



**SAFE HAVEN SITE**

# **Safely Surrendered Baby**

## **no shame. no blame. no names.**

### **What is the Safely Surrendered Baby Law?**

The Safely Surrendered Baby Law allows a parent or person with lawful custody to surrender a baby confidentially, without fear of arrest or prosecution for child abandonment. This law allows for at least a 14-day cooling off period, which begins the day the child is voluntarily surrendered. During this period, the person who surrendered the child can return to the hospital to reclaim the child.

### **How Does it Work?**

A parent who is unable or unwilling to care for an infant can legally and confidentially surrender their baby within 3 days of birth. Babies may be surrendered to any public or private hospital emergency room in California. A bracelet will be placed on the baby for identification and a matching bracelet will be given to the parent. The bracelet will help identify the child if the parent changes their mind during the cooling off period. A baby can be safely surrendered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### **Does a Parent Have to Give Any Information to the people Taking the Baby?**

No. Nothing is required. Hospital personnel will give the parent a medical information questionnaire designed to gather family medical history, which would be useful in caring for the child. It is up to the parent if they wish to give any additional information concerning the baby.

### **What Happens to the Baby?**

Safely surrendered babies are given a medical exam and placed in a foster home or pre-adoptive home.

### **What Happens to the Parent?**

Parents who safely surrender their baby may leave the hospital emergency room without fear of arrest or prosecution for child abandonment. Their identity will remain confidential and they will have the comfort of knowing their baby will remain in safe hands. If during the cooling off period the parents decide that they want to reclaim the baby, they can take the identifying bracelet back to the hospital, where staff will provide information about the baby.

### **Why is California Doing This?**

The purpose of the Safely Surrendered Baby Law is to protect infants from abandonment. Abandoning an infant puts the child in extreme danger and is also illegal. The new law helps prevent exposing the child to the risks of abandonment and helps protect the parent from prosecution for criminal child abandonment. Under this new law, no one ever has to abandon a child again.

### **Who Can I Contact for More Information?**

If you or someone you know wants to surrender a baby, please take the child to any hospital emergency room. Remember: no shame, no blame, no names . . . it's the law. If you would like to know more information about the Safely Surrendered Baby Law, please visit our web site at [http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/SafelySurr\\_91st.htm](http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/SafelySurr_91st.htm).