

# SOULY FOR YOU

FDX MEC | Pilot Assistance Committee

## **Pilot Handbook:** Navigating Maternity and Postpartum



# Congratulations!

If you're reading this guide, you're likely either planning for children or are already expecting. If so, we extend huge congratulations and offer this guide to support you through the process. If you are reading this to help educate yourself to support a pregnant pilot, we cannot thank you enough for your care!

Among other things, this guide will help you understand the obstacles some women face while balancing flying with pregnancy and postpartum. We hope it helps build safety awareness and supports retention/attraction of pilots.

This is designed to be a dynamic model. Please send us feedback and information on any related developments that you believe might be of interest.

Happy safe flying, mamas and babies,

SOULY for YOU

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## Section 1: Absence During Maternity Period and Maternity Leave of Absence (CBA Section 13.F.)



A pilot's **Maternity Period** begins on the date of the pregnancy and extends through 120 days following the date of the end of the pregnancy.

### F. Absence During a Maternity Period and Maternity Leave of Absence

1. During a Maternity Period in conjunction with her pregnancy/care for her newborn child, a pilot may elect any of the following, either alone, or in sequence:

#### a. Vacation

- i. The use of available vacation hours must be a part of a single, continuous period of absence within a Maternity Period;
- ii. If a pilot elects to use available vacation hours during a Maternity Period, the pilot shall notify her Fleet Captain, or his/her designee, of the election. If the need to use vacation was foreseeable, the notification shall occur prior to the opening for bidding of the initial affected bid period. If unforeseeable, the notification shall occur as soon as practicable;
- iii. The pilot shall provide her Fleet Captain, or his/her designee, or at her election the Company's aeromedical advisor, with a medical certification of pregnancy or childbirth, as applicable; and
- iv. A pilot who is not expected to be in a flying status at the beginning of a bid period due to her use of vacation hours during a Maternity Period shall bid in a pay only status. A pilot using vacation for an entire bid period may elect to take vacation in whole hour increments from 36 CH up to and including her BLG/RLG. That election may be changed from bid period to bid period and must be submitted in writing (email is acceptable) to the pilot's Fleet Captain, or his/her designee, within 48 hours following the close of bidding for the bid period to which the election pertains. In the absence of an election, the pilot shall be compensated at the BLG/RLG of her awarded line (if supported by her vacation bank).

#### b. Sick Leave

A pilot shall be deemed automatically eligible to use sick leave within the Maternity Period from the beginning of the 21st week of pregnancy through 30 days from the end of the pregnancy, provided that the pilot provides her Fleet Captain, or his/her designee, or at her election the Company's aeromedical advisor, with a medical certification of pregnancy and of the beginning of the 21st week of pregnancy or a medical certification of childbirth, as applicable.

**c. Disability**

A pilot's eligibility for LTD benefits shall be as provided in Section 27.

**d. Unpaid Maternity Leave of Absence**

- i. The use of an unpaid Maternity Leave of Absence must be a part of a single, continuous period of absence within a Maternity Period.
  - ii. If a pilot elects to be placed on an unpaid Maternity Leave of Absence during a Maternity Period, the pilot shall notify her Fleet Captain, or his/her designee, of the election, if foreseeable, prior to the opening for bidding of the initial affected bid period, or as soon as practicable if unforeseeable.
  - iii. The pilot shall provide her Fleet Captain, or his/her designee, or at her election the Company's aeromedical advisor, with a medical certification of pregnancy or childbirth, as applicable.
2. A Maternity Leave of Absence shall run concurrently with FMLA leave when permitted by law.
  3. Other uses of sick leave or vacation before, during, or after a Maternity Period are as provided by Sections 7 and 14, and other applicable Sections.

