

Pregnancy and operational firefighting

Introduction

When to use	<p>This policy sets out the expected behaviours that apply when a firefighter, officer or executive officer becomes aware they are pregnant.</p> <p>Apply this policy to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss and agree on alternative duties when pregnant • arrange parental leave and payment of the maternity grant • get clearance to return to operational duties • resolve any dispute about the application of this policy.
Purpose	<p>Pregnancy is a normal, healthy and exciting part of many people's lives. However, due to the nature of our operational activities, there are special health and safety considerations to consider when a firefighter becomes pregnant.</p> <p>The aim of this policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce or eliminate exposure to potential hazards and operational activities that may place you, your unborn child, colleagues, or the public, at risk • provide a safe and supportive work environment and prevent discrimination.
Who it applies to	<p>This policy applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • firefighters, officers and executive officers (career and volunteer) who are pregnant or considering becoming pregnant • officer and manager of the person. <p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the purposes of this policy 'executive officers' covers all roles from Group Manager to the National Commander's Group. • For volunteers, the employment-related aspects of this policy don't apply.
Contents	<p>This policy contains the following content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative duties • Return to work • Employment relationship matters • Related information

Alternative duties

Who to inform	<p>You need to inform your manager or officer as soon as you become aware that you're pregnant.</p> <p>For steps, see procedure: Agree on alternative duties during pregnancy.</p>
Agree on alternative duties	<p>To reduce or eliminate exposure to potential hazards and activities, you and your manager or officer need to discuss and agree on suitable duties until such time you decide, or are required, to start parental/maternity leave. For the most part, for the safety of yourself and others, these duties will be non-operational.</p> <p>Let your manager or officer know of any issues that arise when performing the alternative duties.</p> <p>Note: Involve your chosen representative and lead maternity carer in these discussions. You're encouraged to have a support person present as well.</p>
Considerations	<p>When agreeing on alternative duties, the manager or officer must take into consideration the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reasonable wishes you have • recommendations of a relevant health professional • your entitlement to the same conditions and benefits of work as when you're not pregnant • operational and promotional needs of the District or station • nature and range of alternative duties available. <p>Note: All reasonable options that make the person feel supported and safe should be considered.</p> <p>For information on your rights and guidelines for managers, also see these NZ Human Rights Commission documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers' guidelines for the prevention of pregnancy discrimination • Your rights as a pregnant worker.
Criteria	<p>The alternative duties, as much as possible, should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe and not present risks to you, your unborn child, or colleagues • compatible with your abilities and interests • flexible enough to accommodate your changing health requirements.

Ideas for alternative duties	<p>Alternative duties that meet the above criteria may include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building inspections • Evacuations planning and monitoring • Community work, e.g. neighbourhood watch • Coordinating or delivering training • Coordinating station visits • Deliveries within the District that don't involve heavy lifting • Public safety promotion programmes, e.g. FireWise, school visits, static displays • Participate in training and drills, where it's safe to do so, to maintain OSM status • Recruitment • Public enquiries • Research projects • Theory-based training • Practical-based training, where risks and hazards can safely managed • Smoke alarm installations • Work at a computer, and station or brigade administration. <p>Note: You and your manager should assess the risk of these duties to you and your stage of the pregnancy.</p>						
No suitable alternative duties or serious risks	<p>You may be required to start maternity leave if, after discussion and consultation, there are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no suitable alternative duties • serious risks to you, your unborn child or colleagues. <p>Sections 9(2) and 14 of the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 give us the right to appoint a start date for maternity leave on these grounds.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="411 1462 794 1529">If early leave is invoked by...</th><th data-bbox="802 1462 1436 1529">then the reasons must be...</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="411 1529 794 1641">you</td><td data-bbox="802 1529 1436 1641"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fully documented and signed • supported by a medical certificate </td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="411 1641 794 1709">us</td><td data-bbox="802 1641 1436 1709">fully documented and signed.</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	If early leave is invoked by...	then the reasons must be...	you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fully documented and signed • supported by a medical certificate 	us	fully documented and signed.
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Watch assignment	<p>You may remain on your usual watch for all or most of the time you're on alternative duties.</p> <p>However, you may also temporarily shift to Black Watch. Some people find that the shift to Black Watch has helped to manage fatigue associated with shift work and to limit the likelihood of having to work alone.</p>						

Overtime	<p>Based on the needs of the organisation and your health, you may be offered occasional overtime at the discretion of your manager.</p> <p>Overtime must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exceed the level of overtime performed by you in the three months immediately before the pregnancy • place you at any undue risk.
Uniform	<p>When the standard uniform is no longer comfortable, the Fire and Emergency New Zealand-approved maternity uniform is available. For details, see: Maternity uniform order (N2-1d FM).</p>

Return to work

Protection of position	<p>The District Manager must plan appropriately for your anticipated return at least one month before your planned return date.</p> <p>When you return to duty at any time during, or at the expiry of, your parental leave, you'll be expected to return to the same watch and station, wherever possible.</p>								
Return to operational duties	<p>We acknowledge that returning to operational duties may be a challenging time for new parents. There may also be specific challenges due to the physical nature of operational firefighting. You may want to seek support from your manager in the following situations:</p> <table> <tr> <th>If you...</th><th>then...</th></tr> <tr> <td>can't return to full operational duties due to any health or fitness concerns</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you should speak to your doctor to get medical guidelines • discuss with your manager and Rehabilitation Coordinator, if needed, to establish a supported return-to-work plan. <p>Note: In some cases, we may need you to obtain a medical clearance to return to operational duties.</p> </td></tr> <tr> <td>can't return to full operational duties due to 'red light' OSM status</td><td>your manager will discuss what duties you can undertake and what timeframe is needed to achieve 'green light' status.</td></tr> <tr> <td>find you're more fatigued than usual in your transition back to operational duties</td><td>discuss with your manager and Rehabilitation Coordinator, if needed, the option of a supported return-to-work plan.</td></tr> </table>	If you...	then...	can't return to full operational duties due to any health or fitness concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you should speak to your doctor to get medical guidelines • discuss with your manager and Rehabilitation Coordinator, if needed, to establish a supported return-to-work plan. <p>Note: In some cases, we may need you to obtain a medical clearance to return to operational duties.</p>	can't return to full operational duties due to 'red light' OSM status	your manager will discuss what duties you can undertake and what timeframe is needed to achieve 'green light' status.	find you're more fatigued than usual in your transition back to operational duties	discuss with your manager and Rehabilitation Coordinator, if needed, the option of a supported return-to-work plan.
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Employment relationship matters

Paternity and maternity leave	<p>Refer to the <i>NZPFU collective agreement</i> and the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 for your paternity/maternity leave and grant entitlements.</p> <p>To apply for leave and the maternity grant, see procedure: Apply for leave. The maternity grant clause has been agreed by us and the NZPFU to mean the following:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="414 481 1236 750"> <thead> <tr> <th>That an employee on...</th><th>will receive a payment equivalent to...</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>a 'coloured' watch</td><td>8.5 weeks' pay</td></tr> <tr> <td>black watch</td><td>6 weeks' pay</td></tr> <tr> <td>yellow watch</td><td>7.5 weeks' pay</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	That an employee on...	will receive a payment equivalent to...	a 'coloured' watch	8.5 weeks' pay	black watch	6 weeks' pay	yellow watch	7.5 weeks' pay
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Equal employment opportunity	<p>Subject to any considerations arising from the pregnancy, we'll treat you fairly as we do for any other employee under our obligations to promote equal opportunity in employment and to be a good employer. See policy: Good employer and equal employment opportunity.</p> <p>For example, the following remain unchanged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entitlements to leave, including rostered time off. • Opportunities for promotion and training. 								
Disputes	<p>Where you and your manager have a dispute about the application of this policy, both parties are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare a submission to outline their view of the dispute and supporting facts • forward the submissions to the Region Manager for a decision. <p>After discussion with the HR Manager, the decision of the Region Manager is final.</p>								

Related information

Topics	<p>Refer to these Portal topics to help you apply and comply with this policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on alternative duties during pregnancy • Apply for leave
Guidelines	<p>Human Rights Commission related guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers' guidelines for the prevention of pregnancy discrimination • Your rights as a pregnant worker

Policies	<p>Related policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good employer and equal employment opportunity • Safety, health and wellbeing policy commitment
Legislation	<p>We must comply with legislation, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Relations Act 2000 • Human Rights Act 1993 • New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 • Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 <p>Note: For information on Government parental leave, see www.employment.govt.nz > Employment relations > Leave and holidays > Parental leave.</p>

Document information

Owner	DCE People
Steward	National Manager People Experience
Last reviewed	1 July 2019
Review period	Every second year

Record of amendment

Date	Brief description of amendment
September 2015	<p>Under the Corporate Information Framework project, the Pregnancy in operational firefighters policy (POLHR6.5) has been renamed and reformatted to make it easier for personnel to find and understand.</p> <p>The audience of this policy has been extended to officers and executive officers. The supplementary information that didn't meet the framework's definition of policy has been extracted to topic reference material.</p> <p>Note: The UFBA has not yet provided feedback on this policy.</p>
1 July 2017	<p>This policy was reviewed as part of the implementation of the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017. No substantive amendments to content were considered necessary before 1 July 2017 therefore only superficial updates were made. Outdated references and links may remain.</p>
1 July 2019	<p>Additional NZ Human Rights Commission guidelines and legislation references added. Document owner role name updated.</p>

27 September
2021

Updated for Tranche 2. Not reviewed. Steward information added.

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Introduction

When to wear	<p>Fire and Emergency New Zealand personnel may wear maternity uniform when they are pregnant and standard uniform is no longer comfortable.</p> <p>The uniform consists of a top and trousers.</p>
Safety considerations	<p>The maternity uniform must not be used for carrying out operations that would usually require PPE, as it does not offer fire or mechanical protection.</p>
Ordering	<p>The maternity uniform is ordered using a N2-1d Maternity uniform order form.</p> <p>For more information on sizes, see Sizing in this document.</p>
Delivery timeframe	<p>These garments are made to order. Allow two weeks for delivery (and longer during the January holiday period).</p>
Sample sizes	<p>Samples are available for determining sizes. There is a fee of \$12.00 for this service.</p>
Include measurements	<p>The supplier asks that personnel write measurements and sizes on the order form. (See form: N2-1d FM Maternity uniform order, Part C – Measurements, Part D – Order, Part E – Sample to confirm size.)</p>

Design information

Top

Fabric	<p>The top fabric is a viscose polyester knit.</p> <p>Drying instructions: Do not dry in a clothes dryer.</p>
Design features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • V-neck with collar • Epaulettes • Hip length • Fitted shoulder, bust and sleeve • Soft sleeve cuff

Options available

These options are available to choose from.

Feature	Options
Sleeve length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short (elbow length) • Three-quarter Note: When ordering, provide measurement from point of shoulder to wrist bone.
Line/shape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-fitting with hem band – this will become quite fitting as the pregnancy progresses • A-line with 'flat' hem – allows more room; recommended for sizes 20-22

Example

This photo shows the semi-fitting uniform top with short sleeve.

**Trousers****Fabric**

The trouser fabric is a blend of viscose, nylon and spandex.

Design features

- Square leg with fitted hip and thigh
- Inside leg measures 78 cm, crotch to hem.
Note: If you need a different length, ensure you measure with shoes on.

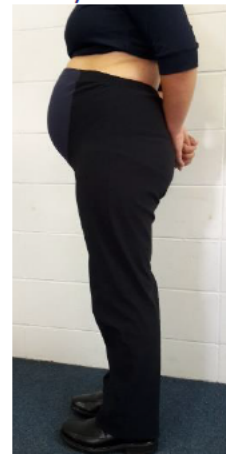
Style options

The maternity trousers are available in two styles.

Style	Features
Roll top	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide and firm tummy band – can be worn rolled over or up high, depending on your stage of pregnancy • Pockets (optional extra)
Lycra tummy insert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotton/lycra tummy insert, cut to sit high over baby • Supple elastic – no adjusting required • No pockets

Examples

These photos show the appearance and detail of the two trouser styles.

Roll top**Lycra insert**

Sizing

Size guide

This table shows the sizes and measurements.

Size	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22
Bust	88	93	98	103	108	113	118	123
Hip	94	99	104	109	114	119	125	130

Measuring your size

If it is possible, use a tape measure to measure yourself, and include these measurements on the order form, so the sizing can be checked.

Measurements are best taken standing side-on in the mirror. Check that the:

- tape is just tight enough so a finger can slide between the tape and the body
- tape is level all the way around
- hip is measured at the largest circumference
- bust is measured at the nipple line.

Ordering

Ordering process

Firefighters wishing to purchase this uniform must:

1. first gain approval from their Group Manager or, if they are working for their Region, their Region Manager
2. fill out the [N2-1d Maternity uniform order form](#) and submit it by email to the authorising officer for approval.

Once the authorising officer approves the order, they will email the order to the above address.

Prompt processing

It is important to include the correct invoicing address and the name of the authorising officer on the form, so that the supplier's invoice can be processed promptly.

Indicative prices

These prices apply from March 2018.

Garment	Size	Cost
Top	8 – 16	\$100
	18 – 22	\$110
Trousers	8 – 14	\$100
	16 – 18	\$105
	20 – 22	\$110

Trouser pockets, if requested: \$10 per pair

Delivery: \$6 per garment to a maximum of \$12

Related information

Also refer to the following:

- [N2-1d Maternity uniform order form](#)

Document information

Owner	National Manager Response Capability
Steward	
Last reviewed	12 September 2018
Review period	Every second year

Record of amendments

Date	Brief description of amendment
June 2013	Trouser cut choices removed and prices updated.
April 2018	Rebranded for Fire and Emergency, indicative prices updated.
September 2018	Example photos added. Wording and formats adjusted slightly for clarity.
September 2021	T2/USD changes applied. Not otherwise reviewed. Owner updated.

Leave

Introduction

When to use	<p>Use this guide to clarify and find information on employee rights, entitlements and obligations that apply to leave.</p> <p>Note: For information about absences from work due to sickness or injury, refer to your employment agreement.</p>
Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual leave • Public holidays • Tangihanga/bereavement leave • Parental leave • Jury service • Sporting and cultural leave • Other leave types • Related information

Annual leave

Taking annual leave is important	<p>You're encouraged to take annual leave in blocks of at least five consecutive days, and preferably at least one block of ten consecutive days each year. This is to ensure you have adequate restorative breaks away from work.</p> <p>Taking breaks away from the workplace is important for your physical and psychological health and wellbeing. Working for prolonged periods without taking adequate time-off can contribute to personal health risks, and will limit your productivity and focus when you're at work.</p> <p>It's your responsibility to ensure that you use your annual leave to support your own health and wellbeing, and your manager's responsibility to encourage and support you to do this.</p>
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Annual leave entitlement

For your annual leave (annual holiday) entitlement, refer to your employment agreement.

