

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER
- SHREVEPORT

**RELINQUISHMENT OF NEWBORN
SAFE HAVEN LAW**

Purpose:

To provide a mechanism for compliance with the revised Louisiana Children's Code, Articles 1701 - 1706, allowing for a parent to relinquish the care of her newborn infant to the state in anonymity and without fear of prosecution or persecution at a designated emergency care facility.

Definitions:

Newborn infant – for the purpose of this law, a child not previously subjected to abuse or neglect, who is not more than thirty (30) days old as determined within a reasonable degree of medical certainty by an examining physician.


Emergency care facility – any state licensed hospital, public health unit, fire or police station, or pregnancy crisis center.

Relinquish or relinquishment of an infant – to give over possession or control of an infant to another in compliance with the Safe Haven law within the Louisiana Children's Code, with the settled intent to forego all parental responsibilities.

Policy:

1. **The Emergency Care Center at LSUHSC- Shreveport is the designated point of contact for any parent who wishes to relinquish their infant. Any infant relinquished at LSUHSC must be brought to the ECC.**
2. Any employee of the hospital who is approached by a parent that expresses the desire to relinquish their infant shall:
 - Take the infant
 - Attempt to give the relinquishing parent a Safe Haven Information Sheet (**see attached**)
 - Staff should contact the ECC to arrange for transportation if the infant is left with any other area of LSUHSC-S.
3. The infant shall be examined and admitted by a pediatrician to the appropriate unit, based upon level of care needed. Options include Newborn Nursery, PICU or Pediatric Unit.
4. When a newborn infant is relinquished during normal business hours:
 - a. The ECC shall notify the Administrator on Call and the Pediatric Case Manager that a newborn relinquishment has occurred.

- b. The Case Manager shall notify the Louisiana Department of Social Services (DSS), Office of Community Services (OCS) of the relinquishment within twenty-four hours of the infant's arrival.
 - c. The Case Manager shall notify the Medicaid Assistance Program (MAP) office for follow-up, as newborns relinquished shall immediately be qualified for Medicaid.
5. When a newborn infant is relinquished after hours and weekends:
- a. The ECC shall notify the Administrative House Manager (AHM).
 - b. The AHM will notify the Administrator -On -Call and DSS/OCS.
 - c. The AHM shall complete an Administrative Occurrence report and forward it to the Case Management office for follow-up.
 - d. On the next business day, the Pediatric Case Manager shall verify contact was made with the DSS/OCS and notify the MAP office of the admission.
6. DSS shall take custody and control of the newborn within 24 hours of notification provided the infant is medically stable. Louisiana Children's Code Chapter 13, provides guidance and protocols for all Safe Haven sites.



Administrator

5/20/11
Date

Reference: Louisiana Children's Code, Chapter 13, Safe Haven Relinquishments.
<http://www.louisianasafehaven.com> which redirects you to:
<http://www.dss.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=206> 1-800-244-5373

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SAFE BABY SITE



YOU HAVE A CHOICE!

LOUISIANA'S SAFE HAVEN LAW

It's safe, legal and anonymous.
If you cannot care for your newborn, choose a Safe Haven.

1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373)
www.louisianasafehaven.com



DESIGNATED SAFE HAVEN LOCATIONS

- Licensed Hospitals in Louisiana
- Emergency Medical Service Providers
- Fire Stations
- Pregnancy Crisis Centers
- Public Health Units
- Medical Clinics
- Police Stations
- Child Advocacy Centers

If a parent is unable to travel to a Safe Haven facility, he or she may call 911, and a law enforcement officer or EMS provider will pick up the baby and transport the child to a hospital.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the Safe Haven Law call
1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373), visit www.louisianasafehaven.com
or contact your local DSS Office of Community Services.



1-800-CHILDREN is supported by Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana

This public document was published at a total cost of \$5,801. 150,000 copies of this public document were published in a fine printing at a cost of \$3.09 cents each. This document was published by the Louisiana Department of Social Services to inform the public about the Louisiana Safe Haven Law. This material was printed in accordance with standards for printing by State Agencies established pursuant to R.S. 43:1. Printing of this material was purchased in accordance with the provisions of Title 43 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes.

Safe Haven brochure issued June 2009



IT'S SAFE

If you or someone you know is not ready to take care of a newborn baby and chooses not to utilize a licensed adoption agency, Louisiana's Safe Haven Law offers parents a safe, legal option.

Parents who are unable to care for their newborns can bring the baby up to 30 days old to an emergency designated facility, or Safe Haven. By leaving the baby in the care of an employee at a Safe Haven facility, parents can give up custody of their baby with no questions asked.



IT'S LEGAL

Employees at designated Safe Havens are trained to know what to do to keep a newborn safe and to keep the situation confidential.

As long as the parent leaves their baby with an employee and the baby shows no signs of abuse or neglect, the parent can simply walk away and know that their baby will be safe.



Leaving a baby unattended, for instance on a doorstep or in a bathroom, is illegal and will not meet the criteria of the Safe Haven Law.

SAFE BABY SITE



IT'S SIMPLE

1. Go to the nearest Safe Haven facility (i.e. hospital, public health unit, EMS unit, medical clinic, fire or police station, pregnancy crisis center or child advocacy center).
2. Give the baby to an employee at the facility. Parents should tell the employee that they want to utilize the Safe Haven Law.
3. An employee will offer the parent a card with a toll-free number, 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373), to call if the parent wants to give medical information about the baby or learn about their parental rights.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BABY?

The baby will be brought to the nearest medical facility for a health assessment and to receive any necessary medical care.

Then the Department of Social Services' Office of Community Services (OCS) will find a family to care for the baby. OCS will begin proceedings to obtain custody of the baby to free the child for adoption.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE PARENT?

As long as the baby shows no signs of abuse or neglect, the parent will be protected by the Safe Haven Law and will not be considered guilty of a criminal act of neglect, abandonment or child cruelty.

WHAT IF THE PARENT CHANGES HIS/HER MIND?

The parent can seek to reclaim parental rights within 30 days by contacting the local parish Office of Community Services.

IT'S ANONYMOUS

Parents do not have to give their name or any other information, and Safe Haven employees will keep everything confidential. Parents can call 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373) to learn about their parental rights or anonymously give medical information about their baby to be used for adoption purposes.

