

# Centre Issues Advisory to State Governments/UTs to Encourage Work-from-Home for Nursing Mothers

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In a latest measure taken to protect the interest of workers specifically nursing mothers at work during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Government has issued an advisory to all the State Governments/UTs to encourage work-from-home for nursing mothers under the enabling provision for permitting work from home for nursing mothers under the Section 5(5) of the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017. The Act provides that where the nature of work assigned to a woman is of such nature that she may work from home, the employer may allow her to do so after availing of the maternity benefit for such period and on such conditions as the employer and the woman may mutually agree.

Keeping in view the vulnerability of nursing mothers and their babies during the Covid pandemic and to save them from getting infected by the corona virus, the Ministry of Labour & Employment has issued an advisory to all the State Governments and UTs to encourage employers to allow to work from home to nursing mothers wherever the nature of work so permits. The State Governments and UTs have been requested that steps may be taken to create awareness about section 5(5) of the Act amongst the women workforce and the employers. The State Governments and UTs have been further requested that advisories may be issued to the employers for allowing more and more nursing mothers to work from home as per section 5(5) of the Act wherever nature of work so allows. It has been conveyed that employers may be advised to allow work-from-home, wherever nature of work so allows , for nursing mothers at least for a period of one year from the date of birth of the child.

In addition to protecting the nursing mothers during Covid, giving the flexibility to work-from-home wherever nature of work allows to do so, this step will enable nursing mothers to continue to remain in employment. Thus, the implementation of this provision shall act as an enabling tool in enhancement of participation of women in labour force. This shall also contribute to creating a happy workforce.

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**MS/jk**

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