

Must we allow unlimited breaks for mothers to express breast milk?

Q. An employee just came into HR demanding that we provide her with unlimited breaks for expressing milk. Is this true? She said she read it at the Minnesota Department of Labor website.

A. Yes. Under the Affordable Care Act, hourly workers are entitled to unpaid breaks to express milk. Employers must provide a secure and private space to express milk. That space cannot be a bathroom.

Minnesota also has rules in place for milk expression breaks. The Minnesota law covers more workers than the federal law does. Your employee may have seen guidance on this topic at www.dli.mn.gov/ls/Pdf/pregnancy_nursing.pdf. For a comparison of the two laws, see tinyurl.com/MN-nursing-rights.

Shirley Lerner and Kerry Middleton advise clients out of Littler Mendelson's Minneapolis office.