

Military Breastfeeding Policies

Branch	Deployment	Supervisors	Private Area	Time	Breast Pump Equipment	Education	Other
Air Force	-12 month deferment from deployment after birth of child. -Remain eligible for field training and mobility exercises. BF encouraged.	Supervisors should work with AF members on a plan to continue breastfeeding	Provide private, clean area for milk expression; restrooms are not appropriate	-Attempt to arrange schedules to allow 15-30 minutes every 3-4 hours to express milk. - BF is not a reason for granting “excessive” time away from work	AF members supply their own equipment and handle storage of milk. Airmen in the field may need to discard milk collected.		Contact MTF or community hospital to ask for a lactation consultant. Airmen may be exposed to environmental contaminants and should discuss with HCP or Occupational Health.
Army	-6 month deferment from deployment after birth of the child. -Remain eligible for field training and mobility exercises. BF encouraged.	Discuss needs with supervisor or commander *sample letter available*	Soldiers will need access to a private space.	-Mothers will need 2-3 20-minute breaks during 8-hour workday. -BF is not a reason for granting “excessive” time away from work.	Army members supply their own equipment and handle storage of milk Soldier in the field may need to discard milk collected	Information provided on collecting and storing human milk, using a breast pump, frequency	Contact MTF or community hospital to ask for a lactation consultant. Soldiers may be exposed to environmental contaminants and should discuss with HCP or Occupational Health.
Coast Guard	Direct access to baby handled on a case-by-case basis.	Communicate with commanding officer to address concerns or issues	Commanding officer will ensure availability of a private, clean room for expressing milk	BF is not a reason for granting “excessive” time away from work	Coast Guard members supply their own equipment and handle storage of milk. Guardsman onboard ship may need to discard milk collected.		
Marine Corps	-6 month deferment from deployment after birth of child. -Remain eligible for field training and mobility exercises. BF encouraged.	Report to chain of command as soon as possible to allow for evaluation of the workplace	Servicewomen must be provided, at a minimum, a clean, secluded space (not a toilet space) with ready access to water source	-Mothers will need 2-3 20-minute breaks during 8-hour workday. -BF is not a reason for granting “excessive” time away from work.	Marine members supply their own equipment and handle storage of milk. Marines in the field or onboard ship may need to discard milk collected.		Contact MTF or community hospital to ask for a lactation consultant. Marines may be exposed to environmental contaminants and should discuss with HCP or Occupational Health.
Navy	-12 month deferment from deployment after birth of child. -Remain eligible for field training and mobility exercises. BF encouraged.	MTF and clinic personnel encouraged to develop plans to educate supervisors, Cos, and OICs, including child development centers	Must provide private accommodations for breast milk expression with door that can be secured, running water accessible	-Mothers will need 2-3 20-minute breaks during 8-hour workday. -BF is not a reason for granting “excessive” time away from work.	Navy members supply their own equipment and handle storage of milk. Sailors onboard ship may need to discard milk collected.	Breastfeeding education should begin at first prenatal visit. Health care staff should be trained in breastfeeding management and counseling.	Navy strongly endorses BF for the first year of the infant’s life. Free formula discouraged, and if given, must be accounted for, controlled, and issued with standard medical supply procedures. Sailors may be exposed to environmental contaminants and should discuss with HCP or Occupational Health.

*Note: MTF = “Medical Treatment Facility”

This is NOT an official DOD document and is neither endorsed nor approved by the DOD.

Policies Regarding Breastfeeding & Pumping in the Military

Air Force- Air Force Instruction 44-102 <http://www.af.mil/shared/media/epubs/AFI44-102.pdf>

The Air Force policy states that AF members shall be authorized 15-30 minutes every 3-4 hours to breast-pump. This should be allowed for approximately 12 months after delivery. The obstetrician or PCM shall annotate on an AF Form 422 that the member wishes to breast pump and makes a request for a room or office that provides adequate privacy for breast pumping be designated to allow AF members to pump. The AF member must supply the equipment needed to breast pump and store the breast milk. The obstetrician, pediatrician or PCM shall annotate on an AF Form 422 a recommendation for deployment for those AF members who choose to exclusively breastfeed (i.e. the infant does not take formula at all.) Breastfeeding/breast pumping AF members may participate in field training and mobility exercises. Decisions to continue to breast pump must be made by the patient, in collaboration with obstetrician or PCM, supervisors, training instructors regard to having a place to safely express and store breast milk

Army- AR 614-30 Deployment

Soldiers will be considered available for worldwide deployment 6 months after giving birth. The U.S. Army has no breastfeeding policy in place at this time. Further information can be found in the Guide to Female Soldiers Readiness <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/documents/TG/TECHGUID/TG281Draft29SepFinal.pdf> There is a sample letter for Army members to give to their supervisor requesting time to pump <http://usachppm.amedd.army.mil/dhpw/population/samplebreastfeedingmemocommanderfinal0807.pdf>

Coast Guard- COMDTINST M1000.6A http://www.uscg.mil/directives/cim/1000-1999/CIM_1000_6A.pdf

Servicewomen should obtain information from their care provider relating to breastfeeding education, care, counseling and support during the pregnancy, after delivery and on return to work. If the servicewoman opts to breastfeed after returning to duty, the member and the command should communicate to address any concerns or issues. When possible, the commanding officer or officer in charge will ensure the availability of a private, clean room for expressing breast milk during the workday. Requests to breastfeed infants during duty hours should be handled on a case by- case basis; however, breastfeeding an infant is not a reason for granting excessive time for meals or away from work. Servicewomen... will not normally be transferred to afloat units, aviation units or OCONUS that are deploying during the period from the 20th week of pregnancy through 6 months after the servicewoman's date of delivery.

