

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

[ COMPANY ]

[ UNIT ]

[ LOCATION ]



[ATTN LINE]

[DATE]

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, [UNIT, AND OFFICIAL MILITARY ADDRESS]

SUBJECT: Breastfeeding support plan on return to duty

1. References:

a. Breastfeeding, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health, 2000, <http://www.womenshealth.gov/Breastfeeding/bluprntbk2.pdf>

b. Information and Resources Provided to Military Personnel Regarding Breastfeeding: Policy Implications. Michael R. Bell, MD, MPH, MAJ, MC, USA. Occupational Medicine, U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, Nov 2002

c. Position of the American Dietetic Association: Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding, Journal of the American Dietetic Association, May 2005

d. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health People 2010, Objective 16-19, January 2000, <http://www.healthypeople.gov/document/html/objectives/16-19.htm>

e. World Health Organization, Infant and Young Child Feeding, 2003

2. Purpose: Provide information on breastfeeding to educate Commanders and postpartum Soldiers, and propose a support plan to assist Soldiers in breastfeeding on return to duty.

3. Background:

a. The Army does not have a formal policy on breastfeeding, but supports healthy families by allowing 6 weeks maternity leave and 4 months deferment from deployment.

b. Federal policy ensures a woman's right to breastfeed her child on federal property and encourages workplace lactation support programs and flexible work schedules options.

[\(http://www.opm.gov/employment\\_and\\_benefits/worklife/officialdocuments/handbooksguides/nursing/ \)](http://www.opm.gov/employment_and_benefits/worklife/officialdocuments/handbooksguides/nursing/)

c. State laws generally say that women must be given reasonable, unpaid break time to breastfeed. (<http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/policies/index.htm> )

d. Workplace lactation support programs are found at National Security Agency, Pentagon, Office Personal Management, National Institutes of Health, and many U.S. government agency departments.

(<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/Breastfeeding/breastfeedingmainpage.HTM> )

e. Resources in DoD hospitals vary by location and typically focus on prenatal and early postpartum care.

4. Benefits: Recent research has clearly demonstrated the crucial role breastfeeding plays in infant and maternal health.

a. Benefits to the infant are both physical and emotional. Human milk is uniquely superior for infant digestion, brain development, and growth.

b. Maternal benefits include a more rapid uterine recovery and earlier return to pre-pregnant weight. Studies indicate reduced risk of ovarian and uterine cancer and premenopausal breast cancer.

c. Social and economic benefits exist since breastfed babies are half as likely to get sick their first year reducing health care costs and employee absenteeism for care attributed to child illness. There is also the direct economic saving for the Soldier and family of not purchasing infant formula.

5. Professional endorsements:

a. US Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy People 2010 goal is to increase to 75% the proportion of mothers whom breastfed their babies in the early postpartum period and to 50% the proportion who continue breastfeeding until their babies are 6 months of age.

b. American Academy of Pediatrics recommends mothers breastfeed for the first twelve months, and encourages employers to provide facilities and adequate time in the workplace for breast pumping.

c. American Dietetic Association's position is that exclusive breastfeeding provides optimal nutrition and health protection for the first 6 months of life, and breastfeeding with complementary foods for at least 12 months is the ideal feeding pattern for infants.

d. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists supports breastfeeding in *Guidelines for Perinatal Care*.

e. La Leche League urges employers to consider providing the means to help working women breastfeed.

f. World Health Organization and UNICEF recommend breastfeeding as an "unequalled way of providing ideal food for the healthy growth and development of infants" with "exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months the optimal way of feeding infants".

6. Strategies/proposed plan for success: The following is a proposal for the Soldier to follow to solicit support for breastfeeding from the Commander. It indicates what the Soldier is willing to do to gain permission/support to breastfeed her baby upon return to duty.

a. Communicate with supervisor before the birth to establish a working plan to support breastfeeding on return to work.

b. Consult Occupational Health about workplace hazards as part of the breastfeeding plan.

c. Develop and have approved a proposed plan (sample as Enclosure) that includes:

1) A work schedule that allows for PT time, lunch and a projected series of breaks to pump, illustrating the ability to complete assigned tasks and successfully breastfeed.

2) A plan that includes the availability of a private space such as an office, partitioned workspace, or latrine with electrical outlet and adequate space to sit and pump.

3) A back up plan for breastfeeding support in emergencies or unusual situations, such as processes for pumping/storing/transporting during field exercises or long duty days.

4) A process for the Soldier to safely store breast milk and to demonstrate that the infant has adapted to feeding from an alternative source (i.e., nipple feeding or alternate feeding methods).

d. Breastfeed exclusively on weekends to keep supply up.

7. Point of contact for this is [name and rank] at [phone].

Encl

[NAME AND SIGNATURE BLOCK]

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[ATTN LINE]

[DATE]

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, [UNIT, AND OFFICIAL MILITARY ADDRESS]

SUBJECT: Breastfeeding work plan

1. Purpose: Provide a breastfeeding work plan to gain permission/support for the Soldier to breastfeed her baby upon return to duty.
  - a. Meeting with supervisor to discuss breastfeeding work plan on return to work is scheduled for [date].
  - b. Occupational Health workplace hazards consultation is scheduled for [date].
  - c. Work schedule with the following times to pump is as follows: [insert specific times of day below as appropriate]
    - 1) Before PT time
    - 2) Morning break
    - 3) Lunch
    - 4) Afternoon break
  - d. Use of room [indicate location] that allows for required privacy, adequate space, electrical outlet, and access to nearby sink.
  - e. In emergencies or unusual situations, such as during field exercises or long duty days, the following processes will be implemented for pumping/ storing/ transporting. [insert what will be done, i.e., pump prior to FTX and freeze milk, pump during FTX and dispose of milk, bottle feed].
  - f. Breast milk will be safely stored [explain where and how, and what has been done to demonstrate that the infant has adapted to feeding from an alternative source (i.e., nipple feeding or alternate feeding methods)].