## **Section 2: Other Leaves of Absence Under the CBA**

- California Paid Family Leave
- FMLA (Federal)



## Section 3: Health Insurance Coverage and Benefits

|  | CBA Section 13.F.<br>Absence During a Maternity Period and Maternity Leave of Absence |                    |  |  |
|--|---|--------------------|--|--|
|  | Vacation  | Sick               | LTD  | Unpaid Maternity Leave   |
| <b>Medical/Dental/<br/>Vision Benefits</b> | Coverage continues  | Coverage continues | <p>Coverage continues in current plan option and coverage tier as long as the required monthly premiums are paid.</p> <p>The first 90 days accumulates and is deducted from the pilot's paycheck on a prorated basis when they return to work. If leave is longer than 90 days, the cost is payable monthly.</p> | <p>Coverage continues in current plan option and coverage tier as long as the required monthly premiums are paid.</p> <p>The first 90 days accumulates and is deducted from the pilot's paycheck on a prorated basis when they return to work. If leave is longer than 90 days, the cost is payable monthly.</p> |
| <b>Basic Life Insurance</b>                | Coverage continues  | Coverage continues | Coverage continues   | Coverage continues   |
| <b>Optional Life Insurance</b>             | Coverage continues  | Coverage continues | Coverage continues: Pilot cost accumulates for the first 90 days; thereafter, cost is payable monthly.   | Coverage Continues: Pilot cost accumulates for the first 90 days; thereafter, cost is payable monthly.   |
| <b>Basic AD&amp;D</b>                      | Coverage continues  | Coverage continues | Coverage continues   | Coverage continues   |
| <b>Optional AD&amp;D</b>                   | Coverage continues  | Coverage continues | Coverage continues: Pilot cost accumulates for the first 90 days; thereafter, cost is payable monthly.   | Coverage Continues: Pilot cost accumulates for the first 90 days; thereafter, cost is payable monthly.   |

## Section 3: Health Insurance Coverage and Benefits (continued.)

|   | CBA Section 13.F.<br>Absence During a Maternity Period and Maternity Leave of Absence |                    |   |   |
|---|---|--------------------|---|---|
|   | Vacation  | Sick               | LTD   | Unpaid Maternity Leave  |
| <b>Business Travel</b>                      | Coverage continues  | Coverage continues | Coverage ends, but is reinstated upon returning to work.  | Coverage ends, but is reinstated upon returning to work.  |
| <b>Pension Plan</b>                         | Coverage continues  | Coverage continues | Pilot continues to earn service.  | Pilot continues to earn service.  |
| <b>Pilot Retirement Savings Plan (PRSP)</b> | Coverage continues  | Coverage continues | Distributions available on total disability except from the Money Purchase Plan account.<br><br>Distributions from the Money Purchase Plan only available at age 62. Pilot may be eligible for suspension of loan repayments. | Distributions available on total disability except from the Money Purchase Plan account.<br><br>Distributions from the Money Purchase Plan only available at age 62. Pilot may be eligible for suspension of loan repayments. |
| <b>Dependent Care Reimbursement Account</b> | Coverage continues  | Coverage continues | Payroll deductions stop. Pilot may continue to send eligible claims for dependent-care expenses. Upon returning to work, pilot can reenroll within 31 days.   | Payroll deductions stop. Pilot may continue to send eligible claims for dependent-care expenses. Upon returning to work, pilot can reenroll within 31 days.   |
| <b>Flexible Savings Account</b>             | Coverage continues  | Coverage continues | Payroll deductions stop. Pilot may continue to send eligible claims for dependent-care expenses. Upon returning to work, pilot can reenroll within 31 days.   | Payroll deductions stop. Pilot may continue to send eligible claims for dependent-care expenses. Upon returning to work, pilot can reenroll within 31 days.   |

### Covered Medical Charges for Pregnancy and Maternity Care

- All medical benefits when provided for pregnancy or maternity care, including diagnosis of genetic disorders in cases of high-risk pregnancy. Inpatient hospital benefits in connection with childbirth will be provided for at least 48 hours following a normal delivery or 96 hours following a cesarean section, unless the mother and her physician decide on an earlier discharge.

