

# Guidelines for Supporting Breastfeeding in the Workplace

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Approved by: Richard Butts, CAO

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## 1 – Guidelines Name

Supporting Breastfeeding in the Workplace

## 2 – Purpose

Halifax Regional Municipality supports breastfeeding and respects each person’s decision about how to feed their child. Halifax Regional Municipality recognizes and upholds the right to breastfeed in accordance with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. These guidelines assist employees by supporting and accommodating those who wish to breastfeed at the workplace.

## 3 – Applicability

All employees of Halifax Regional Municipality.

## 4 – Definitions

In the context of this document:

**Breastfeeding** means feeding directly from the breast as well as expression/pumping of breastmilk.

**HRM Premises** means all land (including parks, playgrounds, sports fields and trails), property, structures, installation, offices, job sites, vehicles and equipment owned, leased, operated or otherwise directly controlled by HRM.

**Workplace** means Halifax Regional Municipality’s physical work-sites, washrooms, locker rooms, lunch rooms, training facilities, business travel locations, conferences, work sponsored social gatherings, vehicles and work-related internet or social media activity, whether on municipal property or otherwise.

## 5 – Roles and Responsibilities

### Directors/Managers/Supervisors



Directors/Managers/Supervisors are responsible for:

- Supporting and accommodating employees who wish to breastfeed at work.
- Responding to breastfeeding requests in a timely manner.
- Working with breastfeeding employees to develop an accommodation agreement that outlines the specific arrangements, on an individualized basis.
- Contacting Human Resources if they have trouble finding appropriate alternatives or accommodations in the workplace, or have any other questions related to these guidelines.

### **Breastfeeding Employees**

Breastfeeding Employees are responsible for:

- Submitting a formal request to their supervisor to identify and discuss their anticipated breastfeeding needs in a timely manner.
- Making up any time beyond regular breaks, if necessary and operationally feasible, through arrangements with their manager or supervisor (if they are not using paid leave or time off without pay).

### **All Employees**

All Employees are responsible for:

- Respecting the rights of employees who wish to breastfeed at the workplace. No employee of the Municipality will ask a breastfeeding person to leave the premises, cover up, move to a more discreet area, use a restroom to breastfeed, or suggest any other alternative that is contrary to the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.
- Applying these guidelines in a manner that is consistent with workplace safety rules and/or obligations.

### **Human Resources**

Human Resources are responsible for:

- Providing support to business units and employees regarding the fair and equitable administration of these Guidelines.

## **6 – Guidelines**

Halifax Regional Municipality follows the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act, which protects the rights of breastfeeding persons, including breastfeeding their children and/or expressing/pumping breast milk when and where needed. The Municipality has a duty to accommodate employees who are breastfeeding up to the point where the accommodation would create undue hardship. Arrangements, accommodations or limitations for breastfeeding employees will respect the individual's dignity and will be in accordance with Nova Scotia Human Rights legislation.

Employees planning to breastfeed in the workplace must advise their immediate supervisor in a timely manner. Supervisors will respond in a timely manner and collaborate with the employee to create a breastfeeding plan for the workplace. Supervisors will work with breastfeeding employees to establish mutually agreeable hours of work, assignments and breaks to support breastfeeding practices while ensuring that these are compatible with operational requirements and consistent with collective agreements and/or other non-union employment policies.

Arrangements may include but are not limited to:

- A. Flexible hours – this may include hours of work and breaks;
- B. Space – suitable space for breastfeeding/pumping that is clean, quiet, comfortable and safe for the employee (and baby, if applicable);
- C. Arrangements for a caregiver to bring the baby to the workplace to breastfeed;
- D. Time off without pay; and
- E. Use of paid leave (i.e. vacation or banked overtime).

Ongoing, supervisors and breastfeeding employees may need to modify the breastfeeding plan to adjust to the baby's needs or changes in the workplace.

Harassment and discrimination toward a person who is breastfeeding is considered sex-based discrimination. Harassment or discrimination toward any breastfeeding employee will not be tolerated.

## **7 – Related Guidelines or Practices**

[NS Human Rights Act](#)

## **8 – Contact**

Human Resources Business Partners

## **9 – Attachments**

NA