This table clarifies provisions in the following situations:

Situation	Provision
Annual leave in advance	You may not have to wait 12 months to take annual leave. You may take a limited number of days leave in advance, or as they are earned. Your leave record will show either accrued leave or a negative figure when leave is taken in advance.
Accumulated leave balances	It's expected that annual leave is taken within 12 months of it being earned. See the 'Monitoring leave balances' section below.
Cashing-up annual leave	Generally, we don't allow cashing-up of annual leave. This policy applies even when you make a request under the Holidays Act.
Public holiday when on annual leave	When a public holiday falls within a period of your annual leave, the public holiday will not count as part of the annual leave.
Become sick or hospitalised when on annual leave	<p>If you become sick or are hospitalised during your annual leave, you can apply to convert annual leave to sick leave. You'll need to provide appropriate evidence to your manager.</p> <p>In the above circumstances, for employees on the NZPFU collective agreement, annual leave will be extended immediately following the period of sick leave.</p>
Called back from annual leave	<p>We won't call you back from annual leave unless it's an extreme emergency. If you're called back:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You'll be entitled to a day off at a later date. This later date can be determined by you after considering the wishes of your manager or officer. We'll reimburse reasonable travel costs for your return home, if it's not covered by travel insurance.

Applications

Check your leave balance and submit your annual leave request in [Home Base](#) or [SMS](#).

Monitoring annual leave balance	<p>Your manager must monitor your annual leave balance to ensure that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use your allocated annual leave within the year that it accumulates, wherever possible • use leave effectively to support your wellbeing. <p>You must strive to use allocated annual leave within each 12-month period. Where your annual leave balance has accumulated, it should ideally be less than 25 days, and no more than 35 days.</p>
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Public holidays

Public holidays	<p>You're entitled to a paid day off on public holidays, where these fall on days on which you would normally work. These holidays may be listed in your employment agreement, but are generally recognised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Year's Day and the day after New Year's Day • Waitangi Day • Good Friday • Easter Monday • ANZAC Day • Queen's Birthday • Labour Day • Christmas Day • Boxing Day • Anniversary day of the province in which you work. <p>For more information, see www.employment.govt.nz > Leave and holidays > Public holidays.</p>						
Working on a public holiday	<p>When you're required to work on a public holiday that's your ordinary day of work (this includes normal rostered shifts), you'll be given a paid alternative holiday at a later date, in addition to any extra pay due under your employment agreement.</p>						
Holidays that fall on a weekend	<p>When ANZAC Day, Waitangi Day, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day or the day after New Year's Day fall on a Saturday or Sunday, the public holiday is observed as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>If you normally work...</th><th>then you'll observe the public holiday on the...</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Monday to Friday</td><td>following Monday or Tuesday.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Saturday or Sunday</td><td>day it actually falls.</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	If you normally work...	then you'll observe the public holiday on the...	Monday to Friday	following Monday or Tuesday.	Saturday or Sunday	day it actually falls.
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Tangihanga/bereavement leave

Entitlements	<p>For your bereavement leave entitlements, refer to your employment agreement and the provisions of the Holidays Act 2003. For information on your minimum rights and entitlements under the Act, see www.employment.govt.nz > Leave and holidays > Bereavement leave.</p> <p>Where we accept that the nature of your bereavement means that the statutory entitlement may not be sufficient, we'll consider additional bereavement leave on a case-by-case basis. This may include fulfilment of responsibilities in respect of the death, such as cultural requirements.</p>
Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You don't have to use bereavement leave immediately, or on consecutive days. You may be required to provide evidence of bereavement. <p>See procedure: Apply for leave.</p>

Parental leave

Entitlements	<p>For your parental leave entitlements, including maternity or partner's/paternity leave, refer to your employment agreement and the provisions of the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987.</p> <p>For information on Government parental leave, see www.employment.govt.nz > Leave and holidays > Parental leave.</p>
Applications	<p>You'll need to apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least three months before the baby is due within 14 days of confirmation that you're going to adopt. <p>See procedure: Apply for leave.</p>
Pregnancy and operational firefighting	<p>There are special health and safety considerations when a firefighter, officer or executive officer becomes pregnant. Contact your manager as soon as practicable to discuss and agree to alternative duties. For details, see policy: Pregnancy and operational firefighting.</p>

Jury service

Entitlements	<p>We're required to let you attend jury service and we recognise that your participation is an important civic duty. For your entitlement options see the table below:</p> <table> <tr> <th data-bbox="414 416 722 483">If you're covered by...</th><th data-bbox="730 416 1417 483">then...</th></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="414 488 722 667">the NZPFU collective agreement</td><td data-bbox="730 488 1417 667">see the <i>NZPFU collective agreement</i> for your options. Note: If you are rostered on a night shift immediately before the first day of your jury service, we'll release you from that night shift on pay.</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="414 672 722 851">any other employment agreement</td><td data-bbox="730 672 1417 851">you'll be paid a fee by the court. A direct report to the Chief Executive may approve special paid leave. If special paid leave is granted, juror fees (excluding expenses) must be repaid to us.</td></tr> </table>	If you're covered by...	then...	the NZPFU collective agreement	see the <i>NZPFU collective agreement</i> for your options. Note: If you are rostered on a night shift immediately before the first day of your jury service, we'll release you from that night shift on pay.	any other employment agreement	you'll be paid a fee by the court. A direct report to the Chief Executive may approve special paid leave. If special paid leave is granted, juror fees (excluding expenses) must be repaid to us.
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Applications	<p>To apply for jury service leave, see procedure: Apply for leave.</p>						
Deferral of service	<p>If you have too much work on, or special commitments, you can apply to the court to defer service to a later date. For more information about jury service, see www.justice.govt.nz > Services > Jury service.</p>						

Sporting and cultural leave

Eligibility	<p>You may be granted special leave on pay to represent New Zealand in a sporting or cultural event, as a participant or an official, provided it meets certain criteria.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th data-bbox="421 383 855 443">If you are covered by...</th><th data-bbox="863 383 1412 443">then for criteria and provisions see the...</th></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="421 443 855 517">the NZPFU collective agreement</td><td data-bbox="863 443 1412 517"><i>NZPFU collective agreement.</i></td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="421 517 855 611">any other employment agreement</td><td data-bbox="863 517 1412 611">criteria sections below.</td></tr> </table>	If you are covered by...	then for criteria and provisions see the...	the NZPFU collective agreement	<i>NZPFU collective agreement.</i>	any other employment agreement	criteria sections below.
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Cultural event criteria	<p>The following criteria apply for cultural events:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th data-bbox="421 1485 703 1545">Event location</th><th data-bbox="711 1485 1412 1545">Criteria</th></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="421 1545 703 1787">Overseas</td><td data-bbox="711 1545 1412 1787"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must represent New Zealand at an international level. The activity must have a national organisation or be well recognised as a cultural activity. Selection must be on a national basis. </td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="421 1787 703 1989">Within New Zealand</td><td data-bbox="711 1787 1412 1989"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The activity must have a national organisation or be well recognised as a cultural activity. You must have been selected to participate in an international cultural event to be held in New Zealand. </td></tr> </table>	Event location	Criteria	Overseas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must represent New Zealand at an international level. The activity must have a national organisation or be well recognised as a cultural activity. Selection must be on a national basis. 	Within New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The activity must have a national organisation or be well recognised as a cultural activity. You must have been selected to participate in an international cultural event to be held in New Zealand.
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Applications	<p>Submit your leave request in writing to your manager. Attach a statement from the national body confirming your selection, together with details of any payment to be made to you and your family.</p> <p>Final approval may be granted by the Region Manager, Deputy Chief Executives or Chief Executive.</p>
Declined applications	Where an application is declined, you may apply for special unpaid leave. If this is also declined, you may apply for annual leave, where appropriate.

Other leave types

Entitlements	<p>You may be entitled to other types of leave:</p> <table> <tr> <th>Leave type</th><th>Provisions</th></tr> <tr> <td>Domestic violence leave</td><td>See www.employment.govt.nz > Leave and holidays > Domestic violence leave.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Leave without pay</td><td> <p>Leave without pay is not an automatic entitlement. A request may be approved by your manager subject to consultation with People branch.</p> <p>Note: We may not be able to provide you with any guarantee of employment at the conclusion of a period of extended unpaid leave.</p> </td></tr> <tr> <td>Long service leave</td><td>Refer to your employment agreement for any long service leave entitlements.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Military leave</td><td> <p>Unpaid leave for military training or service shall be granted under the Volunteers Employment Protection Act 1973.</p> <p>For information on your rights under the Act, see www.employment.govt.nz > Leave and holidays > Other types of leave > Defence force volunteers.</p> </td></tr> <tr> <td>Study leave</td><td>For tertiary study and tuition entitlements, refer to your employment agreement or the Tertiary study policy.</td></tr> </table>	Leave type	Provisions	Domestic violence leave	See www.employment.govt.nz > Leave and holidays > Domestic violence leave .	Leave without pay	<p>Leave without pay is not an automatic entitlement. A request may be approved by your manager subject to consultation with People branch.</p> <p>Note: We may not be able to provide you with any guarantee of employment at the conclusion of a period of extended unpaid leave.</p>	Long service leave	Refer to your employment agreement for any long service leave entitlements.	Military leave	<p>Unpaid leave for military training or service shall be granted under the Volunteers Employment Protection Act 1973.</p> <p>For information on your rights under the Act, see www.employment.govt.nz > Leave and holidays > Other types of leave > Defence force volunteers.</p>	Study leave	For tertiary study and tuition entitlements, refer to your employment agreement or the Tertiary study policy.
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Applications	To apply for these other types of leave, see procedure: Apply for leave .												

Related information

Topics	<p>Refer to this intranet topic:</p> <p>Apply for leave</p>
Policies	<p>Related policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy and operational firefighting • Safety, health and wellbeing
Legislation	<p>We must comply with legislation, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident Compensation Act 2001 • Employment Relations Act 2000 • Holidays Act 2003 • Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 • Volunteers Employment Protection Act 1973 <p>For an overview of holiday and leave minimum employment rights, see www.employment.govt.nz > Leave and holidays > Minimum leave and holidays entitlements.</p>

Document information

Owner	DCE People
Last reviewed	1 May 2018
Review period	Yearly

Record of amendment

Date	Brief description of amendment
September 2015	This guide replaces the Leave policy (POLHR1.4). The policy has been retired as it duplicates information in employment agreements and minimum employment rights can be found through Government labour information sources.
1 July 2017	This guide was reviewed as part of the implementation of the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017. No substantive amendments were considered necessary before 1 July 2017 therefore only superficial updates were made.
1 May 2018	Updated reference to Employee Kiosk to reflect new employee HR system Home base.
1 July 2019	Updated Sports leave delegated approves and added link to domestic violence leave. Updated content owner job title.

Managing pregnancy and parental leave for operational personnel

Foreword

Hā ki roto (Deep breath in)!

You are starting, or are about to start, something that is incredibly special yet life changing. Welcoming a baby or new child into your family is a key time in the lives of many of our members, and Fire and Emergency knows that navigating the necessary employment requirements can be an added challenge. Be assured that our Fire and Emergency whanau is here to support you. Therefore, we have developed this guideline, primarily for operational personnel within Fire and Emergency.

Some aspects necessarily relate to pregnancy and childbirth however, it also contains information for all operational personnel who may be eligible to take parental leave, or who want to better understand the policies and support available to new parents. Again, take heart in the fact that Fire and Emergency is here to support you and we wish you all the best throughout your exciting journey.

He waka eke noa (We are all in this together)!

Brendan Nally – Deputy Chief Executive, People Branch

Introduction

When to use

Use these guidelines to understand the requirements of, and support available to, operational personnel who are pregnant/hapū, or planning to adopt or become a caregiver, and their families.

This is a long document. For an overview of the process and time frames when you are pregnant and preparing for parental leave, see the flow charts for before the birth for [pregnant workers](#) and [managers](#) in the Appendices.

Purpose

The principal purpose of this document is to outline some of the risks associated with operational response work while pregnant. Knowing about these risks can help inform the decision making you and your manager make around your continued operational duties or alternative work plans.

Your Lead Maternity Care provider (LMC) should regularly review your risks with you, to help you and your manager decide what is best, at the various stages of your pregnancy

Role

These guidelines apply to:

- volunteer and career firefighters, Communications Centre (ComCen) dispatchers, Risk Reduction and Community Readiness and Recovery roles, trainers and executive officers who are pregnant or considering becoming pregnant, or planning to adopt or become a caregiver
- officer and manager of the affected person.

Note:

- For the purposes of these guidelines:
 - ‘firefighter’ refers to both rural and urban firefighters and operational support
 - ‘worker’ refers to people in the operational roles listed above
 - ‘manager’ refers to the officer, senior officer, chief fire officer (CFO), supervisor or controller whom the affected person reports directly to
 - ‘executive officers’ covers all roles from District and Region management roles to Assistant National Commanders
- For volunteers, the employment-related aspects of these guidelines don’t apply.
- These guidelines may not apply to personnel on fixed-term contracts. You should discuss your options with your manager.
- Brigade refers to any volunteer brigade, career or composite station.

Managers

If you need more advice about this, contact the HR team for guidance.

Contents

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[When you find out you are pregnant](#)

[While you are pregnant](#)

[Preparing for leave](#)

[Preparing to return to operational duties](#)

[Returning to operational duties](#)

[Adopting or becoming a caregiver](#)

[Pregnancy loss](#)

[Acronyms](#)

[A final word](#)

[Appendix A – Flow chart for pregnant workers: Before the birth](#)

[Appendix B – Flow chart for managers: Before the birth](#)

Definitions

Here are definitions of some key terms that are used throughout these guidelines.

Note: See ‘[Acronyms](#)’ for a list of acronyms that are used in these guidelines.

Term	Definition
lead maternity carer (LMC)	An LMC is a community- or hospital-based midwife; a general practitioner (GP) or family doctor; a private or hospital obstetrician or a hospital maternity service chosen by a pregnant woman to manage her care throughout pregnancy and for 4 to 6 weeks after giving birth.
partner’s leave	Parental leave that the spouse or partner of a pregnant person can take once the baby is born (or the spouse or partner of a primary carer in an adoption/whāngai situation). This is still called by its previous name, paternity leave, in some collective agreements.
primary carer (under the Parental Leave and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An employee who is having a baby, or their spouse or partner if they have all or part of the biological

Employment Protection Act 1997)	<p>mother's parental leave payments transferred to them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An employee who is going to have the primary responsibility for the care, development and upbringing of a child under 6 years on a permanent basis.
risk (health and safety)	The likelihood that a person will be harmed or experience adverse health effects due to exposure to hazards in the workplace or likelihood of a situation of damage, loss or harmful effects to property, equipment or the environment that a hazard may lead to.