## Section 3: Health Insurance Coverage and Benefits (continued.)

- Medical hospital benefits for routine nursery care of a newborn child, if the child's natural mother is an employee or enrolled dependent (spouse or child).
- Precipitous (unplanned) births at home.

### *Programs Offered by Anthem*

- "Future Moms" offers prenatal education and intervention, helping to make expectant mothers better informed about their pregnancy. Anthem provides mothers-to-be with toll-free access to a nurse 24/7. The program includes information on proper nutrition, diet, and exercise during pregnancy. Participants receive prenatal and birth kits that include child health and safety information.

### *Available Benefits from LifeCare*

- Prenatal kit containing free products and information to promote a healthy pregnancy and baby.
- Child safety kit containing free products and information to keep your child safe.

### *Flexible Spending Account*

If the pilot is enrolled in the Flexible Spending Account, certain qualified medical expenses that are pregnancy-related are eligible for reimbursement. Refer to the current IRS Publication 502.

## Section 4: Considerations on Flying while Pregnant

### **A. Flight-Related Duties and Conditions**

Under FAR 61.53, you are legally obligated to remove yourself from flight duty due to the physical and medical limitations that result from your pregnancy. Consider how and when the following may impact your pregnancy:

- Sterile cockpit limits your ability to take bathroom breaks often, which help prevent UTIs.
- Cockpit: Does the size of your abdomen prevent you from adjusting rudder pedals? Are you able to pull the yoke fully backward when properly seated to fly? Does climbing into the cockpit cause abdominal or back pain or cramps? Does closing, locking, or unlocking the cockpit door or entry door(s) cause abdominal pain or cramps?
- If your doctor restricted you not to lift heavy weights, consider your crew bags and the emergency gear extension, which requires aircraft-specific pounds of force.
- Are you physically able to use the emergency escape hatch/window and fit through it in case of an emergency?

## Section 4: Health Insurance Coverage and Benefits (continued.)

- Consider the reduced time of useful consciousness for pregnant women: In case of a rapid cabin decompression at 40,000 ft., the time of useful consciousness is only 18 seconds and, at 35,000 ft., 30 seconds. Our standard cruising altitudes are between 32,000 and 37,000 ft. This is the maximum time we have to put on the oxygen masks in the cockpit and initiate necessary procedures to save crew and passenger lives. The time of useful consciousness diminishes during pregnancy. Not receiving oxygen in this critical time, which for pregnant women is less time available, will lead to hypoxia, unconsciousness, and then death.
- Gamma radiation can impact the baby's healthy growth in a negative way (see Appendix 2).
- Does sitting for longer periods of time in one position without being able to stretch or put up your legs cause swelling in your legs or loss of feeling in your toes and feet, which you need to control the rudder pedals?
- If pregnant in the middle of summer, consider the impact of an inop APU on your health and the baby's health.
- Are you experiencing shortness of breath due to the baby pushing on your diaphragm?

### B. Nausea and Fatigue

Nausea and fatigue are prevalent during many pregnancies, especially in the first trimester. Many women often feel significant relief sometime during the second trimester. What many of our pilots have done is fill out paperwork for intermittent FMLA leave immediately upon discovery of pregnancy (review Leave of Absence Section, FMLA [Federal]). We also highly recommend that when you notify your Fleet Manager of your pregnancy, you let them know how you are feeling. For example, "My doctor and I agree I am fit to fly at this point, however I do have some days of chronic fatigue and/or nausea so I plan on using intermittent FMLA or you may see my sick/fatigue calls increase for this short time. My pregnancy-related symptoms are the reason."

A suggestion is that you first try natural approved remedies for nausea if approved by your doctor. If complications arise with nausea, your doctor can prescribe medications. Many are not approved for flying, so remember to contact the Aeromedical Committee for guidance if necessary. The FAA's guide for aviation medical examiners on pharmaceuticals is a good resource.

