

WASHINGTON

Washington Expands Pregnancy and Lactation Accommodations

On May 20, 2025, Washington [amended](#) the Healthy Starts Act (Act), which requires covered employers to provide reasonable accommodations for pregnancy and related conditions. The amended Act, which takes effect **Jan. 1, 2027**, will cover more employers and expand employee protections.

Background

Washington currently requires employers with **15 or more employees** to provide reasonable accommodations for an employee's pregnancy and pregnancy-related health conditions, including the need to express breast milk, unless doing so would impose undue hardship on the employer.

Amendment Overview

Effective Jan. 1, 2027, all Washington employers with **one or more employees** will be required to provide pregnancy accommodations under the Act. The amended Act will also provide greater protections for employees, including:

- **Paid lactation breaks**—Currently, the Act requires employers to provide reasonable break time to express breast milk. The amended Act will require employers to provide paid lactation breaks at the employee's regular compensation rate. Such paid breaks must be in addition to any legally required meal and rest breaks.
- **Scheduling flexibility for postpartum visits**—The Act requires employers to provide scheduling flexibility for prenatal visits as a reasonable accommodation. The amended Act will require employers to provide such flexibility for postpartum visits as well.

The amended Act will also transfer enforcement authority from the attorney general to the Washington Department of Labor and Industry, which may assess civil penalties. Individuals will continue to have a private right of action as well.

Employer Takeaways

Small employers not currently required to provide pregnancy accommodations may be required to do so, effective Jan. 1, 2027. Such employers may take steps to ensure compliance, such as training relevant personnel and updating accommodation policies. In addition, all covered employers may review policies and practices to ensure compliance with the expanded law by the effective date.

Provided to you by **Employco USA, Inc.**

Highlights

May 20, 2025

Washington amended the Act to impose pregnancy accommodation requirements on more employers and expand employee protections.

Jan. 1, 2027

The amended Act takes effect.

***Effective Jan. 1, 2027,
Washington
employers with one or
more employees must
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related
accommodations.***