

Pregnant employees and parental benefits

Pre-natal check-ups

A pregnant employee is entitled to time off from work with pay for prenatal care when check-ups cannot reasonably take place outside working hours.

Illness during pregnancy

If an expectant mother has to stay off work because she is ill, this is treated as normal sick leave and is not part of the parental benefit period. For the last three weeks before delivery, sick pay is replaced by parental benefits.

Covering expenses

The national insurance scheme covers the mother's share of the costs of necessary medical examinations during pregnancy and of one check-up after delivery.

Strenuous work and hazardous substances

Some women are employed in jobs that may be too strenuous for them in the final stages of pregnancy, for instance women who work as police. Night work may also be strenuous for expectant mothers.

The employer has a duty to adapt the workload as far as practically possible, so that it is not too strenuous for the expectant mother. The work should be reorganised or the expectant mother should be given other work tasks.

Protection against dismissal during pregnancy and leave of absence

No employer may dismiss a woman because she is pregnant. This also applies during the probationary period. A pregnant employee is protected against dismissal even if she is unable to carry out her normal work due to pregnancy. An employee who takes leave in connection with a birth or adoption cannot be dismissed during this leave.

The right to return to the same job

Employees have the right to return to the jobs they had before taking leave of absence. This also applies when periods of part-time leave are over, and any leave in addition to statutory leave in connection with pregnancy, birth, adoption and taking over the care of foster children.

Prohibition of discrimination of pregnant employees and leave-takers

The Gender Equality Act provides protection against gender discrimination. In principle, any form of discrimination because of pregnancy, birth and the use of leave entitlement is a contravention of the Gender Equality Act. However, the Act provides stricter protection during the periods of leave reserved for one or other of the parents. This means that women may not be discriminated against because of pregnancy, birth and leave-taking during the three weeks prior to delivery and the six weeks after. The man cannot be discriminated against when using the paternity quota (6 weeks).

The right to leave of absence in connection with birth and adoption

In connection with birth and adoption, parents have the right to leave of absence from work as laid down in the Working Environment Act. The right to leave of absence runs parallel with and in addition to the provisions on parental benefits in Chap. 14 of the National Insurance Act, which governs the right to pay during leave of absence.

Parental leave during the child's first year

Together the parents are entitled to a maximum of twelve months' parental leave or as long as they receive parental benefits from the national insurance scheme. Prior to delivery the mother has the right to twelve weeks' leave (pregnancy leave). After delivery she must take maternity leave for the first six weeks. After that parental leave may be shared between the parents. Parents may take leave of absence at the same time, but this may affect their right to parental benefits.

Earning the right to parental benefits

Entitlement to parental benefits is earned through paid employment. Both the mother and the father earn the right to parental benefits if they are employed and earn a pensionable income for at least 6 of the 10 months immediately prior to receipt of parental benefits.

The parental benefit period

The parental benefit period in connection with a birth is either 44 weeks at the full rate or 54 weeks at the reduced rate. In the case of adoption, the benefit period is 41 weeks or 51 weeks. If only the father qualifies for parental benefits, the benefit period is 39 weeks or 29 weeks.

Sharing the benefit period between the parents

Parents may choose to share the period of paid leave between them. However, certain weeks must be taken in accordance with specific rules. Three weeks prior to the birth and six weeks after the birth are reserved for the mother. Six weeks are reserved for the father.

The parents may split the remainder of the benefit period between them in accordance with certain conditions, provided that they both qualify for paid leave. In the case of birth this is up to 29 or 39 weeks. If it is only the father who qualifies for parental leave, he can take the remainder of the benefit period subject to certain conditions. The mother may choose to start her parental leave 12 weeks prior to the birth of her child. As a rule, the father may not receive parental benefits until at least six weeks after the birth.

More about fathers' rights

If the father wishes to use parental benefits in addition to the paternity quota, the mother cannot stay at home at the same time and take care of the child. This applies whether the mother is entitled to parental benefits or not. The father can only receive parental benefits if the mother, after the birth or adoption:

- goes out to work, takes a publicly approved , full-time education, or combines work and an approved education to give a fulltime total.

The father may also receive parental benefits if the mother is completely dependent on help to look after the child owing to sickness or injury, or is admitted to a health institution.

The right to leave of absence

Children`s illness, including long-term illness and disability.

Employees who have the care of children under the age of 12 are entitled to leave with pay (care pay) to look after sick children. Employees are also entitled to time off from work to accompany a child to a medical examination or other follow-up in connection with illness.

- Each parent is entitled to leave of absence for up to 10 days per year.
- Parents with more than two children are entitled to up to 15 days each.
- Single providers are entitled to up to 20 days' leave, or 30 days if they have more than two children to look after.

Even if one parent has sole care of the children, the parents may share the right to leave in proportion to the agreed contact arrangements.

The right to leave of absence when a child or childminder is ill applies irrespective of part-time or fulltime employment and of how the parent's working days are distributed throughout the week. If the parent has a shorter working day than normal, one day's absence is still calculated as a whole day.

As a finale enlightenment about the norwegian police force, I will supplement with saying that our retirement age is 57 years.