#### Natural, flying-approved remedies for nausea:

- Ginger candies
- "Preggie Pops" or hard candies
- Pressure bracelets such as Sea-Bands
- B-6 vitamin supplements (discuss these with your doctor)
- Eat regularly—always have a snack readily available in flight
- Stay hydrated—many women note that Gatorade or ginger ale helps with nausea

## Section 4: Health Insurance Coverage and Benefits (continued.)

- Reduce stress
- Get adequate sleep, and implement taking naps on off days if possible

### Tips for combating fatigue in pregnancy:

- As pilots we often have a lot on our schedules, both at work and in our personal lives. Many women have found relief from chronic fatigue issues while pregnant by discontinuing over-scheduling and simplifying life for this short time.
- On your off days, have a routine that focuses on adequate sleep. It is a priority for so many reasons.
- Listen to your body.
- Eat regular meals. This takes preplanning for work trips.
- Use techniques to reduce stress; many stretching exercises and other simple suggestions can be found online.
- Exercise. If you're able, walking is a good option.
- Ask for help.

If you are experiencing nausea or fatigue while at work, but are fit to continue flying, we still recommend you discuss this with your fellow crewmembers—minor nausea and or fatigue can be a significant threat. Develop a mitigation strategy with your crew: do walk-arounds if you feel you need to get blood flowing (or if you need to take small rest break, ask the other pilot to complete the walk-around), stretch, make sure you have good energy snacks readily available, etc. Try all of the tips above to keep yourself fit, but safety and fitness for duty is of utmost importance. Reference the IM SAFE checklist, crewmember fitness for duty requirements, and your doctor to determine if you are fit to continue flying while pregnant.

### C. Maternity Uniform (CBA and Helpful Information)

You are probably very aware of the lack of maternity uniform guidance or options. This section will provide some options for both maternity pants and shirts.

Effective June 1, 2016, the following pilot uniform vendors are approved:

#### **Murphy & Hartelius Uniforms**

48 Second Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94401  
800-888-9927  
www.mandhuniforms.com

Log-in instructions:

Username: FED followed by employee ID (ex. FED123456)

Password: First four digits of your zip code (on initial login, you can change it after that)

To avoid shipping charges, use "fedex" in the coupon code and then select "express shipping."

## Section 4: Health Insurance Coverage and Benefits (continued.)

### Pilot Uniform Store

3855 Airways Blvd  
Mod C Room 2350  
Memphis, TN 38116  
901-345-0393  
Store Manager: Rob Gann  
rob@mandhuniformal.com

### Pilot store hours:

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
Tuesday and Thursday: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Closed for lunch from 2:00 to 2:45 p.m.  
Closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Labor Day
- Presidents' Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Memorial Day
- Christmas Day
- Independence Day

### Landerwood Pilot Shirts

(with M&H voucher only, see reimbursement procedures)  
620 Franklin Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21221  
877-355-2898  
www.landerwoodshirts.com

### Winston Company

(Anchorage or Hong Kong-based pilots only)  
Mr. Raymond Lo  
106 Far East Mansion, 1st Floor  
5-6 Middle Road/Tsim Sha Tau  
Kowloon, Hong Kong  
852-2366-7924

### CBA Section 26.B.8.

Pilots who require a maternity uniform accommodation shall be provided an allowance of \$200 to purchase a maternity uniform from the Company's approved uniform vendor(s). If the pilot's maternity uniform items are not in compliance with future uniform standards, an additional allowance will be provided to bring the pilot's uniform into compliance.



## Section 5: Returning to Work

### CBA Section 13.A.6.

The following provisions shall apply to a pilot capable of returning to active service following a leave of absence.