Case studies

Throughout this document we have used case studies to show how Fire and Emergency has implemented policies and procedures in the past – sometimes successfully, sometimes less so. The individuals in these case studies are real. They have generously shared their experiences, some deeply personal, to help our organisation manage pregnancy and parental leave better in the future. We have changed their names and details to protect their privacy. We ask that you respect this intention as you use these guidelines.

If you want to connect to anyone featured in the case studies, please email parentalleave@fireandemergency.nz.

Related documents

- [Pregnancy and operational firefighting](#) policy (the Policy)
- [Leave](#) guide
- [Safety, health and wellbeing](#) policy
- Your collective employment agreement (CEA), e.g. PSA, FECA, NZPFU, or your individual employment agreement, or Model Rules of Association from the UFBA.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the following organisations for providing us with and letting us reproduce parts of their pregnancy and parental leave guidelines:

- New Zealand Police Association – Parental Leave Pack: Parents and parents to be
- New Zealand Defence Force – Parental Planning: A guide for servicepersons in the NZ Army.

Before you become pregnant

Your rights

The Employment Relations Act 2000 and the Human Rights Act 1993 say you cannot be discriminated against because you might become pregnant. Fire and Emergency should select job candidates based on their skills, experience and qualifications, and not on their desire to have children at some point.

Fertility treatment

If you are undergoing fertility treatment, you may need to take leave to attend medical appointments.

If you are a Fire and Emergency employee, you should arrange leave according to the normal processes or arrange to have appointments on your days off. Check your employment agreement for leave provisions.

Risks

There is a lot we don't know about chemical exposure in firefighting and the risks to fertility (for both females and males) and foetal development.

If you want more information, you can watch [Women Firefighters and their Occupational Health](#), an International Association of Firefighters 2019 conference presentation that summarises the results of a San Francisco biomonitoring study of women firefighters and other international research on firefighting, fertility and foetal development.

Available support

Trying to become pregnant can be a stressful and frustrating process. Remember that Fire and Emergency's wellbeing support is available to you to manage this extra stress.

See process: How do I > [Seek safety, health and wellbeing support](#).

When you find out you are pregnant**Confirm you are pregnant as soon as possible**

Fire and Emergency is committed to providing a safe and supportive work environment. We have a specific [Policy](#) to prevent discrimination and mitigate health and safety risks during your pregnancy.

Operational personnel cannot safely continue most operational duties during pregnancy because of the health and safety risks of firefighting work. In particular:

- there is medical evidence to show that there is an increased risk of foetal abnormalities in the first trimester if the body's temperature is elevated
- there are many chemical exposures where the risk to the foetus is just not understood.

These risks mean that it is very important that if you are a firefighter and you are trying to get pregnant or suspect you are pregnant, you test early and regularly to confirm your pregnancy as soon as possible.

To find out more about these risks go to '[Safety, health and wellbeing during pregnancy](#)' later in these guidelines.

COVID-19 Note: Evidence shows that pregnant women may be at greater risk of poor outcomes if infected with COVID-19. Pregnant and recently pregnant women (defined as within 6 weeks of birth, miscarriage, or termination) may consider taking extra precautions. We recommend you talking to your midwife, GP or nurse practitioner around your risk of getting COVID-19, given your home and work environment. This should be followed up with a conversation with their direct manager.

Telling your manager

Fire and Emergency strongly recommends you tell your manager as soon as you are aware that you are pregnant, so the organisation can take the necessary steps to ensure your or the baby's health and safety.

As soon as you have confirmed you are pregnant:

If you are...	then tell your...
a volunteer firefighter	Brigade leader (CFO, Controller, OIC)
a career firefighter	officer. They will inform District management. If you would feel more comfortable, tell your Group or Community Risk first.
a ComCen dispatcher	manager. If you would feel more comfortable, tell your shift manager first.
In a Risk Reduction of Community Readiness and Recovery role	supervisor.
a trainer	manager.
an executive officer	manager.

Once you have notified you manager, you can begin discussions on how to manage your safety while pregnant in an operational role. We strongly recommend alternative duties to manage the risks without compromising your opportunities and progression. Alternative duties are an established system for managing risks to people in a variety of at-risk situations, including being pregnant in operational roles.

If you are a ComCen dispatcher, you are not exposed to the same chemical and physical hazards in your response duties as a firefighter. But you are still exposed to potential psychological effects from handling emergency calls and to fatigue relating to shift work. We strongly recommend you tell your manager or shift manager as soon as you're aware that you're pregnant and your due date, so you can talk about any suitable options, including the option of being placed on Black Watch to eliminate the risks around shift work.

See How do I > [Agree on alternative duties during pregnancy](#) on the Portal and 'Alternative duties' in this document.

If an agreement can't be reached, your region manager will be advised and the disputes process in the [Pregnancy and operational firefighting policy](#) will be followed

Legally, you have to give a minimum of 3 months' written notice prior to taking parental leave, but there is also a requirement for both employees and employers to act in good faith towards each other. Starting these discussions earlier is a great way to build this relationship.

Listen to your body!

Even if you've been pregnant before, every pregnancy can be different. Your body's response to the early stages of pregnancy may have health and safety implications for you and your team.

Managers

The early stages of pregnancy can be a very uncertain time for expectant parents. Pregnant women may experience hormonal changes, emotional ups and downs

and severe tiredness. Managers should be supportive, empathetic and compassionate during this time. Remind the pregnant worker that Fire and Emergency's wellbeing support is available to them and their families.

Privacy

For many people, privacy is a high priority in the early stages of pregnancy. The risk of miscarriage in the first 12 weeks is higher than at any other stage, so it's understandable to want to be discrete during this time. For more information, see [Pregnancy loss](#) in this document.

When you talk to your manager, make sure you tell them if you want them to keep your pregnancy confidential. For example, you might not want your crew, brigade or team to know yet. Your manager will keep the information confidential and secure, however, if we do feel your information needs to be shared with someone else, we will discuss this with you **before** the information is shared.

Managers

Managers must be flexible and accommodating when managing workers in these early stages of pregnancy.

Listen to the pregnant worker's wishes about confidentiality and discretion.

While it will be important that key people who work with the pregnant worker know that they are pregnant, you must discuss this with the pregnant worker to identify who these people are and document this, as part of an agreed sharing of information. Try to minimise the number of people who know and always follow the pregnant worker's lead at this time. For guidance, see [Managing pregnancy in SMS](#).

Remember, there may be additional health and risk factors they have not shared.

Key messages when you tell your manager you are pregnant

When you tell your manager you are pregnant, you both need to keep in mind:

- Your safety and the safety of your unborn child are at the centre of all decisions we will make – including discussions on alternative duties.
- Pregnancy is a normal, healthy and exciting part of many parents' lives.
- Fire and Emergency is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment and has policies like the [Standards of conduct](#) policy and [Good employer and EEO policy](#) to prevent discrimination.
- Your privacy will be respected. Your manager will **not** tell your crew, brigade or watch you are pregnant if you do not want them to.
- You will **not** be excluded from training. (But there may be some practical components you shouldn't do because of safety, health and wellbeing requirements.)
- Your progression and service will not be adversely affected by your pregnancy.
- Physical effects like tiredness and nausea are often more heavily felt in the early stages of pregnancy, and are unlikely to significantly affect your overall capacity to work. (Unless you are required to work nightshift.)
- While this may be your first pregnancy and/or your brigade's first pregnancy, we as an organisation are here to support you.
- It will be helpful to provide evidence from a medical professional in the next week or two to confirm the pregnancy (e.g. dating scan or certificate from your GP or lead maternity carer (LMC)).

- If you have suffered miscarriage or pregnancy loss and need support, remember our support services are available to everyone at Fire and Emergency and their families.

Case study:

Sarah was a career Senior Firefighter (SFF) in a provincial brigade who had been trying to get pregnant for some time. On their third and final attempt at in vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment, Sarah and her partner had a confirmed pregnancy.

While on alternative duties, Sarah sadly miscarried during week 10 of her pregnancy and was distraught. She couldn't go to work, so she rang her Station Officer (SO) to explain the situation. The SO told her she could have a set of shifts off work to recover. They were unsure how to manage Sarah's absence in SMS and entered it as 'bereavement leave'.

When the Senior Station Officer (SSO) saw the changes in SMS, they approached Sarah directly about the bereavement leave and asked pointed questions about who had died. Sarah was still very upset about the miscarriage and was vague about the details. When the SSO continued to press her, she asked them to talk directly to her SO, but after more questions, Sarah was forced to explain it was a miscarriage.

Sarah was distraught about having to explain the situation to the SSO and to her colleagues. She felt that her privacy was heavily compromised, and that more discretion should have been exercised to protect her confidentiality in the workplace. The whole process of managing her leave contributed to the overall stress and loss at the time.

Sarah's experience highlights the vulnerability of the early stage of pregnancy and the importance of managing miscarriages, stillbirth and pregnancy loss with discretion and compassion, and as they would with any bereavement, limiting contact by managers who knows by necessity, rather than that manager sharing this sensitive information further than absolutely necessary.

From March 2021 a law change means miscarriage and still birth are now included in bereavement leave entitlements.

Case study:

Melanie was a career SFF in a provincial brigade. She and her partner (also a firefighter) had been trying to get pregnant for some time and unfortunately had experienced two miscarriages in the first trimester in two consecutive pregnancies. The second miscarriage resulted in a medical procedure and a later infection which contributed to the traumatic experience for both parents.

When Melanie had her third pregnancy (twins) confirmed early, she was understandably very concerned and anxious about another miscarriage. Melanie's SSO and AAM (Group Manager) knew her miscarriage history and encouraged her to take sick leave for the first trimester. They reviewed her situation and alternative duties after her 13-week scan. The support and flexibility of her SSO and AAM (Group Manager) during the early stages of pregnancy helped to make Melanie's experience at work while pregnant a positive one. With Fire and Emergency's understanding and support, the remainder of Melanie's pregnancy was a successful experience.

Both of the case studies above highlight the need for managers to take a positive approach and be agile and flexible in managing their pregnant firefighters, particularly when discussing their situation with colleagues and managing leave.

Safety, health and wellbeing during pregnancy

Pay attention! Important information ahead!

One of the main purposes of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 is to protect workers (including volunteer workers) against harm to their health, safety and welfare by eliminating or minimising risks arising from work.

Fire and Emergency has a legal duty to assess the risks of our pregnant workers' duties and work environment, and to minimise those risks.

The table below outlines some of the risks that may impact on pregnant operational personnel and their unborn child:

Risk	Potential hazard or risky activity
Fatigue and musculoskeletal injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical activities that involve heavy lifting or strain, particularly during the first 3 months of the pregnancy. Shift work (especially night shifts).
Heat	<p>Frequent or prolonged exposure to temperatures in excess of 39°C, e.g. wearing firefighting PPE.</p> <p>Note: There is medical evidence to show that there is an increased risk of foetal abnormalities in the first trimester if the body's temperature is elevated.</p>
Hazardous substances (see more on chemical exposure below)	<p>Inhaling or exposing skin to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> carbon monoxide toxic or noxious substances.
Psychological harm	Exposure to the demands of operational duties, including the unpredictable and emergency nature of the job, erratic work schedule, shift work and prevalent hazards.
Radiation	Exposure to possible sources of ionising radiation during responses to calls at medical care facilities, laboratories, certain industries or some environmental spills.

Chemical reactions during fires and chemical spills mean that pregnant firefighters can be exposed to a wide range of potentially toxic chemicals; for example, acrolein, aldehydes, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and benzene.

Evidence shows that carbon monoxide has effects on the foetus throughout pregnancy. And, while the risk to the foetus for many chemical exposures is not understood or quantifiable, we do know that in general terms the risk from chemical exposures is greatest in the first trimester (the first 12–14 weeks) when the most rapid development occurs.

Because of these risks, we recommend you do a pregnancy test as early as possible. If you are actively trying to get pregnant, we recommend that you test often and early so that you can confirm your pregnancy as soon as possible. That way we can discuss putting you on alternative duties to reduce the risks outlined above.

Your rights

The Human Rights Commission is very clear that if a pregnant worker is transferred to different duties because of health and safety concerns, there should be no changes to pay, benefits or opportunities for promotion.

The Human Rights Commission also advises that the employer should consult with the pregnant worker about transferring to different duties. We recommend you also involve your LMC in these discussions. Find out more in [‘Alternative duties’](#) later in these guidelines.

Responding to emergencies

Our [Policy](#) states that as soon as you know that you are pregnant, we strongly recommend you inform your manager and begin discussions about managing the operational risks while you are pregnant. For the most part, for the safety of yourself, your unborn child and others, these duties will be non-operational. (We cover [‘Alternative duties’](#) in more detail later in these guidelines.)

As we explained in [‘Safety, health and wellbeing during pregnancy’](#) above, the emergency response environment is unpredictable, dynamic and high stress. There is also the potential that you may be exposed to a wide range of hazards that are harmful to your unborn child, including toxic chemicals at fires such as carbon monoxide, biological illnesses and infections at medical responses, and heavy lifting when transporting equipment and resources.

Because Fire and Emergency is unable to predict and manage what hazards and risks you and your unborn child may be exposed to at any particular emergency response, it is inadvisable for you to continue to respond to emergencies while pregnant.

Managers

There will be a variety of reactions from people when they find out someone in their brigade or team is pregnant. These reactions are largely based on individuals’ own experience of pregnancy or previous experiences at their brigade or work environment. It is unrealistic for a manager to be able to control all of these reactions, but it is important the manager shows leadership in situations such as this and reiterates the organisation’s commitment to supporting pregnancy. We aim to:

- reduce or eliminate exposure to potential hazards and operational activities that may place the pregnant worker, their unborn child, colleagues or the public, at risk
- provide a safe and supportive work environment and prevent discrimination.

We encourage managers to reiterate this to the pregnant worker and the team affected when appropriate.

Remember, pregnancy is a normal part of life. We encourage everyone to approach pregnancy with a positive attitude and focus on what a pregnant worker can do for the team.

Case study:

Sage was a long-standing member of an urban volunteer brigade in a small community when she found out she was pregnant. She informed her Chief Fire Officer (CFO) as soon as she had confirmed her pregnancy.

Sage's brigade was operating below establishment and at the time struggling to get enough qualified personnel for turnouts. Sage felt obligated to remain responding. She and her CFO felt that if she responded in more of an operational support role, she could manage the risk. Sage was physically fit and not experiencing much of the nausea or tiredness usually associated with the early stages of pregnancy.

