

Lactation Room Setup Guide

Importance of a Lactation Room

Women comprise nearly half of the U.S. labor force, and for new mothers returning to work, the thought of breastfeeding seems like a daunting task (e.g., lugging a breast pump and milk back and forth, finding time to pump). If they decide to do it, they must also figure out the logistics to make it work. If your company wants to help support and ease the transition back to work for a breastfeeding mom, we encourage you to create a private, safe, and clean place for her to express breast milk by building a lactation room or nursing room.

According to the CDC 2018 Breastfeeding Report Card, more than 80 percent of mothers attempt to nurse their newborns. Most breastfeeding moms have a goal to breastfeed for the first six months to one year of their baby's life. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Association of Family Practitioners (AAFP) recommend that babies receive nothing but breast milk during the first six months of life and continue receiving breast milk for at least the first year and beyond.

Without the support of their employer, this goal can be challenging to achieve. Creating a lactation room will increase the chances of the working mom to succeed at breastfeeding and improve her health and her child's.

Requirements

Lactation rooms are not required by building codes; rather, they are regulated by labor codes or health and safety codes. The 2010 Affordable Care Act (ACA) amended the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to include the "Break Time for Nursing Mothers Provision," which requires companies with more than 50 employees to provide new mothers adequate spaces in which to pump, described as "other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from co-workers and the public." It does not provide more specific design guidelines or requirements.

In addition to creating a private space for breastfeeding moms to pump milk, employers must also provide reasonable break time. Until the baby's first birthday, nursing moms may take time to get to the lactation room, as well as the time needed for the pumping sessions themselves. Typically, that's a 20-minute period every three or four hours during the work day, but it will vary depending on the needs of the mother and child.

While some employers view the lactation room as a work-life benefit to the new working mom that can increase loyalty and productivity, it actually helps the employer as well. Research has shown that corporate lactation programs help new mothers avoid taking time off work due to a sick child. The United States Breastfeeding Committee cites a 77% reduction in absenteeism among firms with lactation support and twice as many one-day absences among employees whose babies aren't breastfed.

Allocating Space

When designing a lactation room, it must be private and must protect the breastfeeding mom from being seen by co-workers or the general public while pumping breast milk. The room can be as simple or elaborate as desired.

The amount of space needed for a lactation room is minimal. It does not require a full-sized office. The size can be as small as 4' x 5' to accommodate a comfortable chair and a small table or shelf for a breast pump.

If space is not available, check out Mamava. Mamava, a trusted partner of Acelleron, provides freestanding lactation suites. Their pods provide privacy, cleanliness, and all you need to use a breast pump or nurse an infant - while simultaneously reminding passersby that breastfeeding should be supported and celebrated by all of us because of the good it does for babies, women, families, and society in general.



Recommendations

Below are recommendations and considerations for creating a private, comfortable, and functional lactation room/space:

Location

- You should have one room per each 100 female employees.
- Locate the lactation room in a space that is NOT in a restroom; lactation rooms in restrooms do not meet the requirements of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).
- Try to avoid creating a lactation space that can only be accessed through bathrooms, locker rooms, or similar areas.
- Assure that the room is temperature-controlled, warm, and comfortable, equivalent to what is provided in other occupied areas of the building.
- Arrange for the room to be placed on the building's regular cleaning schedule.

Privacy

- The room should be a locked or secure area.
- Identify the room with signage and provide a "Privacy Please" sign.
- Acoustics are another important factor, so consider purchasing a sound machine for the room. They help relax moms and help dampen the sound of the breast pump and outside noises.
- If the room contains windows, provide blinds, shades or other accommodations to prohibit views into the room.

Furnishing

- Obtain a washable, comfortable chair that allows the new working mom to sit up straight, as this is the ideal position to pump in.
- Place a small table or flat surface next to the chair for a breast pump to rest.
- Consider using a non-carpeted floor that can be easily cleaned.

- Do your best to provide a sink, so breast pump equipment can be cleaned. If a sink is not provided in the room, a clean sink should be available nearby.
- Provide easy access to an electric outlet.
- Consider providing a small refrigerator for storing breast milk.
- Consider providing lockers or personal storage space.

Décor

- Create a relaxing space by using soft colors and gentle lighting (e.g., lamps, wall sconces).
- Add artwork and decorations that encourage mothers to relax.
- Place a mirror in the room for moms to adjust their clothing before and after.
- Place a clock in the room so the mom can track her pumping session.

Support

- Post a room usage schedule or create a Google or Outlook calendar so those who use the room can view and edit.
- A place to post your breastfeeding policy and educational materials.
- Allocate a place to display images of baby pictures to help stimulate milk flow.
- Provide a log or notebook for moms to share their experiences and offer support.

Supplies/Accessories

- Ensure there is an adequate supply of paper towels.
- Provide sanitizing wipes to clean up the flat surface and pump after use, as well as to clean pump supplies (e.g., breast shields and parts).
- Provide snacks (e.g., fruit and nuts) and water to help keep moms nourished and hydrated.
- Provide disposable nursing pads to prevent milk from leaking onto clothing.
- Consider purchasing a hospital grade, multi-user pump so the mom does not have to bring hers back to and from work.

Need help?

Does your company need help creating or enhancing its lactation room(s) to help ease the transition back to work for your breastfeeding moms? Acelleron makes pumping at work easy through our **Pump@Work employer benefit program**, a low-cost lactation room subscription service that helps remove workplace barriers for employees such as the hassle of lugging breastfeeding equipment, supplies, and milk-boosting snacks back and forth to work. For more information, email us at wellness@acelleron.com, or visit us at acelleron.com/pumpatwork