	<b>Safety Advisory/Guidance Note</b>		
<b>Ref: SAGN:001:04</b>	<b>RE: Completing a Pregnant Employee Risk Assessment</b>		
<b>Issue date:</b>	July 2015	<b>Revised Date:</b>	July 2023
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<b>Note:</b>	<i>The information provided is for general guidance only, should you require more specific advice please contact the Health &amp; Safety Help Desk. The management of any occupational safety and health issue(s) remains the responsibility of local management.</i>		

**Definitions:** A *pregnant employee* is an employee who has given their employer a medical certificate stating they are pregnant. An *employee who has recently given birth* means an employee during the 14 weeks immediately after giving birth. An *employee who is breastfeeding* means an employee who is breastfeeding during the 26 weeks immediately after giving birth.

**Legislation:** Specific legislation applies to pregnant employees when at work: the key regulation is the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 2007, Chapter 2 of Part 6, Protection of Pregnant, Post Natal and Breast Feeding Employees (from now on referred to as Pregnancy Regulations).

The employer, on receiving notification that an employee is pregnant, must assess specific risks to the employee. The employer shall take action to ensure that the employee is not exposed to anything that could damage either their health or that of their developing child.

**Risk Assessment Process:** The risk assessment process required under section 19 of the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 should have already identified any hazards in the workplace therefore the risk assessment specifically required by the Pregnancy Regulations should be a reappraisal of these hazards, completed by the line Manager with the pregnant employee.

If this reappraisal identifies any additional risks, the employer must inform the pregnant employee of these risk(s) and what should be done to ensure that neither the pregnant employee nor their developing child suffers any adverse effects. The employer must then assess if there are any practical ways the risk can be avoided by taking these actions:

Action 1: Adjust the working conditions and/or hours of work - if this does not remove the risk

Action 2: Provide suitable alternative work – if this is not possible

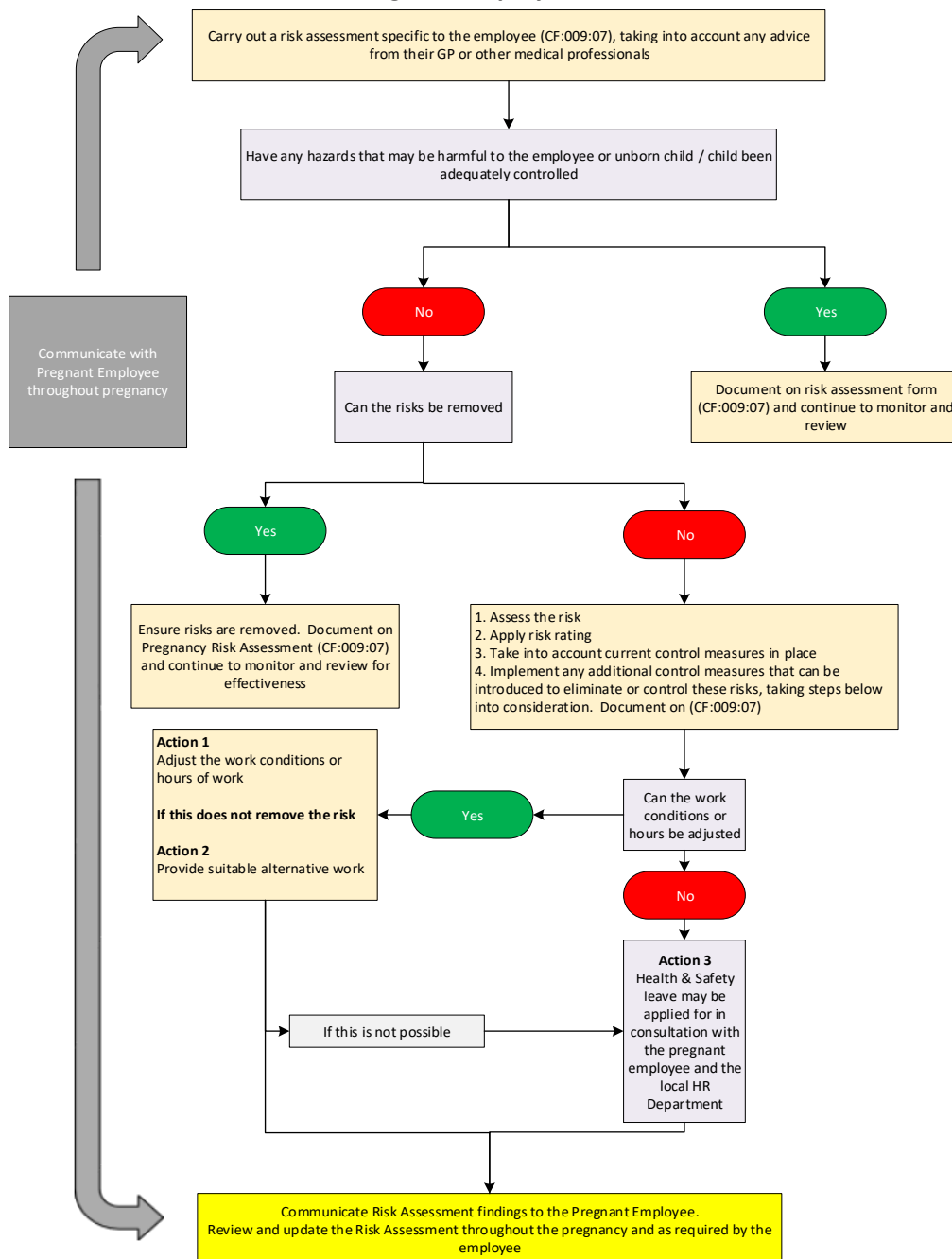
Action 3: Grant the pregnant employee safety and health leave under Section 18 of the Maternity Protection Act, 1994