Their Volunteer Support Officer helped to explain the policy, which outlines some of the risks relating to the unpredictable nature of the emergency environment and the exposure to chemicals during fire-related emergencies. Sage reluctantly agreed to stop responding and her CFO and brigade were very supportive. Even though her unavailability did put more pressure on the others, they worked through the challenges.

Once Sage stopped responding, she was surprised to feel a sense of relief. She was still very much attached to brigade training – her Station Training Coordinator was proactive about including her – which resulted in her maintaining her practical skills and confidence throughout the pregnancy. This meant that when she returned to operational duties after she took 5 months of parental leave after the birth, she quickly transitioned back to her response role.

Managing pregnancy in SMS

Managers

How you manage a pregnancy through SMS is important as it can adversely affect service, attendance records/muster and finances, which have a wider impact on the individual, brigade and organisation. We are working to create a system specific to pregnancy, but in the interim we recommend that you manage it in the following way.

Volunteer firefighters

When a volunteer firefighter tells you that they are pregnant, we recommend you change their profile to 'Operational support', which means that they can maintain their critical OSM safely while not responding to calls. It will also not adversely affect their attendance/muster on the volunteer dashboards or their service, which is important for eligibility for the annual \$300 [Annual volunteer reimbursement](#)

There are a variety of different station administration systems (e.g. SMS) that manage leave, please work with your brigade and HR to ensure you navigate this, so the fire fighter is not disadvantaged

Career firefighters

For reporting purposes, when any career firefighter absence is recorded in SMS as an "Alternative duties absence", the business unit BU 2165 must be used for the cost recovery. Make sure to note this absence is due to pregnancy in the comments section.

If the firefighter expresses a desire for their pregnancy to remain confidential in the early stages, you can create a 'certificated sickness' or 'special job' and retrospectively change it to alternative duties once they are comfortable with this.

While they are on alternative duties the pregnant firefighter can still maintain OSM and you should encourage them to do this. See [Training courses and professional development](#) for more guidance on this.

RR and CRR roles, executive officers

Fire and Emergency does not use SMS as a rostering tool for these roles. As their manager, you should help pregnant personnel in these roles to manage their pregnancy-related appointments and make every effort to maintain minimum shift staffing (MSS).

Email the parentalleave@fireandemergency.nz if you need more help.

While you are pregnant

Alternative duties

Note:

- This section applies to **volunteer and career firefighters** (including officers and executive officers) and **ComCen dispatchers**, and their managers.
- If you are a **trainer**, we strongly recommend that you don't participate in delivering practical training where there are environmental risks that are considered unsafe for you and your unborn child, e.g. live fire training or heavy lifting. This should be done in consultation with your manager. You will be able to continue providing other types of training that do not involve these risks, though.
- If you are in a **RR or CRR role**, or you are an **executive officer**, we strongly recommend that you are removed from the on-call roster. This must be done in consultation and agreement from both parties. As we explained in '[Safety, health and wellbeing during pregnancy](#)', there is the potential that you may be exposed to hazards at emergency incidents/sites that are harmful to your unborn child. But outside of this, you will largely continue to do your routine duties.

Note: In all roles with an overtime or on-call component, your pay (if you are on reduced duties) will be averaged out so you are not disadvantaged (percentage based on the previous year's earnings if applicable), which would take into consideration the on-call ratio and applicable allowance as well as any overtime payments for call-backs / callouts.

Managers

Make sure you notify the Payroll team about this.

Our Policy states that in order to reduce or eliminate exposure to potential hazards and activities, you and your manager should discuss and agree on suitable duties until you decide, or are required, to start parental leave. For the most part, for the safety of yourself and others, these duties will be non-operational, see the [Pregnancy and operational firefighting policy](#).

Agreeing and documenting your alternative duties

After you've told your manager you are pregnant, you two should meet to agree and document your alternative duties plan. Refer to the [Appendix A Flow chart for pregnant workers: Before the birth](#) at the end of these guidelines for a summary of what to cover in this meeting.

Don't forget it's helpful to bring a certificate from your doctor or LMC confirming your pregnancy and due date, this can help with future planning

You should involve your LMC in these discussions. It's always helpful to have a second set of ears! We encourage you to have an appropriate support person at these meetings, such as:

- your partner/spouse

- a union or association representative
- a Peer Supporter
- a leader/member of Women in Fire and Emergency (WFENZ)
- an HR team member.

The Human Rights Commission advises that if a pregnant worker says they are concerned about a suspected hazard area, the employer should avoid exposing them to that hazard and provide peace of mind – even if information does not support that there is a risk to the pregnant worker or baby. So, if you are worried about doing a particular duty while you are pregnant, talk to your manager about it.

Note for everyone – let's keep talking!

Remember, good employment practice involves productive consultation – legally, employers and employees have to work together in good faith.

We encourage everyone at the meetings to be empathetic and solution-focused. This will not only avoid future complaints of pregnancy discrimination but will make the experience a positive one for everyone.

Always document the decisions made at these meetings.

When planning alternative duties, prepare some options for alternative duties you would like to do, this will help with discussions. Your manager must consider the:

- reasonable wishes you have
- recommendations of the relevant health professional
- that the entitlements, conditions and benefits should remain the same as when you are not pregnant
- operational and promotional needs of the District, station or ComCen
- nature and range of alternative duties available.

Note: All reasonable options that make the pregnant worker feel valued, supported and safe should be considered.

Make sure you document the alternative duties plan. There is an [Alternative duties plan template](#) on the Portal.

Criteria

The alternative duties, as much as possible, should be:

- safe and not present risks to you, your unborn child, or colleagues
- compatible with your abilities and interests
- flexible enough to accommodate your changing health requirements.

Ideas for alternative duties

Alternative duties that meet the above criteria may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Building inspections for low rise buildings
- Technical level building design
- Evacuations planning and monitoring
- Support work in the Fire Information unit

- Fire Hazard removal and fire permit work
- Community work, e.g. neighbourhood watch
- Project work in the Risk Reduction or Community Readiness and Recovery teams
- Coordinating or delivering training
- Coordinating station visits
- Local deliveries that don't involve heavy lifting
- Public safety promotion programmes, e.g. Firewise, school visits, static displays
- Participation in training and drills, where it's safe to do so, to maintain OSM status
- Recruitment
- Public enquiries
- Research projects
- Theory-based training
- Practical-based training, where risks and hazards can be safely managed
- Home fire safety visits that don't involve smoke alarm installations
- Work at a computer, and station, brigade or ComCen administration.

Note: Your alternative duties plan is a living document. You and your manager should regularly assess the risk of these duties to you and your stage of the pregnancy, and update the plan when anything changes.

Managers

Managers should consider all reasonable options to ensure that a pregnant worker's environment is maintained or adjusted and that they feel supported and safe. Pregnancy is different for everyone – don't make assumptions about what a pregnant worker needs to continue performing in their role. It is important that any decisions around accommodating the changing needs of pregnancy include the manager, the pregnant worker and their LMC.

Case study 1:

Jill was a FRMO, (Specialist Fire Investigator), based in the Area, (District) Office when she confirmed she was pregnant. As per the policy, she advised her manager straightaway.

While Jill's office duties remained largely unchanged during the pregnancy, her exposure to chemicals and toxins at post-fire scenes needed to be eliminated. For this reason, she was removed from the on-duty fire investigation roster immediately. She was sad about temporarily moving away from the fire investigation work, but she enjoyed picking up additional duties in community education and built environment. She was able to stay connected to the fire investigation work through team meetings and training that occurred away from fire scenes and the hazards associated with them.

Case study 2:

Greta was a career firefighter working towards her Qualified Firefighter (QFF) qualification at an urban metropolitan brigade when she became pregnant. She informed her Officer as soon as she knew and was quickly transferred to alternative

duties. She discussed her alternative duties with her acting AAM (Group Manager) at the time and agreed to:

- *support her workload on site reports*
- *some national project work*
- *Training and Progression System (TAPS) work towards her QFF qualification.*

Greta enjoyed the exposure to fire risk management, but her specific tasks involved organising SSOs and SOs, which was challenging given her rank and lack of service. Greta made good progress with the national project work, but when the seconded AAM (Group Manager) moved on and a new acting AAM (Group Manager) filled the position, they didn't see the value in the national work and directed her to reprioritise the site report work.

She continued to progress her QFF TAPS work by completing the theory work and sitting her theory examination. Her manager helped her prioritise the practical components and assessment for when she returned to operational duties.

Greta's experience shows how important it is to formally document alternative duties in case there are personnel changes. We recommend that you use the [Alternative duties plan template](#) on the Portal. Her experience also highlights that the tasks need to be appropriate to the rank and position that the person currently holds. It also demonstrates how her training and progression was not adversely affected by her pregnancy.

Watch assignment You may remain on your usual watch for all or most of the time you're on alternative duties.

However, you may also temporarily shift to black watch. Some people find that being on black watch helps them to manage the fatigue associated with shift work. It also makes it less likely that you will have to work alone.

Like all decisions about alternative duties, you should decide this in consultation with your manager and LMC.

Case study:

Sharon was a career QFF at a provincial brigade when she became pregnant with her first child. At the time, local management had some fire risk management priorities, and after a collaborative and productive discussion with Sharon they mutually agreed for Sharon to work black watch while she was pregnant. While she enjoyed the fire risk management work, she did lose contact with her watch and missed using her operational skills and knowledge.

During her next pregnancy, she was given the option of remaining on her coloured watch or transferring to black watch. Unfortunately, her childcare options fell through, so even though her preference was to remain on her watch, she agreed to set days during the week which worked with childcare and watch days and, on agreement, some weekend work. This arrangement exposed her to different parts of the organisation without her losing the connection to her operational role and professional relationships.

In her final pregnancy, she was able to remain on her watch for the duration of her pregnancy. This, combined with some extra rehabilitation time on return to work duties (due to a non-work accident which occurred prior to her pregnancy but was operated on during parental leave), meant she quickly reintegrated into operational duties when she returned to work after the birth of her child.

Open communication allowed the watch structure of the alternative duties to be different in all three of Sharon's pregnancies. This reflects the intention of the policy which states that your alternative duties need to be flexible enough to accommodate your changing requirements.

Accommodating pregnant workers

Fire and Emergency is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment as well as promoting flexible work options where appropriate. The Human Rights Commission gives examples of ways in which employers may accommodate a pregnant worker. They include providing:

- seating for work that can reasonably be performed sitting down, e.g. training
- flexible working hours
- more opportunities to take breaks to eat and drink.

For some, it may be appropriate to change your work location, for example, to mitigate health concerns. We encourage you and your manager to consider whether you can effectively perform your work (including alternative duties):

- from a brigade/station, district or region office closer to home, if you live a long way from your station
- from home.

That said, we know that new parents returning to work find the transition easier if they have stayed connected to their brigade or ComCen in some way, even if it is in a reduced capacity.

Managers

Managers should consider the suggestions above, and any others, in good faith and could implement any of them if it will help to provide a safe, supportive and productive work environment for a pregnant worker.

Overtime

From the [Pregnancy and operational firefighting policy](#), based on the needs of the organisation and your health, you may be offered occasional non-operational overtime at your manager's discretion, such as work that falls outside of your rostered shifts that may be eligible for overtime or time in lieu. This must be approved by your manager. The overtime section of the Policy applies

Work-related air travel

If you have to travel by air for work, including for training, and become unwell or for any reason need to go home early, we'll support you to do that. Let your travel booker know and they will make arrangements to change your flights. You can request that you are not booked on very early morning or late evening flights to help you manage fatigue – please discuss with your manager in the first instance.

Note: You should also follow the airline's advice about what stage in your pregnancy they recommend you stop flying.

Training courses and professional development

Training and professional development is a high priority for an operational organisation like Fire and Emergency. Access to training can directly affect promotions, transfers and opportunities for project/specialised work.

We know that training practices give individuals opportunities to stay connected to their brigade and keep up to date with topical and relevant changes in operations. Experience has shown that pregnant operational personnel who are able to participate in training are more likely to transition back to operational duties and their response role quickly, so you and your manager should prioritise your participation in scheduled and regular training throughout your pregnancy.

The Human Rights Commission is clear that pregnancy should not affect your pay, benefits or opportunities for promotion and it can be deemed discriminatory for a pregnant worker to be excluded from training.

But, just like in the response environment, there are some environmental factors in the practical components of training that might be considered unsafe for pregnant workers and their unborn children, such as:

- excessive temperatures
- heavy lifting and handling
- some chemicals see [Safety, health and wellbeing during pregnancy.](#)
- some radiation
- risk of infection
- poor oxygen supply.

For example, some practical firefighting scenarios involve uneven terrain, physical strain in high angle line work and increased cardiovascular activity combined with heavy lifting.

This means that if training involves any of the above, you might not be able to participate in the practical component of that training while you are pregnant. It would not exclude you from participating in the theory components of the training. There are many online modules on Learning Station that you can continue with.

So, while you may need to delay a course if it involves operational activities that are unsafe for you during your pregnancy, we encourage you to participate in as much theory training as possible and submit all assignments as per usual while you are pregnant.

Managers

Encourage the pregnant worker to participate in training that they can do safely and advocate for them if needed.

Case study:

Ariana was a career firefighter working towards her QFF qualification at an urban metropolitan brigade when she became pregnant. One of her specific alternative duties was working through her QFF TAPS programme.

Ariana focused on the theory components of this qualification and made sure she handed in her assignments on time. She also completed her examination within the service time frame to gain the QFF qualification. After a discussion with her LMC, National Training and her Area, (District) Manager, it was decided that it was not safe for her to complete her Level II Fire Fighting course. Completing this course was a priority when she returned to full operational duties after the birth of her child. When she successfully completed this course, her promotion to the rank of QFF was backdated to when she would have gained the qualification if she had been able to attend the practical course. The remuneration attached to this qualification was also backdated.

The management of Ariana's QFF training, promotion and remuneration is an example of good practice because it ensured that there was limited change to her pay, benefits and work opportunities despite the temporary change in her role to manage her pregnancy.

Maternity uniform When you are pregnant and standard uniform becomes uncomfortable, you may wear maternity uniform (a top and trousers).

See [N2 SCg Maternity uniform schedule](#) and [N2-1d FM Maternity uniform order form](#).

Sick leave **Note:** This section applies to pregnant Fire and Emergency operational **employees** and their managers only.

Pregnant employees have the same sick leave entitlements as other employees. It does not matter if the illness is related to your pregnancy, such as nausea or pre-eclampsia, or if it is a more general illness, such as a cold or the flu.

If you can't do your work effectively because of recurring illness, you and your manager should discuss a temporary solution; for example, changing your work hours, responsibilities or location. See [Accommodating pregnant workers](#) above. Fire and Emergency will make these changes in a way that does not compromise your conditions of work, opportunities or pay.

Let's keep talking

Remember, for this to work both parties need to operate in good faith. Employees and employers need to keep lines of communication open.

