



Criteria for Recognition as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recognizes workplaces as Breastfeeding Friendly if they ensure that appropriate *support, time, education* and *place* (STEP) are provided for pregnant and breastfeeding employees. Some of the requirements for Breastfeeding Friendly recognition are required by federal or Minnesota state law, while others are not legal requirements but are important to ensure adequate support for breastfeeding employees.

The self-assessment checklist below outlines the elements of a workplace lactation support program required for recognition as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace by MDH. For links to resources that can help you learn about and implement each element of a comprehensive lactation support program, visit the employer resources page on the MDH breastfeeding site. To apply for recognition as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace, complete and submit an application, available online.

Criteria for Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Recognition:

Written policy or guideline:

Workplaces must have a written breastfeeding policy or guideline that is routinely shared with staff and addresses the elements of *support, time, education* and *place* outlined below. The policy format should follow other guidance provided to employees. This may mean a formal policy or something as simple as a section in an employee handbook. See the resources page [\[link\]](#) for examples of workplace breastfeeding policies.

Workplace policy addresses:

- Support for breastfeeding employees (explain)
 - Adequate break time for employees to express breast milk or breastfeed as needed
 - Education of staff regarding the breastfeeding policy and of supervisors regarding the basics of workplace support for breastfeeding employees
 - Provision of a place to breastfeed or express breast milk, as outlined below
- Information about the breastfeeding policy and workplace lactation support is provided to employees at the time they request maternity leave.

Support:

- Employer provides opportunities for breastfeeding mothers to receive support and encouragement.
Examples include message boards in the lactation room, internal workplace support groups, information about your local breastfeeding coalition, or a list of support opportunities available in your community.

Optional: The employer maintains a list of local breastfeeding resources (local La Leche League chapter, lactation consultants, breastfeeding coalition, support groups) that is provided to pregnant and breastfeeding employees seeking breastfeeding information and support.

Time:

- Employers must provide work schedule and work pattern flexibility to accommodate reasonable break times for breastfeeding employees to express breast milk or breastfeed as needed, for one year or longer after the child's birth.

Written policy or guideline should reflect this. This is required by state and federal law.

Education:

Employers must be able to describe how they:

- Ensure that all employees are familiar with the employer's breastfeeding policy
- Train all supervisors to support breastfeeding

Place:

Workplaces must have the following in place:

- An appropriate number of lactation spaces relative to the number of breastfeeding employees

The appropriate number of lactation rooms depends on the size of the company, the number of female employees of childbearing age, and the number of buildings on campus, among other factors. Multiple sites should be provided if it will take breastfeeding employees more than 5 minutes to walk from their workstation to the lactation room. Companies with many female employees may wish to create lactation "suites," installing partitions or curtains in the lactation room to accommodate multiple users at one time.

Each lactation space must:

- Be in an accessible location, within 5 minutes or less of breastfeeding employees' workstations
 - Be a private space, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion by coworkers and the public. A locking door is ideal. If a locking door cannot be provided, the employer must be able to explain how they ensure privacy. *(State & federal law)*
- Include access to an electrical outlet *(State law)*
- Include a comfortable chair
- Include a small table or surface to support pumping equipment
- Have or be located near clean refrigerator space for milk storage
- Have or be located near a place to wash hands and clean pump equipment

A description and photo of the lactation room(s) are required as part of the application.

While not essential for recognition, if your workplace has taken steps to make the lactation space especially comfortable by providing, for example, a hospital grade pump, soft lighting, a bulletin board, a CD player, breastfeeding art, and/or a mirror, you will be invited to describe what you have done. We welcome and encourage employers to take steps beyond the basics of breastfeeding support outlined above.

If breastfeeding employees travel for work, the employer should help ensure that a clean, private place to pump will be available where they travel. If employees travel to areas without appropriate accommodations, the employer might consider creating a travel kit for breastfeeding employees. This could include a privacy screen for car windows, a universal lock for a door and sanitary wipes.

