Maternity protection

What is Maternity Protection?

Maternity protection safeguards pregnant and breastfeeding employees and their children. It includes, among other things:

- protection of health in the workplace,
- special protection against dismissal,
- statutory protection periods before and after childbirth, and
- financial protection during these periods.

How long does maternity protection last before and after birth?

The statutory protection period begins **6 weeks before the expected due date**. During this period, you generally may not be required to work. However, you may expressly declare that you wish to continue working. You can withdraw this declaration at any time with effect for the future.

After childbirth, a **protection period of 8 weeks** generally applies, during which you may not work. In the case of premature births, multiple births, and certain cases in which the child is diagnosed with a disability, the protection period is extended to **12 weeks**. If the child is born before the expected due date, the post-birth protection period may also be extended by the number of days by which the pre-birth protection period was shortened.

Am I allowed to work during maternity protection?

Before childbirth, you may continue working during the six-week protection period if you expressly wish to do so. Please send us a written declaration confirming that you wish to continue working. You can withdraw this declaration at any time.

After childbirth, you generally may not work during the statutory protection period.

During the maternity protection periods, you are generally entitled to **maternity benefit (Mutterschaftsgeld) and, where applicable, an employer supplement to maternity benefit**. For employees with statutory health insurance, maternity benefit is paid by the health insurance provider; where applicable, the employer pays the supplement.

> During this time, Smart cannot issue invoices on your behalf. You will continue to receive your full salary for these two months, and no budget will be deducted.

Required Documents

- Written declaration confirming that you wish to continue working during the protection period before childbirth, if you want to continue working before the birth.
- Medical certificate stating the expected due date. This is required to determine the maternity protection period.
- Notification of parental leave, if you wish to take parental leave after the maternity protection period. Please email us at members@smartde.coop. You must generally notify your employer of parental leave at least 7 weeks before it begins.
- Birth certificate or other proof of birth once your child has been born.

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