Special leave **Note:** This section applies to operational pregnant Fire and Emergency employees (specifically ComCen dispatchers, RR and CRR roles, trainers and executive officers) and their managers.

You may need to go to appointments related to your pregnancy. If you are eligible, you can take up to 10 days' unpaid special leave for pregnancy-related reasons, such as antenatal classes, scans or LMC appointments.

Check if you are eligible for parental leave (including special leave) at [employment.govt.nz > Leave and holidays > Parental leave > Parental leave eligibility](#).

You can also talk to your manager about alternative leave arrangements if you need to.

Preparing for leave

**Leave for
Pregnancy for
volunteers**

UFBA model rules

Section 9.3 of the Model Rules of Association says:

'Parental leave may be granted by the Chief Fire Officer to any Member for a total of up to 15 months (taken consecutively). The parental leave granted may include a period of no more than 4 weeks prior to the Member or Members' spouse/partner giving birth to a child.'

There should be no reason to decline this leave – speak to HR if you have a concern

We suggest once you have agreed on the dates of leave you and your CFO/Controller put this in writing.

Notes:

Dates can change as circumstances often change once the baby is born and it is ok to revisit the leave amount and either shorten or lengthen.

The Annual volunteer reimbursement still applies if you are on leave see the [Eligibility heading on the Portal page](#) under the Volunteer Hub/Volunteer benefits

Volunteers – if you have queries about taking leave and broken service, they are to refer to the UFBA for information and advice.

Notes:

The rest of this section applies to pregnant operational Fire and Emergency employees and their managers.

Parental leave refers also to Primary carer and Partners leave

Eligibility for parental leave (career staff)

Fire and Emergency will grant parental leave as special leave without pay if you are:

- a pregnant employee, or
- the partner of a pregnant employee where they have transferred their entitlement to parental leave to you under the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987.

Note: Fire and Emergency will also grant parental leave to an employee who becomes the primary carer of a child or children under the age of 6 years. See [Adopting or becoming a caregiver](#) for more information.

If you have..	then Fire and Emergency will grant you..
at least one year's service at the time of starting parental leave	up to 12 months' leave
less than one year's service at the time of starting parental leave	up to 6 months' leave

Note: Even if you are not eligible for parental leave under your employment agreement, you may be eligible for paid parental leave (PPL) administered by Inland Revenue, as the criteria is different. Go to [employment.govt.nz > Leave and holidays > Parental leave > Parental leave payment](#) for more information.

Applying for parental leave

You can apply for Primary carers/Partner leave by following the steps set out on the Portal – see How do I > [Apply for leave](#).

You need to complete the [Application for parental or partner's leave](#) form and forward it to your manager with supporting documents **3 months** before your intended leave date. We recommend you do this at the 6-month mark.

If you are sharing parental leave with your spouse or partner, you also need to tell us:

- the dates on which you and your spouse or partner plan to start and finish each period of leave
- your spouse or partner's name and, if they are an employee, the name and address of their employer
- that you and your spouse or partner are both eligible for the leave you are applying for
- that the total amount of leave you and your spouse or partner are taking will not be more than 52 weeks (not counting any partner's leave taken).

Three months is the legally required notice period, the earlier that discussions about final dates at work and projected time on parental leave happen, the easier it is for Fire and Emergency to plan, manage and support you through this process.

Managers

You will need to approve the employee's leave in writing. There is a [Grant parental leave letter](#) template on the Portal, or contact the HR team for help.

Please ensure payroll are made aware of this change to employment status – work with your HR manager.

Subsequent children

For anyone expecting their second, third... eighth child, all pregnancies have the same service test – this means you need to be back at work at least 6 months between leave to be eligible for parental leave.

An employee must meet two separate criteria to be entitled to parental leave, namely they must be:

1. employed for a period of 6 months or 12 months before the baby's due date (or the date that the employee becomes the permanent primary carer of the child); and
2. working an average of 10 hours a week across that 6- or 12-month period.

The way this test operates means that, for example:

- an employee who has worked (or returned to work after a previous period of parental leave) 40 hours a week for 4 months would not meet the criteria, because they had not been employed for a period of six months, even though when averaged over a 6-month period they would have worked more than 10 hours a week; but
- an employee who has worked (or returned to work after a previous period of parental leave) for 6 months, but who only worked 8 hours a week for the first 3 months and then 20 hours a week for the remaining 3 months, would meet the criteria – because, on average, they would have worked at least 10 hours a week over a 6-month period.

If you don't meet the criteria for parental leave, talk to your Region HR Manager about the options available to you.

Applying for partner's leave

Fire and Emergency will grant employees whose partner (or spouse) has had a baby up to 14 days' special leave **without pay** as partner's leave. This is referred to in some agreements by its old name, paternity leave.

You need to apply for partner's leave using the [Application for parental or partner's leave](#) form at least **3 months** before your intended leave date.

In addition, employees whose partners are giving birth to a child are entitled to 3 days of **special paid leave** to attend their partner's and family's needs at the time of the birth. This entitlement only applies to those covered by the NZPFU Collective employment agreement.

So that Fire and Emergency can best support you to take partner's leave when your baby is born, tell your manager about your partner's pregnancy, expected due date and if there is a chance the baby might arrive early (e.g. in a multiple birth situation).

Note: Fire and Emergency will also grant partner's leave (up to 14 days of unpaid leave and 3 days of special paid leave) to an employee whose partner becomes the primary carer of a child or children under the age of 6 years. See [Adopting or becoming a caregiver](#) for more information.

Case study:

Jim was a career SSO at a provincial brigade when his wife became pregnant with their son. This was not his first child, so he understood the demands of a newborn and wanted to be at home to support his wife after the birth.

He had accrued the maximum amount of banked time, a full annual leave cycle and four statutory holiday shifts in anticipation of the birth. By accumulating these shifts he could spend a whole month at home with his family. He told the rosters staff and his manager (in this case, an executive officer) about his intention to take this time off, so there were no surprises for the brigade. Jim ensured that his OSM was up to date and programmed in some work for the watch to work through while he was at home.

He had booked his annual leave to begin a week after the baby's due date, but his wife went into labour a week early. Fortunately, Jim was able to use the 3 days of special paid leave to cover his first three shifts after the birth. That gave him time to apply for the rest of his leave using the usual formal process and allowed him to spend that special time directly after the birth at home with his family.

Jim's story shows that if you are organised about your leave and communicate with rosters staff and your manager, you can prioritise important time after the birth at home with your family. There is the option of taking 14 days of unpaid partner's leave but saving up leave and using it this way is more popular with new parents as it means that their pay is not interrupted.

Applying for paid parental leave through Inland Revenue

As of 1 July 2020, if you take time off work to care for your baby or a child under 6 who has come into your care, you may be able to get 26 weeks of paid parental leave (PPL) from Inland Revenue. You also need to have worked an average of 10 hours a week, in at least 26 of the weeks in the year before your due date or the date the child comes into your care.

To find out if you are eligible for PPL and how to apply, go to ird.govt.nz > [Paid parental leave](#).

The regional HR manager is also available to support managers and employees through this application process.

Best Start payments

Best Start payments from Inland Revenue may be available for any baby born after 1 July 2018. In the first year, if you're the primary carer, you can get the payment. For the first year of getting Best Start, it doesn't matter how much your family earns. If you are receiving PPL payments, you cannot get the Best Start payment until your PPL finishes.

Go to ird.govt.nz > [Best Start](#) for more information and to apply.

Preterm baby parental leave payments

You may be able to get preterm baby payments in addition to PPL if:

- you are caring for a baby who was born live before the end of 36 weeks' gestation, and
- you are eligible for parental leave payments.

Go to employment.govt.nz > Leave and holidays > Parental leave > Parental leave payment > [Preterm baby parental leave payments](#) for more information.

Preparing to return to operational duties

Protection of position

Your re-entry rights are protected. When you return to duty at any time during, or at the end of, your parental leave, you'll be expected to return to the same watch and station, wherever possible.

The Human Rights Commission and the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 state that an employee returning from leave is entitled to the same role with the same terms and conditions of work as they had before they went on leave. If their normal role was temporarily adjusted to accommodate their pregnancy before they took leave (such as a change of hours or responsibilities), they are entitled to return to the job and shifts they held immediately prior to the temporary adjustment. The employer is required to ensure that employees who are returning from leave are not given less substantial or secure conditions of work than they had before they went on leave.

Extending parental leave

Parental leave of up to twelve months is to be granted to workers with at least one year's service at the time the parental leave starts. For workers with less than one years' service, parental leave of up to six months is to be granted.

Should a worker wish to extend their time at home at the end of their 6/12 months they can apply for leave without pay (LWOP) via the usual process.

This needs to be done in writing via their Group Manager and at will be approved at the discretion of the Region Manager.

Stay in touch

Note for everyone – let's keep talking!

It's a good idea for new parents and their managers and crews to keep in regular contact while they are on parental leave – not just leave it to a single conversation a month before the parent returns to operational duties.

Experience shows us that new parents transition back to their operational duties and response role better when they have stayed connected professionally and socially to their brigade.

We recommend that managers check in with the new parent every couple of months and see how they are going and encourage new parents to check in with their own crews and managers.

Employees can use keeping in touch (KIT) days to stay in contact with colleagues after the birth and before returning from parental leave. See [Keeping in touch days](#) in this document for more information.

Managers

You must plan appropriately for the employee's anticipated return and formally communicate with them at least 1 month before the end of their parental leave.

Decide if you are going back to work

You need to let your manager know whether or not you are returning to work when your parental leave ends. Legally, you need to do this no less than 21 days before the end of your parental leave. However, we recommend you let your manager know about 1 month before the end of your parental leave, or earlier if

you can. Remember, we expect you and your manager to have been in contact with each other throughout your parental leave, so keep them updated.

Managers

When the employee tells you they are coming back from parental leave and when, let the HR team know. They will draft a letter for you to give to the employee that confirms when they'll be coming back.

Return to operational duties

We acknowledge that returning to operational duties may be a challenging time for new parents. There may also be specific challenges due to your type of delivery, your recovery from childbirth, and the physical nature of your role.

You may want to ask your manager for support in the following situations:

If you...	then...
can't return to full operational duties due to any health or fitness concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you should speak to your doctor to get medical guidelines • discuss with your manager and Rehabilitation Coordinator, if needed, to establish a supported return-to-work plan. <p>Note: In some cases, we may need you to obtain a medical clearance to return to operational duties.</p>
can't return to full operational duties due to 'red light' OSM status	your manager will discuss what duties you can undertake and what time frame is needed to achieve 'green light' status.
find you're more fatigued than usual in your transition back to operational duties	discuss with your manager and Rehabilitation Coordinator, if needed, the option of a supported return-to-work plan.

Case study:

Joel was a career SO working at a busy metropolitan station. She had six months parental leave with her first child and 12 months with her second and physically prepared well after each birth for her return to work.

Shortly after returning to work after her second child, Joel experienced some stress and fatigue incontinence and lower back pain. She discussed this with another colleague, who said the same thing had happened to her after her pregnancy and reassured her that "it will eventually return to normal".

To try to alleviate her incontinence, Joel embarked on a series of physical training routines to strengthen her pelvic floor. Unfortunately, her stress incontinence didn't improve, but she enjoyed the mental health benefits of the physical training, so she continued to do high-impact exercise both during and outside of work.

Joel understands that her pelvic floor dysfunction and deterioration resulted from many factors. However, the medical professionals involved in her case agree that not paying attention to the trauma of her pregnancies and births and her doing high intensity exercise during and outside of work certainly contributed to her condition. Joel has now completed several training and rehab programmes and avoids high intensity exercise outside of work. While her pelvic floor is significantly stronger and she can work to full capacity in her role, she needs to manage her

pelvic floor dysfunction carefully to delay surgery – the only long-term fix for her condition.

Joel's pelvic health experience is not uncommon for new mothers, but what is unique to her story, however, is the physically demanding job she returned to. It's important to acknowledge there are added implications for an operational firefighter with a dysfunctional pelvic floor and we need to take greater care in this area. If Joel had her time again, she would have told her GP about her niggling concerns earlier, sought specialist advice more quickly, and not rushed her return to full physical fitness for operational duties.

Case study 2:

Jill was a career SFF at a provincial brigade when she became pregnant. She advised her SO and local management and was put on alternative duties as soon as she confirmed her pregnancy with a dating scan at 7 weeks. Her first trimester progressed smoothly, and she transitioned into her alternative duties while remaining on her usual watch assignment.

Sadly, at 16 weeks Jill had a miscarriage at home. This was very unexpected – her pregnancy had been progressing well and because she was in the second trimester, she thought she had passed the danger zone. The miscarriage was physically and emotionally painful for Jill. When her GP checked her, she ensured she got a doctor's certificate because she knew that in the immediate term, she was unable to return to her operational role. She was well supported by her Officer and the management team, who put her on sick leave as soon as they knew about her pregnancy loss and continued to check in with her every 3 or 4 days. They outlined Fire and Emergency's support services to her so that she knew what help was available.

In one of the phone check-ins it became apparent that Jill was still struggling with the emotional loss. She had also gained a lot of weight during the pregnancy and physically she was not feeling confident about returning to full operational duties when her sick leave ended. Local management respectfully advised her that if she could provide a doctor's certificate from a medical professional that confirmed she was not fit for work, then they could refer her to the IMU. Jill was happy to do this as she had already been discussing this with her GP.

Once the IMU were involved, they connected directly with Jill and her doctor and developed a plan to help her transition back into her operational role.

Keeping in touch days

While you are on paid parental leave, you can choose to use paid keeping in touch (KIT) days to do work from time to time. These need to be discussed, agreed to and documented with your manager. This only applies to the Primary carer on paid parental leave

KIT days need to be used while you are on paid parental leave and need to be agreed to by Fire and Emergency. They are not compulsory – they can only be taken if both you and Fire and Emergency agree. This means that we cannot force you to work during your parental leave and you cannot insist on doing so.

Remember:

- during your parental leave payment period, you can only do a total of 64 hours or less of paid work, and
- this work cannot be within the first 28 days after your child is born.

If you work more than 64 hours during your parental leave payment period or do any work within the first 28 days after the birth of your child, then you're considered to be back at work. This also means that you won't be able to get any more parental leave payments, and any payments you received after you're considered back at work are treated as an overpayment.

It's a good idea to talk to your manager about KIT days **before** you go on parental leave.

You could liken KIT days to return-to-work days. Except for the first 28 days after the birth of your child, you can spread KIT days throughout the duration of your parental leave or at the end to help with the transition back to work. Examples of good use of KIT days include:

- generalised crew training
- OSM tasks
- re-certifications
- brigade/ station, district or region meetings
- workshops and meetings related to project work
- development opportunities with other agencies
- station or brigade events.

