

New Illinois Law Will Require Pregnancy Accommodations Starting January 1, 2015

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Illinois employers should start preparing to provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant employees and new mothers – including leaves of absence - under a new law that will go into effect on January 1, 2015. Notice posting will be required and employers also may need to revise employee handbooks or policy manuals in anticipation of the effective date of the new law. The Illinois law, which amends the Illinois Human Rights Act, will allow women to request reasonable accommodations in the workplace for medical and other common conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth. Employers of all sizes will now have to consider leave as an accommodation for pregnant workers and those who have given birth regardless of whether the individual would qualify for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act. While the federal FMLA provides up to 12 weeks of leave and job restoration rights to eligible employees who work at employers with 50 or more employees and who have worked at least 1,250 hours in the preceding 12 months, the Illinois pregnancy accommodation law contains no such eligibility requirements. The Illinois law also does not specify the length of time an individual can be out on leave, although employers can request medical certification as to the expected duration of the leave. For Illinois employers, the new law adds one more layer of complexity to the analysis of accommodations for pregnant employees beyond existing laws such as the FMLA, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act. The text of the new law can be found [here](#).

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