

What to Do if You're Expecting

If you're a Steel-Edge Woman and you become pregnant, there are a number of questions you may have about your rights on the job and the need to protect your health. The answers will vary, depending on the terms of your collective bargaining agreement, your specific craft, and applicable state and local laws. But here is a broad guide to help connect you with resources and information we hope you will find useful, with special thanks to OPCMIA Steel-Edge Women Chair Kilah Engelke, Business Agent for Local 599 Area 558. Kilah just gave birth to her first child, Marleigh Jade. Congratulations!

Please know that the OPCMIA and your Local Union stand ready to help if you encounter any problems. We have got your back!

PROTECTING YOUR SAFETY AND HEALTH WHILE PREGNANT

- To learn more about protecting yourself from hazards on the job, please see the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health website at: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/repro/workers.html and www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/repro/pregnancyjob.html
- For more detailed information on how to protect yourself from specific hazards:
 - Physical demands, such as lifting, standing and bending: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/repro/physicaldemands.html
 - Heat: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/repro/heat.html
 - Shift work and long working hours: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/repro/workschedule.html
 - Noise: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/repro/noise.html
 - Lead and other heavy metals: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/repro/heavymetals.html
- Regarding heavy lifting, the [familyeducation.com website](http://familyeducation.com) finds, "Generally, it's agreed that pregnant women can lift items that weigh 25 pounds or under, all day long without harm. Also, they can occasionally lift items that weigh up to 50 pounds with no problem. This explains why you can carry your toddler and preschooler occasionally, but not constantly. But if your job requires you to lift weights between 25 and 50 pounds or more on a regular basis, you should ask for reassignment or take your leave:
 - By the 20th week of pregnancy if you're repetitively lifting weights over 50 pounds.
 - By the 30th week if you are occasionally lifting weights over 50 pounds.
 - By the 34th week if you are repetitively lifting weights between 25 and 50 pounds.
- For information about appropriate personal protective equipment, please see: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/repro/ppe.html
- Here is an account of working on a construction site while pregnant by a British site engineer: www.womeninconstructionsummit.com/blog/michelle-hands-pregnant-construction-worker
- For information about working on the job while breastfeeding, please visit: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/repro/breastfeeding.html

YOUR RIGHT TO MATERNITY LEAVE

- Contact your Local Union to find out what benefits are available through the Local or one of your local benefit funds. You can find your local union contact information here if you're in the U.S. – www.opcmia.org/us-locals/ – and here if you're in Canada – www.opcmia.org/ca-locals/
- To learn more about the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, which provides for 12 unpaid workweeks of leave in a 12-month period in the U.S., please go to: www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fmla
- Here is an account of best practices in pregnancy and maternity leave produced by Chicago Women in Trades: iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Pregnancy-and-Maternity-in-the-Trades_revision2.pdf
- For general guides to maternity leave policies and options, please visit any or all of the following:
 - www.whattoexpect.com/pregnancy/maternity-leave
 - www.parents.com/pregnancy/my-life/maternity-paternity-leave/your-smart-guide-to-maternity-leave/
 - www.thebalancecareers.com/planning-maternity-leave-3545036
 - www.nerdwallet.com/blog/health/maternity-and-paternity-leave-a-guide-for-expectant-parents/
 - online.rider.edu/online-masters-degrees/masters-business-administration/guide-to-maternity-leave-in-the-u-s-statistics-tips-resources/

If you are pregnant or raising a newborn child and have further questions about your rights and protections, please contact your Local's Business Manager. The OPCMIA is a family-friendly union and you have a right to a career that allows you to work in our crafts while raising your family.