You need to claim KIT days as individual overtime claims in Home Base.

Managers

Code KIT days as BU 2165 in SMS.

Case study:

Sarah was a career SFF in an urban metropolitan brigade. While she was pregnant, she had a discussion with her AAM (Group Manager) about how she could use KIT days to stay connected while she was at home with her newborn son and also help her to reengage with operational duties.

Together, they agreed and documented suitable duties, which included:

- *keeping OSM up to date on station with her usual watch*
- *general and specialised training on station with her usual watch*
- *attending and participating in meetings and forums as part of the Regional Women's Advisory Network (RWAN)*
- *attending interagency networking opportunities as a member of her RWAN.*

The agreed plan was documented and endorsed by the Area, (District) Manager and regional HR business manager.

The AAM (Group Manager) processed all her overtime claims so they could keep a tally of the hours.

When Sarah was asked specifically about her KIT experience, she said, "I had a really positive experience. It was great being able to come into work and catch up with people and keep my hand in the job while on maternity leave. I had so much amazing support from everyone, from peers through to SOs/SSOs and especially the AAM (Group Manager)."

Case study:

Bruce was a career senior fire fighter at a provincial brigade when his partner became pregnant with their second child. Bruce knew that he wanted to be more involved with his second child after the birth and after discussing it with his partner they planned for him to take six months of parental leave (primary carers leave) directly after the birth so that she could return to full time work sooner. Bruce applied for the leave prior to the delivery and was supported by District Management which helped him swap leave cycles to maximise time at home and the regional HR manager helped him with the FENZ and IRD forms.

Bruce knew that he would be eligible to utilise KIT days while he was preparing to return to work. He had been preparing to complete his Type 4 aerial training prior to the birth of his second child so he proposed that his KIT days focus on this competency. Because so few fathers had formally taken “parental leave” in the region there was some hesitancy from District Management who were not comfortable for individuals to complete training while on leave, as they saw Bruce’s time at home as being LWOP. Once Bruce explained that he had formally taken primary carers leave and that KIT time could be used for any purpose to assist with returning to work (with their agreement) under NZ law, they were happy to accommodate this request. Bruce came into station and completed the Type 4 training with his usual watch and also used the time to ensure all his critical OSM skills were green lighted as well. This meant he was able to transition effortlessly back into operational duties on his return.

On reflection Bruce feels that his time at home has created a strong bond with both is children, as it “changed my identity in the best possible way,” he encourages more male fire fighters to take up this opportunity.

**Injuries on unpaid
parental leave and
ACC**

If you are on unpaid parental leave and injure yourself and can’t return to work on your expected date because of the injury, you may be able to claim through ACC.

You need to contact ACC and your manager as soon as possible.

Service

Fire and Emergency values and celebrates service. It impacts firefighter rank promotions and transfers, and, for our career personnel, it affects entitlements like annual service leave and long service leave. It is important that we manage it consistently and fairly across the organisation.

Career firefighters, RR and CRR roles, trainers, ComCen dispatchers and executive officers

Your service will **not** be affected while you are on alternative duties, parental leave or even return-to-work duties if applicable. This means that as long as you do not take a period of leave without pay in addition to any statutory parental leave entitlements, your service will continue to accrue.

When you return to work, it is important to monitor this in either SMS and/or Home Base – our systems are not always set up to manage parental leave so we recommend you check this occasionally (and take screenshots) to ensure your pregnancy and specifically your time on parental leave has not adversely affected your progression, entitlements and remuneration.

If you find anything incorrect, talk to your manager first.

Volunteer firefighters

Your service will **not** be affected while you're pregnant as long as you're still attending brigade activities.

But when you take parental leave (immediately before and/or following the birth of the child), your service is **interrupted but not broken**.

The United Fire Brigades' Association (UFBA) manages the calculation of service for volunteers. Service is linked to the calendar year 1 July to 30 June, not to a joining or anniversary date. If you are an active member of your brigade for 66% (2/3) of the year, your service will be unaffected. Brigade leaders and pregnant firefighters should keep that in mind when they are planning start and return dates for parental leave.

If you need support, contact the Service Honours Coordinator at the UFBA (ufba.org.nz > [Contact us](#)). They can explain exactly how service is calculated and give advice about reducing disruption to the brigade's and individual's service record.

Association and union membership

Make sure you reactivate your association or union membership when you return to work.

Find your association or union contact details on the Portal > [Associated agencies](#).

Likewise, if you have any other outgoing payments connected to your pay, e.g. Welfare Society, Credit Union and/or insurances attached via either of those, make sure that they have been reinstated and are operating as they should. We recommend you double-check your first couple of payslips.

Superannuation

Pay attention! This is important!

When you go on parental leave, you will need to suspend your contributions to your nominated superannuation scheme. (This is the same process as when you take leave without pay.)

Before you go on parental leave, contact the [Payroll team](#) in the first instance as they will initiate the process with the appropriate superannuation scheme.

Suspension of superannuation for any reason requires trustee approval, so you will also need to confirm with your nominated superannuation scheme directly. When you confirm this, give them an approximate return date for their records.

For many pregnant workers using this guideline, it will be NZ Fire Super who will be managing this. You can contact them at nzfire.super@mercer.com.

Likewise, when you return to work, ensure you contact the Payroll team and your nominated scheme again to confirm your return date and ensure that you have your contributions reinstated.

We would also recommend that you check your first couple of payslips on Home Base to make sure that your contributions and Fire and Emergency's contributions are going into your scheme.

Case study

Rose was a career SO based at a provincial urban brigade when she became pregnant.

She enjoyed her time on parental leave but was excited about returning to work when her son was 10 months old. Rose jumped straight back into her work, progressing with her SSO TAPS and moving to a busier station to broaden her officership skills. It was a busy time for Rose and her family – her partner had recently changed roles at work, and she was supporting a family member through a significant health scare. She knew that, like many young families, they were juggling a lot of needs, but by focusing on her family's health and happiness she took comfort that she was prioritising the most important ones.

While she did take some overtime, she didn't take much notice of her payslips, which were now fully automated. Her partner managed the finances for the family and her pay went into the family bank account every second Tuesday night, so she assumed everything was operating as it should. Some years later, when they finally got around to auditing their finances, Rose discovered that her superannuation had never been reinstated when she returned to work after parental leave. This meant that she had not been contributing 6 percent of her pay each fortnight and, more importantly, not been receiving the employer contributions and the interest. She was devastated about this financial loss and embarrassed about admitting she had taken so long to discover the error.

The organisation was willing to pay the missed employer contributions, but under the superannuation scheme rules, Rose also needed to contribute the 6 percent of her pay for the last three and half years. At the time, Rose's family needed all of their savings for the deposit on their first home before house prices increased and put this out of their reach. In the end they just wrote off the loss and bought the house. Rose estimated the loss was more than \$20K at the time, but with compounding interest that figure would increase significantly over the duration of her superannuation scheme.

Rose's experience highlights how important it is to ensure that any regular payments that are connected to your pay are reinstated on your return to work, especially superannuation contributions, union and association fees and/or regular premiums connected to insurance.

Childcare

Fire and Emergency is not responsible for, or involved in, organising childcare, but we understand it is not always easy to find. If you will have to rely on paid childcare, start looking at options as soon as possible. It may take you a while to decide what best suits you and your family. In some areas it is highly likely that you will be placed on a waiting list until a space becomes available. So again, we strongly advise you to start this process early so you do not find yourself without childcare arrangements when you want to go back to work.

If you are a shift worker, you may need to get creative with options; at-home care, shared nannies, au pairs have all been used in the past by families returning to operational work at Fire and Emergency.

Return to work checklist**Before you return to work**

- Confirm that you are coming back and your return date with your manager about 1 month, but no less than 21 days, before your return.
- If you want to take KIT days, plan, organise and take them.

- Physically prepare for operational duties. (If you are concerned about your physical fitness, talk to your manager and a medical practitioner.)
- Make sure your relevant skills are current. (If applicable, review your OSM and ensure core skills have 'green light' status.)
- Confirm your childcare arrangements and do some test runs if possible.
- Advise your union/association of your return date and make sure you reactivate your membership and fees if you wish to do so.
- Advise your superannuation provider of your return date and make sure you reactivate your employee contributions if you wish to do so.
- If you are breastfeeding and would like to continue doing this when you return to work, discuss it with your manager, see [Breastfeeding at work](#) below so Fire and Emergency can put plans in place to support you.

Returning to operational duties

Breastfeeding at work

You may want to continue breastfeeding your child after you return. Under New Zealand employment law, employers have to provide breastfeeding breaks and appropriate facilities for women who want to breastfeed or express breast milk at work or during working hours so far "as it is reasonable and practicable in the circumstances". These breaks are in addition to rest and meal breaks.

See Employment New Zealand > Hours and wages > Breaks > [Breastfeeding at work](#) for more information.

Breastfeeding personnel need:

- a private, quiet, clean and warm room or space
- a suitable chair or couch
- room to change a nappy (unless they are solely expressing breast milk).

And if mother is expressing breast milk, it is important they access to:

- a fridge
- hygienic hand-washing facilities
- a lockable room (with a power point if they will use an electric pump)
- a clean space to store equipment.

Fire and Emergency supports breastfeeding and expressing. You and your manager need to talk about what facilities and breaks you will need and write down what you have agreed (an email is enough). For example, if you are a ComCen dispatcher, in a RR or CRR role, trainer or executive officer, and if you and your manager agree, you could take these breaks offsite if there is nowhere suitable at your station or workplace.

Operational work can be unpredictable, so we recommend you plan for contingencies, e.g. carry a manual pump on the truck and make sure you have a good supply of breast milk stored at home. Discuss your breastfeeding requirements with your manager so they can help and support you with this.

Note: There is very little research into antenatal and postnatal women's health and operational firefighting. But, one 2015 US-based pilot study looked at the effect of the firefighting environment on breast milk. The researchers acknowledged that the results of the study were very limited, but recommended that, until further studies are done, breastfeeding firefighters should pump and discard their breastmilk for 72 hours after they attend a structural fire. (See the IAFF presentation [Women Firefighters and their Occupational Health](#), 56:22)

We recommend that you do your own research to ascertain your level of comfort around this issue.

Managers

Fire and Emergency supports breastfeeding. We acknowledge, though, that in some circumstances, the operating environment and resources of the station or workplace mean it isn't reasonable or practicable to provide breastfeeding facilities. Circumstances may also change over time. But if personnel want to continue breastfeeding when they return, you should try to accommodate their wishes as much as possible and work with them to find a solution.

Annual leave after returning to work

Under the Holidays Act 2003, any annual leave that an employee becomes entitled to during parental leave, or in the 12 months after they return from parental leave, is paid at the rate of their average weekly earnings over the 12 months before the annual leave is taken. However, Fire and Emergency has chosen to pay any annual leave taken after an employee returns to work from parental leave at the higher of either their ordinary pay or their average earnings, which is better than the provisions of the Holidays Act.

This ensures that operational staff resuming their leave cycle receive no less than full pay when it falls, regardless of how long they have been back. Note, however, that your manager needs to agree before you take or defer any annual leave.

Flexible working arrangements

When you return to work, you may find that your situation has changed. As an employee, you are entitled to apply (in writing) for a flexible working arrangement, such as job-sharing, working from home or part-time work where applicable. Your manager will consider your request and respond to it in writing within 1 month of receiving your application (but they do not have to agree to it).

Your request must:

- have your name on it
- be dated with the day of when your request was made
- refer to Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 (which is about flexible working)
- explain the working arrangement you are seeking and whether you want it to be permanent or for a set period of time
- state the date that you want the new working arrangement to start and, if the new working arrangement is for a set period of time, state the date you want the arrangement to end
- explain, in your view, what changes (if any) Fire and Emergency may need to make to our current work arrangements if your request is approved.

Managers

Managers should be flexible with new parents as they're adjusting back to the workplace. If an employee applies for a flexible working arrangement, we as an

employer must consider all options before accepting or declining an application. We need to respond their request in writing. We must do this as soon as possible and not later than one month. This requirement comes from Employment Relations Authority guidance. If we decline an application, we must give the employee a reason why.

Case study:

Heath and Sarah were both career firefighters at a provincial brigade. They were both terrified and thrilled when they discovered that they were expecting twins at the 8-week dating scan. Sarah managed her pregnancy smoothly with the help of her SSO and AAM (Group Manager).

Heath and Sarah agreed to split the parental leave entitlements so that they would each have 6 months at home with their boys. Sarah was at home for the first 6 months and Heath was at home for the next 6 months.

The new parents and local management kept communicating throughout their parental leave and due to some personnel movements on station during that period, the couple were able to apply for and secure positions on trailing watches (one on brown watch and one on blue watch). They thought this would work well for managing childcare when they were both back on full operational duties and shift work.

The couple had no family to support them with childcare. As Heath's return to work date approached, they realised that managing the two shift transitions/jump times from blue days to brown nights was going to be challenging. They approached their AAM (Group Manager) about the two of them jumping position for position on these specific times at the earlier time of 1500. The AAM (Group Manager) took the proposition to the SSO group for discussion and they agreed to a 6-month trial.

Sarah and Heath were well supported by the management, firefighters and NZPFU throughout this process. They remained positive, flexible and open to suggestions others might have to enable it to work better. At the time of writing, the trial is still in place but is working well so far.

Flexible working options for firefighters and shift workers are much more complex than standard work arrangements, but Sarah and Heath's experience shows that if individuals are prepared to come up with a practical solution/suggestion and they are supported by the management, then there are workable options.

Parental leave grant

Firefighters returning to work under the NZPFU CEA may be eligible for a parental leave grant. (See clause 1.4.2.4 of the NZPFU CEA.) This payment now attracts superannuation.

Once you have been back at work for 6 months you can apply for this grant. This means that:

An employee on...	will receive a payment equivalent to...
a 'coloured' watch	8.5 weeks' pay
black watch	6 weeks' pay
yellow watch	7.5 weeks' pay

To apply for the parental leave grant, you will need to email your Group Manager directly with details confirming the dates of your last day at work before starting parental leave and your first day back after parental leave. They can then forward this request directly onto the Payroll and HR teams for processing.

Sick leave and sickness at home

New parents returning to work may be nervous about how they will manage childcare if someone in the family gets sick. Remember, your entitlements for sick leave will remain unchanged when you return to work following parental leave.

There are also provisions for sickness at home (SAH) for Fire and Emergency employees which account for sickness of a dependant or family member who depends on the employee. (See clauses 2.8.7–2.8.7.4 of the NZPFU CEA.) If you want to apply for SAH please keep in mind the following:

- You may need to provide a doctor's certificate.
- Your officer can approve one shift at any given time
- An executive officer can approve up to 4 days at any one time. For absences longer than this you will need to discuss further with an executive officer.
- You cannot exceed 10 days of SAH in any leave year.
- Fire and Emergency may not approve your SAH absence if another adult (e.g. a family member) is available to care for the sick person.
- We will give approval to one employee if both parents are working for Fire and Emergency.