- a. A pilot on leave of absence in excess of a full bid period shall contact her Fleet Captain to notify him or her of the return date to active service; and her Fleet Captain shall aid the pilot in coordinating such return.
  - i. The contact shall occur at least 30 days prior to the anticipated end of her leave of absence. The Fleet Captain shall confirm, in writing if requested, the return date and resumption to active pay status, as provided in Section 13.A.6.a.ii.
  - ii. Provided that a pilot has complied with Section 13.A.6.a.i., the pilot shall be returned to active pay status upon her return. Failure to comply with Section 13.A.6.a.i. may result in the pilot's return to active pay status being delayed an amount equal to the notification delay. In no case shall the pilot be returned to active pay status later than 30 days following the pilot's return date.
- b. A pilot's crew position upon return to duty following a leave of absence shall be determined as follows:
  - i. If no System Bids closed during her absence, the pilot shall return to the crew position that was the pilot's then currently awarded/assigned crew position immediately prior to the commencement of the leave of absence; or
  - ii. If any System Bids closed during her absence, she shall select from among those crew positions that:
    - (a) she could have been awarded/assigned, but for her absence, on any of the System Bids that closed during her absence; and
    - (b) in which, upon her return to active status, she would not be the junior awarded/assigned pilot in that crew position.
- c. If upon returning to active status from a leave of absence, the pilot's current crew position does not differ from the pilot's currently awarded/assigned crew position, and requalification training is required, requalification training for the pilot's current crew position shall start within 60 days of her return date, if either:
  - i. No System Bid closed during her absence; or
  - ii. A System Bid closed during her absence, but she did not (or could not) select a new crew position (as provided in Section 13.A.6.b.ii.).
- d. If upon returning to active status from a leave of absence, the pilot's current crew position differs from the pilot's currently awarded/assigned crew position, the pilot's training shall be handled in the same manner as provided in Section 13.A.6.e.

## Section 5: Returning to Work (continued.)

- e. If the pilot selects a new crew position (as provided in Section 13.A.6.b.ii. above), training for that crew position shall be as follows:
  - i. If the System Bid on which the pilot was awarded/assigned her selected crew position has been trained to completion, the pilot shall be assigned to start training within 60 days of her return.
  - ii. If the System Bid on which the pilot was awarded/assigned her selected crew position has not been trained to completion and if she requires full requalification training (i.e., training with a footprint similar to ITU) in her current crew position upon her return, the pilot shall be assigned to start training for her selected crew position within 60 days of her return.
  - iii. If the System Bid on which the pilot was awarded/assigned her selected crew position has not been trained to completion and if the pilot requires 24-Requal training in her current crew position upon her return:
    - (a) the pilot will be assigned to start training for her selected crew position within 60 days of her return if a junior pilot in the case of a crew position award (or a senior pilot in the case of a crew position assignment) has been awarded/assigned a training date; or
    - (b) the pilot will be assigned to start 24-Requal training within 60 days of her return if a junior pilot in the case of a crew position award (or a senior pilot in the case of a crew position assignment) has not been awarded/assigned a training date. Such pilot shall be eligible to bid for and/or be assigned to training dates (for her awarded/assigned crew position) following completion of her 24-Requal training.
  - iv. If the pilot's selected crew position requires a BTA but the pilot requires requalification training in her current crew position, she will be assigned to start requalification training within 60 days of her return. Her BTA shall be effective on the first day of the first full bid period following the completion of requalification training.
  - v. If the pilot's selected crew position requires a BTA but the pilot does not require requalification training in her current crew position, her BTA shall be effective on the first day of the first full bid period following her return.
- f. A pilot returning from a leave of absence who requires training prior to returning to line flying shall be compensated as provided in Section 4.I.6.
- g. A pilot returning from a leave of absence who is able to return to line flying without training shall be scheduled as follows:
  - i. A pilot whose return coincides with the beginning of a bid period shall be afforded the opportunity to bid for that bid period in the normal bid process prior to her return, in accordance with Section 25.C.6.
  - ii. A pilot who returns for a portion of a bid period shall be assigned a custom line (Section 25.I.) for the bid period in which she returns.

## Section 6: Postpartum

### A. Postpartum Considerations and FAA Medical Awareness

If you are experiencing symptoms of postpartum depression, anxiety, or any other postpartum mood disorder (PPMD), you should discuss it with your doctor and/or counselor ASAP. Studies show that the sooner you get help, the less long-term the effects can be. Approximately 10 to 15 percent of mothers experience PPMD, so you are not alone. Some excellent resources are listed here to help you decide if you are suffering from PPMD, and what it means for your FAA medical certificate. We highly recommend that you consult with ALPA's Aviation Medicine Advisory Service (AMAS) at 303-341-4435.

