◆ Adoptive parents, including same-sex parents who adopt, are entitled to 37 weeks of unpaid job-protected parental leave.

The 37 weeks of parental leave may be taken by one parent or split between two parents, but the total may not exceed 37 weeks. For example, a birth mother might take 15 weeks of maternity leave plus 20 weeks of parental leave, and the father or legal co-parent could take the remaining 17 weeks of parental leave.

3. Can a pregnant woman who has not worked for her employer for 52 consecutive weeks be terminated from her job?

The *Employment Standards Code* does not address the legal responsibilities of employers related to employees with less than 52 consecutive weeks of employment.

However, under human rights law, an employer cannot terminate a woman's employment simply because she is pregnant, even if she has not worked for the employer for 52 consecutive weeks. Human rights law requires the employer to accommodate the medical consequences of pregnancy up to the point of undue hardship, even if an employee has not worked for an employer for 52 consecutive weeks. This may require adjusting job duties to accommodate pregnancy-related medical issues, providing medical leave as necessary, and returning her to her position when she is medically fit to work.

If a company provides benefits covering illness and a woman is eligible for these benefits, then she is entitled to access these benefits during the medical portion of her maternity leave. After the pregnant employee no longer has a medical reason to be off work, the employer no longer has to keep the woman's position open if she does not return to work after the medical leave, but the employer may choose to do so. The woman would have to arrange with her employer for additional leave (for example, vacation leave or leave without pay) after her medical leave.

4. Can an employer require an employee to start her maternity leave?

Under human rights law, an employer is obligated to accommodate any physical or mental disability, related to the pregnancy or otherwise, that the employee experiences. If the disability interferes with the employee's job performance, the employer must make a sincere effort to accommodate the employee to the point of undue hardship. If the employee cannot be accommodated on the job, the employee may be able to access available sick leave or other paid leave. An employer is **only** able to apply section 49 of the *Employment Standards Code* (see below) after fulfilling their obligations under human rights law and accommodating the employee to the point of undue hardship.

Section 49 of the *Employment Standards Code* states:

"If during the 12 weeks immediately before the estimated date of delivery the pregnancy of an employee interferes with the performance of her duties, an employer may give the employee written notice requiring her to start maternity leave."

5. Does an employee get paid while they are on maternity or parental leave? If so, who pays?

The federal government pays Employment Insurance (EI) benefits for up to 50 weeks if an employee qualifies for EI maternity or parental leave benefits. An employee must have worked a certain number of hours to be eligible to receive EI maternity and/or parental leave benefits. To find out more about applying for EI maternity and parental leave benefits, contact Service Canada. See the *Related resources* section of this bulletin for contact information.

Some employers who provide benefits for sick or disabled employees offer a Supplementary Employment Benefit plan, which tops up the EI benefits if the employee needs medical benefits while on a leave due to pregnancy. This ensures that pregnant employees receive the same benefits as other employees who are absent from work because of illness or disability.

Employees should contact their employers for more information about benefits they may be entitled to while on leave.

6. Can an employer terminate an employee while the employee is on maternity or parental leave?

Under human rights law, an employer may not terminate an employee while the employee is on a leave due to pregnancy unless the termination is reasonable and justifiable in the circumstances. For example, if the employer discovered that the employee had made substantial errors on the job or had stolen from the employer, and misconduct of this sort would normally be grounds for termination, then the employer may have the basis to terminate the employee.

Under the *Employment Standards Code*, an employer **cannot** terminate an employee while they are on maternity or parental leave unless the employer suspends or discontinues the business.

7. What happens if an employer terminates an employee after the employee returns from a leave due to pregnancy or a maternity or parental leave?

Once an employee returns to work after a medical leave due to pregnancy or a maternity or parental leave, the employer cannot use the time the employee has taken off as a reason to terminate the employee. However, if the termination is due to a valid reason unrelated to the particular leave, then the employer may have the basis to terminate the employee.

8. What happens if the employee returns to work and their position no longer exists?

Under human rights law, the employer must make reasonable attempts to accommodate the employee to the point of undue hardship. This may involve laying off a more junior employee and placing the returning employee in their position, offering the first available opening, retraining the employee, offering the employee a job share, or another form of accommodation.