Adopting or becoming a caregiver**Adoption and whāngai**

Adopting, whāngai or becoming a permanent caregiver is a beautiful way to grow your family, and the good news is there is support available for you.

New Zealand parental leave legislation extends to parents who are becoming the 'primary carer' of a child under the age of 6 years, but are not the child's biological mother or her spouse or partner. The Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 gives some examples:

- If a child under the age of 6 years goes to live with their aunt, who intends to raise the child in place of the child's biological parents, the aunt is the child's primary carer.
- If a couple formally adopt a child under the age of 6 years, or undertake to care for the child permanently, the couple must jointly nominate one of them to be the child's primary carer.

- But, if a child under the age of 6 years is temporarily placed with a foster parent, that person is not a primary carer because the placement is not permanent.

Many of the provisions are the same, but there are some key differences.

What's the same?

1. [Eligibility criteria for parental leave](#)
2. [PPL payments from Inland Revenue](#)
3. [Eligibility for KIT days](#)
4. [Process to return to work](#)
5. [Protection of your position while you are on parental leave](#)
6. [Extending leave options](#)

Differences

While most of the parental leave information in this document applies to parents who are going through adoption or whāngai or becoming permanent caregivers, there are some differences from when you're pregnant:

1. Age of the child – you can take parental leave for a child coming into your care up to the age of 6, not just a newborn or infant.
2. Notifying Fire and Emergency that you intend to take parental leave – you must give your manager at least 14 days' notice before you (or, for partner's leave, your spouse or partner) intends to become the child's primary carer. You will have to provide evidence (e.g. a court order or a statutory declaration) to show that you or your partner or spouse will be the primary carer of the child.
We understand that you may not know the exact date your child will be placed with you, so it is quite important that you let us know as much as you do, as soon as you can – just in case you get a call in the middle of the day that your child is waiting to meet their new parents! It can happen that quickly sometimes – not unlike a baby deciding to arrive early.
3. Time off for appointments – the unpaid special leave that pregnant employees are entitled to under New Zealand law for reasons specifically relating to their pregnancy is not transferable to the adoption or permanent caregiver process. If you need to take time off during work for meetings with social workers, lawyers and other professionals, you will need to discuss and agree this with your manager.

Points to consider

Adopting or becoming a caregiver to a child is often a long journey and can have ups and downs. If your manager is aware of what you and your family are going through, they can support you as needed. But remember, if you intend to take parental leave, you need to give your manager at least 14 days' notice.

You may also want to consider telling a few close colleagues, so you have some support at work. If this is your first child, your colleagues may have some useful advice on how to get through the first few months of being a parent! But it is really up to you when and how you disclose your adoption journey at work.

Remember that Fire and Emergency's usual support relating to wellbeing is available to you to manage any additional pressure. See How do I > [Seek safety, health and wellbeing support](#).

Pregnancy loss

Miscarriage and pregnancy loss

Miscarriages are a common occurrence – statistically one in four pregnancies will result in a miscarriage and over twenty thousand women experience a miscarriage every year in New Zealand.

Miscarriages can occur in a variety of forms. They are more common in the first trimester, but can occur up until the twentieth week of pregnancy. (After 20 weeks the loss is usually categorised as a 'stillbirth'.) The terminology is important as pregnancy loss can be a highly traumatic experience for the whole family.

Types of miscarriages and pregnancy loss include:

- Threatened miscarriage
- Inevitable miscarriage
- Complete miscarriage
- Incomplete miscarriage (this may result in further medical procedures)
- Missed miscarriage (this may result in further medical procedures)
- Recurrent miscarriages
- Ectopic pregnancy
- Molar pregnancy (this may result in further medical procedures)
- Blighted ovum (this may result in further medical procedures)
- Termination, including:
 - surgical abortion
 - early medical abortion.

Go to pregnancybirthbaby.org.au > [Types of miscarriage](#) for more information on miscarriage and pregnancy loss.

Managers

Because pregnant operational personnel need to tell their manager that they are pregnant as early as possible, there is a higher chance that managers may need to deal with a worker having a miscarriage.

There are a range of reactions to miscarriage and pregnancy loss for parents. We encourage managers to empathise with parents as they navigate their loss and return to work. Encourage them to work with their LMC or GP (if it happened in the very early stages of pregnancy). Remind them that Fire and Emergency's wellbeing support is available to them and their families.

Please use the case studies in this section to guide how you manage parents who experience miscarriage or pregnancy loss.

Confidentiality and privacy are the highest priority at this time.

Stillbirth

After 20 weeks a miscarriage is referred to as a stillbirth. In most of these cases, the baby will need to be physically birthed.

This experience is often described as harrowing and can carry guilt and grief for parents. Managers navigating this with their workers need to be empathetic, patient and kind, and be guided by the family involved.

Case study:

Brian was a career firefighter at a metropolitan brigade when his wife, Sarah, became pregnant with their first child. The pregnancy progressed normally. There were no concerns, even when Sarah went over term, as all the scans and medical professionals confirmed that the baby was a good size and looking healthy.

Brian was on duty when Sarah phoned to tell him that the baby hadn't moved much throughout the day. Despite a scan and reassurance that the low movement was due to the baby preparing for delivery, they both had a bad feeling. At the hospital the next day, they were eventually told that the baby had passed away. Sarah still needed to birth the baby, which was highly traumatic.

Brian's priority after the stillbirth was Sarah. They had not prepared at all for this outcome; their house and nursery were awaiting the arrival of the new baby, as were family and friends. On top of communication and logistics, there were additional formalities; their daughter needed a birth certificate and a death certificate, and they needed to organise a private funeral service. Brian tried to manage all of this to give Sarah the space to grieve. A friend offered them their back as a place to stay out of town, which was a welcome escape for the grieving couple.

The last thing on Brian's mind during this ordeal was work, but he did phone the station the night of the stillbirth and told the on-duty officer what had happened. He requested the following shift off as sickness at home before his leave that had been pre-approved for the birth started. The SO who took the call emailed everyone at the station about what had happened and asked them to give the family space in the short term, as Brian wasn't expected back on station for the next 4 weeks.

At the time, Brian's watch were in-between officers, and no one person stepped up to be his point of contact at work, which was challenging.

Sometime later, after his return to work, Brian was re-traumatised when he got an automated email from SMS via the Business Services Coordinator requesting a doctor's certificate for the one single shift he took off the day after the stillbirth.

Twelve years on, Brian is now an SO himself. He has reflected on this experience and is proactive about supporting firefighters through trauma, whether it be at home or at the station. He makes sure that there is single point of contact for them as they manage leave entitlements and documentation and proactively checks in on them either by text message or phone. He knows that the birth and death of his only daughter has changed him and that recovering from that loss was not a linear process. It didn't simply get a little bit better each day; there were good days and bad days, and there were triggers weeks, months, years later and they came at the most unexpected times. Brian is passionate about finding ways to support the individual and is happy to support any firefighter who has to deal with a stillbirth.

Case study:

Sarah was a career Senior Firefighter (SFF) in a provincial brigade who had been trying to get pregnant for some time. On their third and final attempt at in vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment, Sarah and her partner had a confirmed pregnancy.

While on alternative duties, Sarah sadly miscarried during week 10 of her pregnancy and was distraught. She couldn't go to work, so she rang her Station Officer (SO) to explain the situation. The SO told her she could have a set of shifts off work to recover. They were unsure how to manage Sarah's absence in SMS, and entered it as 'bereavement leave'.

When the Senior Station Officer (SSO) saw the changes in SMS, they approached Sarah directly about the bereavement leave and asked pointed questions about who had died. Sarah was still very upset about the miscarriage and was vague about the details. When the SSO continued to press her, she asked them to talk directly to her SO, but after more questions, Sarah was forced to explain it was a miscarriage.

Sarah was distraught about having to explain the situation to the SSO and to her colleagues. She felt that her privacy was heavily compromised, and that more discretion should have been exercised to protect her confidentiality in the workplace. The whole process of managing her leave contributed to the overall stress and loss at the time.

Sarah's experience highlights the vulnerability of the early stage of pregnancy and the importance of managing miscarriages, stillbirth and pregnancy loss with discretion and compassion, as they would with any bereavement

From March 2021 a law change means miscarriage and still birth are now included in bereavement leave entitlements.

Support available

If you have suffered pregnancy loss and need support, please do not hesitate to reach out for help via the support services available to everyone at Fire and Emergency and their families.

Managing leave after pregnancy loss

Note: This section applies to operational Fire and Emergency employees and their managers.

If you are recovering from pregnancy loss, miscarriage or still birth and need time off work, this is now included in bereavement leave entitlements. Refer to your employment contract for bereavement leave details.

If you feel that bereavement leave is the appropriate leave to use in this situation, apply for it and it will be allocated and managed as per your agreement. Under the [Holidays Act 2003 S69](#), if you have worked here for at least six months, you are entitled to up to 3 days' bereavement leave if you or your partner experiences a miscarriage or stillbirth. If you need more than 3 days' leave, discuss this with your manager.

Managers

Managers need to be professional, kind and compassionate in these situations. Ask the HR team for guidance around managing leave if you are unsure what to do.

Case study 1:

Janine was a QFF at a career urban station when she became pregnant. She had been trying to get pregnant for some time so was familiar with the policy. She informed her Officer as soon as she knew, and local management removed her from her response role straightaway.

Janine had just finished her driving qualification and was working through her SFF TAPS programme. She was motivated and supported by her brigade, which meant that she was able to progress this work as part of her alternative duties plan.

At 11 weeks she had a miscarriage at home and her GP confirmed this. She took some sick leave to recover but returned to work after 10 days, which meant she was able to attend her SFF course at NTC. While she was in Rotorua she started experiencing very heavy stomach cramps and vaginal bleeding. When she shared her condition with the trainers they took her to a local emergency medical practice

straightaway. The doctor confirmed that her miscarriage from 2 weeks ago was in fact an 'incomplete miscarriage'. The doctor gave her some pain relief medicine and organised for the appropriate medical procedure to be performed in her home town.

The trainers made sure Janine could travel safely back to her home and she went to her local hospital the next day for the procedure. After the trainers confirmed that Janine was happy for them to share the information, they also informed her Area, (District) management and officer of the situation. This meant that they could manage her leave appropriately and prioritise her attending the next available training course at NTC when she was feeling physically and emotionally fit to attend it.

While the experience was very traumatic, Janine was very grateful for the compassion and discretion of the trainers and management team, who were able to organise support and the appropriate leave for her. This reduced the emotional impact of such a challenging experience and helped her recover more quickly.

Case study 2:

Jill was a career SFF at a provincial brigade when she became pregnant. She advised her SO and local management and was put on alternative duties as soon as she confirmed her pregnancy with a dating scan at 7 weeks. Her first trimester progressed smoothly and she transitioned into her alternative duties while remaining on her usual watch assignment.

Sadly, at 16 weeks Jill had a miscarriage at home. This was very unexpected – her pregnancy had been progressing well and because she was in the second trimester she thought she had passed the danger zone. The miscarriage was physically and emotionally painful for Jill. When her GP checked her, she ensured she got a doctor's certificate because she knew that in the immediate term, she was unable to return to her operational role. She was well supported by her Officer and local management team, who put her on sick leave as soon as they knew about her pregnancy loss and continued to check in with her every 3 or 4 days. They outlined Fire and Emergency's support services to her so that she knew what help was available.

In one of the phone check-ins it became apparent that Jill was still struggling with the emotional loss. She had also gained a lot of weight during the pregnancy and physically she was not feeling confident about returning to full operational duties when her sick leave ended. Local management respectfully advised her that if she could provide a doctor's certificate from a medical professional that confirmed she was not fit for work, then they could refer her to the IMU. Jill was happy to do this as she had already been discussing this with her GP.

Once the IMU were involved, they connected directly with Jill and her doctor and developed a plan to help her transition back into her operational role.

Acronyms

These acronyms are used in this document.

Acronym	Stands for...
CEA	collective employment agreement
CFO	Chief Fire Officer

ComCen	Communications Centre
FECA	Fire and Emergency Commanders Association
GP	general practitioner
KIT days	keeping in touch days
LMC	lead maternity carer
OS	operational support
OSM	operational skills maintenance
QFF	Qualified Firefighter
NTC	National Training Centre
NZPFU	New Zealand Professional Firefighters' Union
PPE	personal protective equipment
PPL	paid parental leave
PSA	Public Service Association
RWAN	Regional Women's Advisory Network
SAH	sickness at home
SFF	Senior Firefighter
SMS	Station Management System
SO	Senior Officer
SSO	Senior Station Officer
TAPS	Training and Progression System
UFBA	United Fire Brigades' Association

A final word

We hope these guidelines have been helpful.

This is a living document that we will update when information changes. Please email your feedback and any suggestions for improvement to parentalleave@fireandemergency.nz.

This is the end for now. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately), our guidelines don't extend to actually raising children. You'll have to refer to other guides for helpful hints, given that the addition to your whānau doesn't arrive with a user manual.

Aroha nui (Much love)!

Appendix A – Flow chart for pregnant workers: Before the birth

Congratulations, you are pregnant! If you are a volunteer firefighter, career firefighter, ComCen dispatcher, RRA/CRRA (including senior, trainer, executive officer):

we strongly encourage you to tell your manager (chief, officer, supervisor, executive officer) as soon as you confirm this.

Note: The sooner your manager is aware of your pregnancy, the better Fire and Emergency can support you. See [Key messages](#).

We strongly recommend:

Volunteer firefighter, career firefighter

You stop responding to call outs.
Volunteer firefighter – OS on SMS
Career firefighter – alternative duties

ComCen dispatcher

You discuss options for alternative duties.

Trainer

You are removed from live fire training.

RR/CRR roles, executive officer

You are removed from the on-duty roster.



Initial meeting

- Bringing a certificate from a medical practitioner or lead maternity carer confirming your pregnancy and due date, will help with planning.
- Discuss and agree to an [alternative duties](#) plan if appropriate. Discuss your allowances and whether your manager needs to notify the Payroll team about any changes.
- Discuss and agree how to manage pregnancy-related appointments.
- Discuss any concerns, including [privacy concerns or requests](#).
- Document the meeting.
- Review your agreement regularly and update your alternative duties as needed.



When you are approximately 5 months pregnant

- Confirm in writing your final date of work. If you are taking parental leave, you must give Fire and Emergency at least 3 months' notice before your expected due date.
- Apply to Inland Revenue for paid parental leave – HR can support you with the paperwork.
- Confirm how you will manage your accrued leave.
- Start investigating childcare options – there is likely to be a waiting list.