It should be noted that action 3 applies where the employer, having undertaken the risk assessment, identifies occupational risks that arise for pregnant employees and which cannot be reasonably controlled using actions 1 or 2.

Throughout their pregnancy, the pregnant employee must inform their line Manager of any advice they receive from their doctor or midwife that could affect the risk assessment. Where necessary, the Manager will seek assistance from Occupational Health professionals in relation to any such medical information received so that it can be taken into account and the appropriate action taken to ensure the health of the pregnant employee and that of their unborn child. Please see Table 1 for a list of potential aspects of pregnancy that may affect work.

The pregnant employee must be made aware of the provisions of Pregnant Employee Regulations at local Induction which is facilitated by the Manager, please refer to Figure 1 below which outlines the risk assessment process.

**Figure 1: Risk Assessment Process for Pregnant Employees**



### Aspects of pregnancy that may affect work:

There are some aspects of pregnancy that may impact the employee during the course of the pregnancy e.g. the posture of a pregnant employee changes to cope with their increasing size. A Manager will have to review the risk assessment regularly throughout the pregnancy.

See Table 1 for impact factors below:

Aspects of Pregnancy	Factors in Work
Morning sickness	Early shift patterns, exposure to nauseating smells
Backache	Standing/manual handling/ posture
Varicose veins	Standing/ sitting
Frequent visits to the bathroom	Difficulty in leaving job/site of work
Increasing size	Use of protective clothing, work in confined spaces, manual handling
Tiredness	Overtime, evening and night shift, shift work
Balance	Problems working on slippery, wet surfaces
Comfort	Problems of working in tightly fitting workspaces
Dexterity, agility, coordination, speed of movement and reach may be impaired because of increasing size	Problems of working in tightly fitting workspaces

Table 1: Aspects of pregnancy that may affect work

**Ref:** (Information from the Health & Safety Authority Website "A Guide to the Safety, Health & Welfare At Work (General Applications) Regulations 2007"; Chapter 2 of Part 6 Protection of Pregnant, Postnatal and Breastfeeding Employees).

### Contact the National Health & Safety Function

- By Telephone: Monday to Friday (10:30-12:00 & 14:00-15:30) – 1800 420 420
- Online: Log your Health & Safety request on the [Health and Safety Helpdesk](#) or <http://pndchssdweb02.healthirl.net/Health.WebAccess/ss>