Pregnancy, Postpartum and Breastfeeding Policy

Brief to DACOWITS

MPO

18 June 2015

USMC Pregnancy Policy

- **Governing Directive for Pregnancy:** Marine Corps Order 5000.12E (Marine Corps Policy Concerning Pregnancy and Parenthood); published 8 Dec 2004 with Change 1 on 19 Jan 2007 and Change 2 on 14 June 2007; currently under revision

- **Goal of policy is to balance the medical and safety needs of the pregnant Marine and her unborn child with the needs of the Marine Corps while maintaining optimum job and career performance**

  - Created with recommendations and input of Director, Health Services, HQMC
  - Closely aligned with OPNAVINST 6000.1C (Navy Guidelines concerning Pregnancy and Parenthood)

- **Policy Enforcement/Discrimination Prevention:** A Marine who believes she is the subject of pregnancy discrimination may access her Chain of Command, Request Mast, the Chaplain, the Inspector General, and/or the command's Equal Opportunity Office

USMC Pregnancy Policy

- **Career/Family Balance Resources:**
  - Leadership mentoring through chain of command
  - Marine Corps Family Team Building programs (such as New Parent Support Program)
  - Military OneSource
  - Command Family Readiness Officers
  - Chaplains
  - Career Intermission Pilot Program (though not specific for parenthood and/or servicewomen)

- **Effect of Pregnancy on advancement, assignments, and retention**
  - No effect on advancement or retention
  - Assignment carries some limitations in order to protect the health of the Marine and her unborn child
    - Not assigned hazardous duties
    - limited working hours in latter stages of pregnancy
    - Travel restrictions (not transferred past certain stage of pregnancy)
    - Any other restrictions the overseeing Health Care Provider (HCP) recommends

USMC Pregnancy Policy

- **Documentation of pregnancy**
  - Documented on performance evaluations to validate other markings on the fitness report that may otherwise be adverse; i.e., outside of height/weight standards, or absence of a physical fitness test or combat fitness test score.

USMC Postpartum Policy

- **Governing Directive for Postpartum Policy:** Marine Corps Order 5000.12E (Marine Corps Policy Concerning Pregnancy and Parenthood); published 8 Dec 2004 with Change 1 on 19 Jan 2007 and Change 2 on 14 June 2007; currently under revision

- **Goal of policy is to balance the medical and safety needs of the postpartum Marine and her infant with the needs of the Marine Corps while maintaining optimum job and career performance**

  - Created with recommendations and input of Director, Health Services, BUMED, and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Committee
  - Closely aligned with OPNAVINST 6000.1C (Navy Guidelines concerning Pregnancy and Parenthood)

USMC Postpartum Policy

- **Operational Deferment Policy (updated in June 2007):**
  - Deferred from deployment or assignment to a deploying unit for 6 months after giving birth; Marine may waive this option.
  - DOD policy is 4 month deferment

- **Postpartum Fitness:**
  - Marine is exempt from taking the physical fitness test or combat fitness test for 6 months after returning to full duty, unless extended further by Health Care Provider.
  - Exempt from unit PT and exercise resumes at own pace, under supervision of HCP
  - Clarified within MCO 6110.3 w/ Change 2 (Marine Corps Body Composition Program) in Jan 2015

- **Effect of new parenthood on advancement, assignments, and retention**
  - No effect on advancement or retention
  - Assignment carries some limitations in order to maximize the opportunity for the mother-child dyad to bond and breastfeed. (Ex. Deployment deferment and not assigned duties that could be hazardous to the Marine or a breastfeeding infant)

USMC Breastfeeding Policy

- **Governing Directive for Breastfeeding Policy:** Marine Corps Order 5000.12E (Marine Corps Policy Concerning Pregnancy and Parenthood); published 8 Dec 2004 with Change 1 on 19 Jan 2007 and Change 2 on 14 June 2007; currently under revision

- **Goal of policy is to balance the medical and safety needs of the lactating Marine and her infant with the needs of the Marine Corps while maintaining optimum job and career performance**

  - Created with recommendations and input of Director, Health Services
  - Collaborative effort between lactating Marine and her chain of command, in order to provide space and time for expressing breastmilk during the work day
  - Seeks to strike a balance between needs of Marine and the command

USMC Breastfeeding Policy

- **Policy Enforcement/Support**
  - Chain of Command, Health Care Providers, Lactation Consultants within Military Treatment Facilities, Request Mast, etc

- **Impact of postpartum and operational deferment policy on Marine's ability to breastfeed:**
  - The policy ensures the Marine is not separated (deployed) from the newborn infant for at least 6 months to allow for breastfeeding during that time. Delayed physical fitness testing allows for the Marine to return to fitness standards at an individual pace under the supervision of her Health Care Provider.
  - Training requirements that may be hazardous to lactation (i.e. rifle range, gas chamber) are waived for 6 months following childbirth.

Questions?