

Maternity/Paternity Policy

Gaston County is firmly committed to protecting the rights of expectant mothers and complying with Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as amended by the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978. Gaston County's policy is to treat women affected by pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions in the same manner as other employees unable to work because of their physical condition in all employment aspects, including recruitment, hiring, training, promotion and benefits.

Further, Gaston County fully recognizes eligible employees' rights and responsibilities under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), applicable state and local family leave laws, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Pregnant employees may continue to work until they are certified as unable to work by their physician. At that point, pregnant employees are entitled to receive benefits in accordance with FMLA and Gaston County's Maternity/Paternity Leave Policy.

Both, mothers and fathers, can take FMLA leave any time in the first 12 months after a child's arrival. However, employees must conclude their leave before the 12-month period ends.

When both parents work for Gaston County, they are limited to a combined total for 12 workweeks of leave in a 12-month period. In this case, each parent would have the difference between 12 weeks and the amount of leave they took for the child to use for any other legitimate FMLA reason in that year.

Maternity/Paternity leave may be taken for the following FMLA-qualifying reasons:

- The birth of a son or daughter and bonding with the newborn child.
- The placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care and bonding with the newly-placed child.

In addition to the provisions under FMLA, Gaston County offers the following Maternity/Paternity benefits:

- An additional 2 weeks of paid leave for the first two weeks following the birth or placement of a child. Maternity/Paternity Leave and FMLA leave will run concurrently.
- The ability to request shared sick leave in accordance with Gaston County policy.
- Five (5) additional days of sick leave upon return to work.

Employees will be considered to be on Unauthorized Leave if they do not return to their positions after their Maternity/Paternity Leave is exhausted. Unauthorized Leave is considered voluntary resignation and grounds for discharge.