Under this policy, career oriented officers and enlisted members are allowed a onetime separation from Active Duty for up to two years to discharge parental responsibilities to care for newborn children (CNC). This policy allows a member to separate with a guarantee of reenlistment or a new officer appointment upon return to Active Duty on meeting physical and other qualifying standards. While not a breastfeeding policy, it certainly can be helpful for breastfeeding mothers.

Marine Corps Order 5000.12E <http://www.awhonn-af.org/resources/MCO5000.12E.pdf> MARADMIN 358/07

Servicewomen who desire to continue breastfeeding upon return to duty will notify their chain of command at the earliest possible time to allow the command to determine how best to support them and facilitate the prompt evaluation of the workplace for potential hazards. When possible, the servicewoman who continues to provide breast milk to her infant upon return to duty shall be, at a minimum, afforded the availability of a clean, secluded space (not a toilet space) with ready access to a water source for the purpose of pumping breast milk. The time required for breast milk expression varies and is highly dependent upon several factors including the age of the infant, amount of milk produced, pump quality, the distance the pumping location is from the workplace, as well as how conveniently located the water source is from the pump location. Supervisors and lactating Servicewomen will collaborate to keep to a minimum the amount of time required for milk expression. Lactation consultants are available at the MTF to assist in this endeavor. Servicewomen will not normally be transferred to deploying units from the time of pregnancy confirmation up to 6 months from the date of delivery.

Navy OPNAVINST 6000.1C [http://doni.daps.dla.mil/Directives/06000 Medical and Dental Services/06-00 General Medical and Dental Support Services/6000.1C.PDF](http://doni.daps.dla.mil/Directives/06000%20Medical%20and%20Dental%20Services/06-00%20General%20Medical%20and%20Dental%20Support%20Services/6000.1C.PDF) Navy BUMEDINST 6000.14 <http://www.awhonn-af.org/resources/BreastfeedingInstruction6000.14.pdf>

Servicewomen should be provided access to educational information from didactic materials, a lactation consultant for breast care, breastfeeding education, counseling, and support during the pregnancy, after delivery, and on return to work. When possible, CO shall ensure the availability of a private, clean room for expressing breast milk. There should be ready access to running water and refrigeration for safe storage of breast milk. Requests to breast feed infants during duty hours should be handled on a case by case basis; however, breastfeeding an infant is not a reason for granting excessive time for meals or from work. Servicewomen may not be transferred to units that are deploying during the period from the 20th week of pregnancy through 12 months after the servicewoman's expected date of delivery.

Barriers to Breastfeeding in the Military-Regardless of the above policies many women find the following to be the main barriers to breastfeeding in the military:

- **Deployments/Training Exercises/TAD/TDY**-Military women are sent on deployments or on training exercises, to schools or temporary duty assignments away from their main duty assignment for varying lengths of time, often without much advance notice.
- **Place**-Finding a place to pump can be a challenge as many women in the service are working in non-traditional jobs and may not have an office to pump in. If the member is on flying duty, works on the flight line, in the field, back of ambulance/firefighting, on-board ship, watchstanding duty, etc-she may not have a private place with a door and running water and will instead have to be creative with finding and using whatever space is available.
- **Time**-Finding time to pump can also be difficult for the female service member if she has an ever-changing schedule to maintain (flight schedule, ambulance/firefighting 'on-call' runs, watchstanding duty, ER, school, etc). As well, military mothers often work 12+ hour days or have shift work (2 days on, 1 day off/ 2 nights on 1 night off) requiring that they pump more often during the workday, or at a differing time of day every few days.
- **Operational Commitments**-The mission always takes precedence over the need to pump!
- **Other**- HAZMAT (Hazardous Materials: lead, JP-8, hydraulic fluid, munitions, medical agents, tear gas), Physical Fitness/Readiness Standards, heavy gear (Kevlar vests) and uniforms can all pose problems not encountered by civilian mothers.
- **Support**-Finding support for breastfeeding and pumping in the military is a major hurdle for many military mothers. Female and male co-workers and supervisors alike may not agree with or support the military breastfeeding policies, making the attitude of the command or workplace difficult for the breastfeeding service member to feel comfortable asking for the time and place required to pump.

Tips for Pumping in the Military Workplace

- **Speak with supervisor and research options during pregnancy**-Servicemembers must be aware of the policies regarding breastfeeding and pumping in the military and speak with their supervisors, and make the command aware of their request before the baby arrives. Have a plan in place for pumping: when, where and for how long as well as emergency plans for unexpected deployments and late nights.
- **Be creative about pumping schedules, types of pumps and where to pump**-Once back from maternity leave stick to your plan as much as possible, be prepared for operational commitments, be flexible with pumping schedules. Be familiar with hand expression and hand pumps as well as electric pumps. Be creative with finding an area to pump if not at home base.
- **Check with OSHA/Medical**-If servicemember will be working with Hazardous materials, she needs to speak with her OSHA representative as well as an IBCLC to minimize exposure and weigh benefits of breastmilk versus detrimental effect of HAZMAT.
- **Find and utilize your support network**-Make it a point to find a mentor or co-worker(s) who have or are breastfeeding both for support and also to make demands for a command-wide breastfeeding policy or place/time to pump. There is power in numbers!

More information can be found in the book, "*Breastfeeding in Combat Boots: A Survival Guide to Breastfeeding Successfully while Serving in the Military*" and at the website www.breastfeedingincombatboots.com or the Facebook Fan Page 'Breastfeeding in Combat Boots'