Headquarters U.S. Air Force

Integrity - Service - Excellence

USAF Pregnancy and Postpartum Policy Review

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18 June 2015

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Wellness- W1

What instruction(s) delineates the workplace assignment and general limitations for pregnant servicewomen? When was the last time this policy was updated?

- **AFI 10-203, *Duty Limiting Conditions*, 20 Nov 14**
- **AFI 48-145, *Occupational and Environmental Health Program* , 22 Jul 14**
- **AFI 44-102, *Medical Management*, 17 Mar 15**
- **AFI 36-2905, *Fitness Program,* 29 Oct 13**
- **AFI 36-2110, *Assignments*, 27 Mar 15**

(Draft Guidance Memorandum in coordination)

- **AFI 36-2903, *Dress and Personal Appearance of AF Personnel*, 15 Aug 14**

What was the methodology used to design the current pregnancy policy (e.g., supporting medical research)?

- **Policy driven by operational requirements & advised by consensus of experts**
- **Each policy statement is supported by evidence, which is regularly reviewed or changed when new evidence is presented**

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Wellness- W1

What programs exist to prevent pregnancy discrimination and ensure commands adhere with DoD and Service's policies?

- **AF provides proactive prevention through Human Relations Education (HRE)**
- **AF guidance is to adhere to OSHA, EEOC and Pregnancy Discrimination Act unless specifically exempted**
- **AF does inquires into allegations of pregnancy discrimination and the USAF Inspector General Program ensures compliance with policies**

What resources exist for pregnant servicewomen as they prepare to balance a career in the military with parenthood?

- **Airman Family and Readiness Center programs such as "Bundles for Babies" and Military OneSource - New Parent Support Program**
- **Family Advocacy Programs, additional women's health, childbirth and new parenting classes vary by location and local community**

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Wellness- W1

How does pregnancy affect servicewomen's advancement, assignments & retention?

- **Pregnancy is not a consideration for promotion, assignment, or retention. Beginning in 2015, Developmental Teams for each career field will conduct barrier analysis to determine/identify if there are any artificial limitations.**

Is pregnancy documented or coded in servicewomen's performance evaluations/fitness reports? If so, why?

- **No**

What policies and/or programs exist to ensure servicewomen are not exposed to reproductive hazards?

- **AFI 48-145, *Occupational and Environmental Health Program*, 22 Jul 14, which includes specific guidance on the Fetal Protection Program**
- **Individual Fitness and Duty profiles are determined on case-by-case basis with consideration of functional tasks in occupation**

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Wellness- W2

Describe the postpartum operational deferment policy. When was the last time this policy was updated?

- **AFI 36-2110, *Assignments,* 27 Mar 15, (Draft GM in coordination), which currently has 6 months postpartum deferral for deployments & draft GM changes to 12 months postpartum deferral (Airman may defer at her discretion)**
- **AFI 44-102, *Medical Management*, 17 Mar 15, which requires 6 month postpartum deferral for deployments, recommends commanders consider 12 month deferral**

What was the methodology used to design the postpartum operational deferment policy (e.g., supporting medical research)?

- **Policy driven by operational requirements and advised by consensus of experts**

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Wellness- W2

Describe the postpartum fitness testing policy. When was the last time this policy was updated?

- **"Members with pregnancies lasting 20 weeks or more are also exempt from Fitness Assessment for 180 days after completion of pregnancy (delivery, miscarriage, etc.)."**
- **For cases where pregnancy ends prior to 20 weeks, providers will take into account physiological and psychological changes when determining days required for recovery & reconditioning prior to Fitness Assessment eligibility**
- **AFI 36-2905, *Fitness Program,* 29 Oct 13**

What was the methodology used to design the postpartum physical fitness testing policy (e.g., supporting medical research)?

- **Airmen with medical conditions that require profiles for greater than 30 days are authorized 42 days after profile completion prior to fitness testing**
- **Advisement from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Committee Opinion (ACOM) with consideration of current occupational health 'return to work' guidelines**

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Wellness- W2

How does your Services' postpartum operational deferment policy compare with the DoD policy?

- **AF increased length of time for deferment from 4 to 6 months and currently is coordinating Guidance Memorandum change to 12 months, which may be declined at Airmen's request**

How do the postpartum policies affect servicewomen's advancement, assignments, and retention?

- **Postpartum policies allow an option for servicewomen to address personal, family and professional needs which may assist with retention. There are no indication of negative impact to advancement, assignments and retention due to postpartum policies. Beginning in 2015, Developmental Teams for each career field will conduct barrier analysis to determine/identify if there are any artificial limitations.**

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Wellness- W3

Describe the breastfeeding policy. When was the last time this policy was updated?

- **"Exclusive breastfeeding is optimal nutrition for the first 6 months of life." Policy was designed to encourage and support breastfeeding**
- **AFI 44-102, *Medical Management,* 17 Mar 15**

Methodology used to design this policy (e.g., supporting medical research)?

- **Consensus of medical experts, current literature and breastfeeding advocates (AAP, ACNM, ACOG)**

What programs exist to support breastfeeding and ensure that commands adhere to DoD and/or Service policies? - (e.g., provide time and a clean lactation space)

- **Lactation Counselors at all USAF MTFs, local breastfeeding support groups, Airman Family and Readiness Center programs**
- **Military OneSource - New Parent Support Program**
- **Family Advocacy nurses, WIC, additional women's health and breastfeeding classes vary by location and local community**
- **Command adherence to policy is performed through internal and external inspections and complaint systems (i.e. IG)**

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Wellness- W3

How does the postpartum physical fitness testing policy and the postpartum operational deferment policy impact servicewomen's ability to breastfeed?

- **6 months fitness deferral and 12 months deployment deferral provide optimal support for breastfeeding**
- **Per ACOM, Committee Opinion, *"Moderate weight reduction while nursing is safe and does not compromise neonatal weight gain" and "A return to physical activity after pregnancy has been associated with decreased incidence of postpartum depression, but only if the exercise is stress relieving and not stress provoking"***
- **Current limited data suggests less than 10 Airmen deploy during their first 12 months postpartum, so very limited impact noted**

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Wellness- W3

What policies and/or programs exist to ensure servicewomen are not exposed to lactation hazards?

- **AFI 48-145, *Occupational and Environmental Health Program*, 22 Jul 14, includes specific guidance on the Fetal Protection Program**
- **AFI 48-148*, Ionizing Radiation Protection*, 20 Nov 14, covers prevention of exposure of fertile women to radiation for medical treatment or diagnosis, the reporting/notification process for the radiation exposure to a pregnant service member, and the annual dose limits for Declared Pregnant Females**
- **Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 48-146, *Occupational & Environmental Health Program Management*, 9 Oct 12, contains the Fetal Protection/Reproductive Risk program which states that pregnant personnel may request an individual workplace reproductive health hazard exposure assessment**
- **Individual Fitness and Duty profiles are determined on a case-by-case basis with consideration of functional tasks in occupation**

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Questions?