



AWS maternity leave policy for surgeons in practice:

While this document is specific to maternity issues, it is the intention of the Association of Women Surgeons that this information be incorporated into a broader family leave policy. The following policy is provided as a guideline, emphasizing that surgeons are entitled to a reasonable maternity leave policy. At a minimum, maternity leave policies should be in compliance with already existing federal policies and laws regarding family leave, thus providing a policy that allows flexibility for the expectant surgeon, while maintaining quality standards of the profession.

1. The surgeon will inform her department chair or senior partner as soon as possible after the pregnancy or adoption date is confirmed (preferably within the first trimester) in order to facilitate planning. The department chair/senior partner should be sensitive to the confidential nature of this information during the early part of pregnancy.
2. A period of not less than 6 weeks maternity leave should be provided based on the needs of the expectant surgeon, separate from vacation time. Accrued vacation time and sick leave may be added to this period.
3. For a maternity leave of not less than 6 weeks for vaginal delivery and 8 weeks for cesarean section, the surgeon should receive full benefits and pay without having to make up missed call. Should maternity leave extend beyond 90 days for medical reasons, the surgeon's disability insurance should be used for salary compensation and COBRA for continuation of benefits.
4. The surgeon should be able to return to regular practice after maternity leave. Consideration for allowing the surgeon to return to work part-time should be negotiated prior to maternity leave.
5. The surgeon's obstetrician will determine the date of ability to return to duty. If the surgeon requires extended maternity leave because of a complication of pregnancy, or her physician deems her unable to work, the absence will be treated the same as any absence due to illness. The department chair or senior partner will be entitled to a full report from the surgeon's physician documenting the need for extended leave.
6. Loss of time from practice for a maternity leave will not be reason for termination from employment nor should it be held against her in evaluation for promotion.
7. The surgeon will comply with OSHA and safety regulations as they apply.
8. The surgeon will make all reasonable attempts to schedule elective appointments and tests outside of regular working hours and call days. In no case will a surgeon be told that a medically necessary test or appointment must be canceled simply because it occurs during the normal working day.
9. The surgeon may take full benefit of the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993, which states that an employee has up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave without pay during any 12-month period if the employee is eligible.
10. If the surgeon takes leave without pay, she should not have to pay office expenses during that leave period.