

# Maine Workplaces Support Nursing Employees



**MAINE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**LABOR**  
Bureau of Labor Standards

An employer who is found to have violated this law through a hearing process must pay a civil penalty of \$100– \$500 for every violation.



This document is a collaborative effort of the Maine WIC Nutrition Program and the Maine Department of Labor.

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Employers of nursing employees, for three years after the birth of a child, must:

- provide adequate unpaid break time, or permit an employee to use paid break or meal time each day to express breast milk for a nursing child.
- make reasonable efforts to provide a clean room or other location, other than a bathroom, where an employee may express breast milk in privacy.

An employer shall not retaliate or discriminate against an employee who exercises the right provided under this section.

## How can employers support nursing parents?

- Develop a workplace policy, including identifying who oversees implementation, and inform employees of new policy.
- Identify a clean, private place with access to electric outlets and a chair.
- Offer flexible breaks.

## What can employees do to make nursing in the workplace easier?

- Understand Maine's Nursing Mothers in the Workplace Law 26MRS §604.
- Create a "back to work" plan before your baby is born.
- Determine scheduling and support needs and talk to your employer as soon as possible.
- Do a workplace walk-through and suggest ideas.

## Why do Maine workplaces support nursing employees?

- Average annual savings equals \$400 per breastfed baby (lower medical costs with fewer health insurance claims).
- Reduces employee turnover.
- Lowers employee absenteeism.
- Improves employee productivity.
- Raises employee morale and company loyalty.

Additional breastfeeding protection in Maine:

The Nursing in Public Law (5MRS §4634) provides protection for parents who nurse in public.

A parent may breastfeed her baby in any location, public or private, where the parent is otherwise authorized to be.

## For more information on working and pumping visit:

WIC Nutrition Program: [www.maine.gov/WIC](http://www.maine.gov/WIC)  
or 1-800-437-9300

[www.workandpump.com](http://www.workandpump.com)  
[www.lli.org](http://www.lli.org)

## For more information or if you believe that your rights have been violated, contact:

Maine Department of Labor  
Bureau of Labor Standards  
45 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0045  
[www.maine.gov/labor/bls](http://www.maine.gov/labor/bls)  
**207-623-7900 or 207-623-7930**

Maine Human Rights Commission  
[www.maine.gov/mhrc/](http://www.maine.gov/mhrc/) or 207-624-6290  
TTY users call Maine Relay 711