#### Postpartum Depression/Anxiety Resources

- [Postpartum Support International](#)
- [Postpartum Progress](#)
- [What to Expect: Recognizing and Treating Postpartum Depression](#)
- [AMAS: "Baby Blues" vs. Postpartum Depression, What Does It Mean for My Medical Certificate?](#)
- [LeftSeat.com: Private company specializing in helping you obtain and keep your FAA medical certificate](#)

### Miscarriage

Not all pregnancies have a successful outcome, and miscarriage and stillbirths can cause profound grief. Consider using leave during this time and developing a support system for healing. SHARE Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support, Inc. is national organization dedicated to helping families heal after the loss of a pregnancy or infant. They can be reached at 800-821-6819 and [www.nation-alshare.org](http://www.nation-alshare.org).

### B. Fitness for Duty

This section details how to expedite your fitness for duty. Remember, every pregnancy and postpartum is different, so not all of these ideas work for every mother pilot. Continually check the IM SAFE checklist as outlined in AIM 8-1-1.

#### Illness:

- If you experienced a complication with your childbirth or are suffering from postpartum mental health complications, seek advice from your doctor and discuss possibility of needing extended medical leave.

#### Medication:

- If any medications are still needed when returning to work, we recommend that you consult with AMAS first.

#### Stress:

- Find tools to help you manage stress. Examples: stroller walks to get fresh air, meditation, deep-breathing and mindfulness exercises, taking time for yourself each day, accepting help, or asking for help from family and friends.



## Section 6: Postpartum (continued.)

- Connect with other mother pilots or pilots who can relate: [Unofficial: Pilot Moms Facebook Page](#).

### Alcohol:

- It is highly recommended to avoid alcohol, especially if you are experiencing chronic fatigue or postpartum emotion and transitioning back to fitness for duty.

### Fatigue:

- This is one of the hardest obstacles to overcome as a new mother, especially when trying to transition yourself back into fitness for flying. Consider organizing prior to giving birth or after: help from family or friends, e.g., have someone stay with you to assist with baby during the night, especially before returning to requal training. Hiring a postpartum doula, babysitter, or nanny can allow you to get proper naps to recover from short nights of sleep. While this can be an extra cost, it can assist in speeding up physical and emotional recovery from childbirth and provide an easier transition into fitness for flying, which can be an investment in the long run.
- Meal plan—hire a meal service short term or prepare meals to freeze when you are still pregnant. Have a friend or family member set up a meal train website.
- Know your rights and responsibilities concerning fatigue—review the fatigue provisions of the CBA (Section 12.A.9).

### Emotion:

- First, we will say it again, if you are feeling any symptoms of a postpartum mood disorder, etc., seek help ASAP! This is not something to hide in (see postpartum depression section).
- Connect with someone to talk out any challenges you are facing. Feeling supported can go a long way with our emotional health and well-being, especially during the postpartum transition. You may just need a peer or something more depending on your circumstances. Please contact the FDX MEC Path Program for your needs in this area.

## Section 7: Peer Resources and Additional Information

- Please stay in contact with ALPA FDX's Pilot Assistance [SOULYforYOU](#) site to access our resources.
- [FAST: Female Aviators Sticking Together](#)
- [Pilot Moms Facebook Group](#)
- [Pregnancy Discrimination Act \(Federal\)](#)
- [Alaska State Commission for Human Rights](#)
- [Tennessee Human Rights Commission—Pregnancy FAQs](#)
- [Tennessee State Laws for Maternity Leave](#)

## Appendix 1: Pumping Locations Document

Coming soon!

## Appendix 2: In-Flight Radiation Exposure During Pregnancy

[PDF: In-Flight Radiation Exposure During Pregnancy, Robert J. Barish PhD](#)