When you are approximately 7 months pregnant

- Confirm your paid parental leave application is with Inland Revenue.
- Notify your union or association to ensure your service won't be affected.
- Notify your superannuation scheme.
- Ensure you address any automatic payments attached to your pay (insurance, superannuation, etc.).
- Consider using [keeping in touch days](#) after the birth – discuss these now with your manager.

Appendix B – Flow chart for managers: Before the birth

An operational member of your team has told you they are pregnant

You can begin to formally guide and support them, and manage any changes in your team. Be supportive and reiterate our [key messages](#) when you talk to the pregnant worker.

We strongly recommend:

Volunteer firefighter, career firefighter

They stop responding to call outs.
Volunteer firefighter – OS on SMS
Career firefighter – alternative duties

ComCen dispatcher

They discuss options for alternative duties.

Trainer

They are removed from live fire training.

RR/CRR roles, executive officer

They do not attend fire investigation scenes.



Organise an initial face-to-face meeting with the pregnant worker as soon as possible

- Discuss any concerns, including any [privacy concerns or requests](#).
- Discuss and agree how to manage pregnancy-related appointments.
- Discuss and agree to an [alternative duties](#) plan, if appropriate.
- Collect their documentation confirming their pregnancy and due date (usually a certificate from a medical practitioner or lead maternity carer) and pass this on to the HR team.
- Document the meeting and send a copy to the pregnant worker.
- [Manage any change in their attendance appropriately in SMS](#) and notify the Payroll team about any changes they need to action (e.g. for RR/CRR roles).
- Remember you and the pregnant worker will need to review their agreement regularly and update the alternative duties as needed.



When the worker is approximately 5 months pregnant

- Review their alternative duties plan and agree to update it if required.
- Get confirmation (in writing) of their final date of work and notify the HR team. If they are taking parental leave, they must give Fire and Emergency at least 3 months' notice before their expected due date.
- Remind them to apply to Inland Revenue for paid parental leave, and that the HR team can support them with the paperwork.
- Confirm and manage any leave they have accrued.
- Start discussing possible return-to-work dates.



When the worker is approximately 7 months pregnant

- Remind the worker to notify their union or association and their superannuation scheme; and address any automatic payments attached to their pay (insurance, superannuation, etc.)
- Discuss using [keeping in touch days](#) during parental leave (after 28 days after the birth). Encourage them to stay in regular contact with you and their crew/team while they are on parental leave.

Document information

Owner	DCE People
Stewardship	National Manager Women's Development
Last reviewed	24 February 2022
Review period	Yearly

Record of amendments

Date	Brief description of amendment
December 2022	Clarified the information around risks of shift work and black watch options, and the averaging of overtime (OT) for those with OT or on-call components to their work. Zendesk ticket #318539
March 2022	Initial version

SUBJECT	Clarification on pregnancy and parental leave guidelines
DATE	7 December 2022
TO	All personnel
FROM	Janine Hearn, DCE, People
STATUS	Information only
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that we have made two amendments to the <i>Managing pregnancy and parental leave for operational personnel guidelines</i>.
Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been brought to our attention that two paragraphs in the <i>Managing pregnancy and parental leave for operational personnel guidelines</i> needed more clarity, so we have amended them. 1. The first paragraph is on page 5 and formerly read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are a ComCen dispatcher, you are not exposed to the same chemical and physical hazards in your response duties as a firefighter. But you are still exposed to potential psychological effects from handling emergency calls and to fatigue relating to shift work. We strongly recommend you tell your manager or shift manager as soon as you're aware that you're pregnant and your due date, so you can talk about any suitable options. This paragraph has been amended to read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are a ComCen dispatcher, you are not exposed to the same chemical and physical hazards in your response duties as a firefighter. But you are still exposed to potential psychological effects from handling emergency calls and to fatigue relating to shift work. We strongly recommend you tell your manager or shift manager as soon as you're aware that you're pregnant and your due date, so you can talk about any suitable options, including the option of being placed on Black Watch to eliminate the risks around shift work. 2. The second paragraph is on page 11 and formerly read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: As a RR or CRR role, your pay (if you are on reduced duties) will be averaged out so you are not disadvantaged (percentage based on the previous year's earnings if applicable), which would take into consideration the on-call ratio and applicable allowance as well as any overtime payments for callouts. It was not intended that this be read as relating to RR and CRR roles only. We have, therefore, amended the Guidelines so the paragraph reads as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: In all roles with an overtime or on-call component, your pay (if you are on reduced duties) will be averaged out so you are not disadvantaged (percentage based on the previous year's earnings if

	applicable), which would take into consideration the on-call ratio and applicable allowance as well as any overtime payments for call-backs / callouts.
Portal link	The amended guidelines are on the Portal
Contact	Barbara Olah, Manager, Women's Development
	End of Notice.

APPLICATION FOR PARENTAL OR PARTNERS LEAVE FORM

Use this form when applying for parental or partner's leave. Complete and forward this form and supporting documentation to your manager three months before your intended leave date.

Part A		Personal details			
Employee name:			Employee number:		
Job title:			Business unit/Station:		
Start date:	Month YYYY	Full-time:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Part-time:	<input type="checkbox"/>
		hours per week: _____			

Part B		Parental leave		
Start date of parental leave:	DD Month YYYY	Period of time applying for:	i.e. 6 months, 12 months	
Employee's signature:			Date:	

Under the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987, employees are eligible for:

- (i) up to 52 weeks' parental leave from their employment with an employer if, on the relevant date, they will have worked for the same employer for at least 12 months for at least an average of 10 hours a week; or
- (ii) up to 26 weeks' parental leave from their employment with an employer if, on the relevant date, they will have worked for the same employer for the immediately preceding 6 months for at least an average of 10 hours a week.

The relevant date is the expected date of delivery of the child or the date on which the employee first becomes the primary carer in respect of the child.

If you wish to use any annual leave before starting parental leave, submit the leave request in the Employee Kiosk or SMS.

Send this form and the following documents to your manager:

- ☐ Supporting documents and/or letter confirming due date of birth, e.g. Medical certificate from doctor or midwife.

Part C		Partner's leave application		
I wish to apply for two weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	or one week	<input type="checkbox"/>	
unpaid partner's leave starting on:		DD Month YYYY		
Employee's signature:			Date:	

Entitlements for employees with 12 months' service:

Primary carer leave, partner's leave, and extended leave are available to employees who have worked for the same employer for at least an average of 10 hours a week over the immediately preceding 12 months. Primary carer leave and extended leave amount to 52 weeks, which may be shared by the spouses or partners in the child's first year. The combined period of 52 weeks may be exceeded only as follows:

- (iii) a biological mother may start her primary carer leave early if directed to do so by her lead maternity carer or by her employer;
- (iv) the biological mother's spouse or partner may take up to 2 weeks of partner's leave.

Primary carer leave must be taken in 1 continuous period not exceeding 18 weeks.

Entitlements for employees with 6 months' service:

Primary carer leave, partner's leave, and extended leave are available to employees who have worked for the same employer for at least an average of 10 hours a week over the immediately preceding 6 months. Primary carer leave and extended leave amount to 26 weeks, which may be shared by the spouses or partners in the child's first year. The period of 26 weeks may be exceeded as follows:

- (i) a biological mother may start her primary carer leave early if directed to do so by her lead maternity carer or by her employer;
- (ii) the biological mother's spouse or partner may take up to 1 week of partner's leave.

Primary carer leave must be taken in 1 continuous period not exceeding 18 weeks.

Send this form and the following document to your manager:

- ☐ Document confirming your spouse's or partner's due date of birth, e.g. Medical certificate from doctor or midwife.



APPLICATION FOR PARENTAL OR PARTNERS LEAVE FORM

Part D

Manager Approval & Checklist

Application granted: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you have any questions about parental leave entitlements, please contact the People Support team (NHQHR@fireandemergency.nz.nz).

Manager's signature: _____

Date: _____

Print name: _____

Checklist:

☐ Attach supporting documents, i.e. document confirming due date of birth.

Forward all documents to NHQHR@fireandemergency.nz for processing.

Part E

PAYROLL ACTION ONLY

☐ Checked by Payroll Coordinator

☐ Entered into Human Resources Information System

Signature: _____

Date: _____

☐ Processed and entered into the Payroll system

Signature: _____

Date: _____



Hybrid working at Fire and Emergency

Why hybrid

Hybrid working enables us to choose how we can best deliver on our outcomes. It means we choose the best places, times and approach to match, and deliver on the work we are doing.

We are all committed to delivering on our outcomes. As part of Fire and Emergency our focus is on the delivery of our services to New Zealand. A planned and principles-based approach to hybrid working helps us to maintain and enhance delivery to our organisation, other teams and stakeholders and continue to provide excellent service and outcomes. Developing a shared understanding of hybrid working with your team will set us all up for success.

In order to achieve this, hybrid working must come from a position of give and take and requires responsibility from us all. Hybrid working isn't about you working all of your time from home and it may not be about you working all of your time from the office either. We recognise the importance of kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) connection and the value of in-person collaboration to achieve our outcomes.

We will also need to continue to adapt and be agile in our approach to hybrid working.

What is hybrid working at Fire and Emergency

Hybrid working is available for our people, where the nature of their work allows it. It enables a blend of working from the office and working remotely (usually from home) depending on the needs of the organisation, your team, your role, and your own preference. It isn't about you working all of your time from home and it may not be about you working all of your time from the office either.

We are taking a **principles-based** approach to hybrid.

Principles help establish expectations and accountability about hybrid working and should be used to enable effective and values-based conversations between teams, leaders and individuals when discussing hybrid working.

Hybrid working is an informal arrangement between you and your leader – the arrangement does not change the terms and conditions of your employment agreement in respect of working hours or normal location of work. There is a responsibility on both sides to have discussion based on our hybrid working principles. The decision about the arrangement is ultimately your leader's and may be subject to review depending on the organisation's, or the team's needs.

Hybrid working is also supported by **flexible workspaces**. Flexible workspaces move away from a traditional office workspace where desks are allocated in a fixed location to enabling you to choose a space that makes the most sense for the work you are doing.



Spark Central NHQ is designed to provide a variety of different spaces and ways to work.

Our hybrid principles

Our hybrid principles have been developed to guide your discussions without the need for a list of rules as one size doesn't fit all.

Our five principles are:

Fit with the role: Your hybrid working arrangement is a good fit for your role. Arrangements will vary across the organisation depending on the needs of our different roles.

Enables outcomes to be achieved: Hybrid working enables your team's outcomes to be achieved and supports the needs of other teams and your stakeholders.

Does not affect delivery: Delivery to the organisation is maintained or enhanced. Hybrid working arrangements don't result in increased workloads for other team members.

Requires responsibility: Arrangements are based on trust. We trust you to choose the best times, places and approach to match, and deliver on, the work you are doing.

Comes from a position of give and take: Hybrid working requires collective responsibility and for people to be open and adaptable so that it works for everyone.

Kanohi ki te kanohi

We recognise the importance of kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) connection and the value of in-person collaboration to achieve our outcomes.

It's important to think about our activities and tasks that are best done in-person. Types of work that are conducive to face to face interactions can be broadly categorised as connection, collaboration, communication and learning.

Connection

Connection develops mutual understanding, reinforces organisational norms and builds a shared identity.

Once established, connections can be maintained remotely but remain strong and productive through time spent together in-person.

Tikanga requires that pōwhiri, whakatau and poroporoaki are in-person wherever possible.

Collaboration

Collaboration is about people coming together to complete work.

In-person connections are important to innovation and knowledge sharing, which often occurs informally or through opportunistic interactions.

Communication

Communication is about building trust, relationships and shared understanding.

Face to face communication allows for verbal and non-verbal cues that develop trust.

Our work is embedded in interpersonal relationships, connections and interactions.

Learning

Most work-based learning is informal and arises through 'learning by doing'. Informal communication, which often occurs face to face facilitates the exchange of information. People also learn skills by being with and observing their colleagues. Acquiring tacit knowledge in this way can be lost when people are working remotely.

Kanohi ki te kanohi – examples

	Connection	Collaboration	Communication	Learning
Mostly face to face	<p>Pōwhiri, whakatau, welcome</p> <p>Poroporoaki, farewells</p> <p>Forming a team e.g. new project team</p>	<p>Brainstorming or ideation</p> <p>Workplan planning</p> <p>Establishing a project</p>	<p>Performance Reviews</p> <p>Recruitment Interviews</p> <p>Establishing relationships</p> <p>Disciplinary meetings</p>	<p>Onboarding</p> <p>Informal learning with colleagues</p>
Some face to face	<p>Celebrating achievements</p> <p>Discussions or chats with colleagues</p> <p>Major organisational events</p>	<p>Urgent or unplanned work</p> <p>Collaboration on tasks within teams</p> <p>Planning coordinated tasks</p> <p>Collaboration across the organisation</p>	<p>One-to-one's</p> <p>Giving and receiving feedback</p> <p>New work</p> <p>Maintaining relationships</p>	<p>Formal learning</p> <p>Coaching and mentoring</p>
Less face to face		<p>Routine tasks requiring input from others</p>	<p>Team meetings or daily stand-ups</p>	

Safety, Health and Wellbeing

Wherever we work, we need to be mindful of our safety, health and wellbeing and take action.

From correctly setting up your workstation in a suitable area and creating a safe working environment to establishing routines and behaviours that support staying mentally healthy and promote positive wellbeing – make sure you take time to review the hybrid working safety, health and wellbeing resources.

Resources



Hybrid Working
Wellbeing Portal Page



Conditions of working
from home



Work from home self-
assessment checklist



Workstation setup
checklist

Better meetings – beating virtual fatigue

Be clear on the **purpose** and the intended **outcome**. Set an agenda.

Think carefully about **who needs to attend** and what is **expected of them** – make sure attendees are clear about their role.

Help attendees to be prepared. If pre-work is required communicate this early.

Confirm understanding and **set deadlines** for actions resulting from the meeting.

Think about the **length of the meeting**. Could it be 45 minutes rather than an hour? Would 25 minutes rather than 30 minutes achieve the same outcome? With that in mind, be sure to **start on time** and **end on time**.

and challenge yourself ...

Does it need to be a meeting? If yes ...

Is it suited to a hybrid environment or should it be kanohi ki te kanohi?

Tips for hybrid meetings

- Ensure everyone has a consistent experience – provide everyone with a chance to contribute.
- Don't default to people you can see or those in the meeting room.
- Encourage all remote participants to have their camera on.
- Avoid using equipment in the room that remote participants won't be able to see or use.
- Don't continue the conversation after remote participants have left.

Further information



Further information and resources on hybrid working can be found on the Portal

<https://portal.fireandemergency.nz/national-teams/people-hr/hybrid-working/>



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