Under the *Employment Standards Code*, the employer must reinstate the employee to their previous position at the end of the leave or provide alternate work of a comparable nature with at least the same salary and benefits.

Human rights protection after you return to work

Family status is a protected ground under the *AHR Act*, so certain situations that may arise for employees returning to work after childbirth may be protected under the *Act*. For example, employers have a responsibility to accommodate a parent's needs related to breastfeeding, up to the point of undue hardship. Human rights law also requires certain accommodations to be made for working parents with sick babies. For more information, contact the Commission.

Related resources

Commission publications

- ◆ Booklet: *Becoming a Parent in Alberta: What you need to know about human rights, maternity and parental leave, and benefits* is a one-stop practical guide for working Albertans who are becoming parents. It provides plain language information about human rights protection, maternity and parental leave, and Employment Insurance benefits.

Commission interpretive bulletins

- ◆ *Duty to accommodate*
- ◆ *Obtaining and responding to medical information in the workplace*, which includes the sample medical information forms, *Medical Absence Form* and *Medical Ability to Work Form*

Commission information sheets

- ◆ *Obtaining and responding to medical information in the workplace: A summary for employers*
- ◆ *Obtaining and responding to medical information in the workplace: A summary for employees*
- ◆ *Obtaining and responding to medical information in the workplace: A summary for doctors*

You can access Commission publications online at www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca. Use the quick links for easy access.

Employment Standards website

- ◆ <http://employment.alberta.ca/SFW/1224.html>
- ◆ Employees who want to make a complaint to Employment Standards must make their complaint within six months of the date on which their employment terminated.

Employment Insurance website

- ◆ www.servicecanada.gc.ca

Contact us

The Alberta Human Rights Commission is an independent commission of the Government of Alberta. Our mandate is to foster equality and reduce discrimination. We provide public information and education programs, and help Albertans resolve human rights complaints.

Northern Regional Office

800 Standard Life Centre
10405 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4R7
780-427-7661 Confidential Inquiry Line
780-427-6013 Fax

Southern Regional Office

Suite 310, 525 – 11 Avenue SW
Calgary, Alberta T2R 0C9
403-297-6571 Confidential Inquiry Line
403-297-6567 Fax

To call toll-free within Alberta, dial 310-0000 and then enter the area code and phone number.

For province-wide free access from a cellular phone, enter *310 (for Rogers Wireless) or #310 (for Telus and Bell), followed by the area code and phone number. Public and government callers can phone without paying long distance or airtime charges.

TTY service for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing

780-427-1597 Edmonton
403-297-5639 Calgary
Toll-free within Alberta 1-800-232-7215

E-mail humanrights@gov.ab.ca

Website www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca

Please note: A complaint must be made to the Alberta Human Rights Commission within one year after the alleged incident of discrimination. The one-year period starts the day after the date on which the incident occurred. For help calculating the one-year period, contact the Commission.

The website links in this publication are provided as a service and were accurate at the time of publication. The Commission is not responsible for content of websites other than its own. If you have questions about website links or their content, please contact the administrator of the website in question.

The Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund has provided funding for this publication.

Upon request, the Commission will make this publication available in accessible multiple formats. Multiple formats provide access for people with disabilities who do not read conventional print.

Pregnancy, childbirth and adoption – Reader Survey

Please help us improve this publication by answering any or all of these questions:

1. What information were you looking for in this publication?

2. Please indicate if you found:

all of the information
you were looking for

most of the information
you were looking for

none of the information
you were looking for

3. Please indicate how easy the publication was to understand.

very easy to
understand

somewhat easy
to understand

just right

somewhat difficult
to understand

very difficult
to understand

4. Please indicate if the format (design) made the publication easy to read.

very easy
to read

somewhat easy
to read

just right

somewhat difficult
to read

very difficult
to read

5. What information could be added to this publication to make it more useful?

6. Please list any other ideas you have for making this publication more useful.

7. Please indicate if you are:

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- an individual seeking information about your human rights
- working in human rights, human resources, law or another field related to human rights
- other (please specify) _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

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Coordinator, Educational Resource Development

Alberta Human Rights Commission

800 Standard Life Centre, 10405 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4R7

Fax 780-422-3563