

<b>TITLE</b> OPERATIONS MANUAL	<b>STANDARD</b> INSTRUCTION 06		<b>DEPARTMENT</b> FIRE
<b>SUBJECT</b> STATION MANAGEMENT: SAFELY SURRENDERED BABY PROGRAM	<b>SECTION</b> 21	<b>PAGE</b> 1 of 3	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> 06/16/2008

## XXI. SAFELY SURRENDERED BABY PROGRAM

### A. Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Instruction is to provide operating procedures and guidelines that shall be used by San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) when accepting a newborn under the California Safely Surrendered Baby Law.

### B. Scope

These instructions shall apply primarily to fire suppression crews staffing fire stations and shall define their role as a safe haven.

### C. Authority

Section 1255.7 of the California Health and Safety Code, Section 271.5 of the California Penal Code, and the Welfare and Institutions Code, Sections 300, 309, 361.5 and 14005.24 relating to abandoned newborns

### D. Background

1. On January 1, 2001 California enacted the Safely Surrendered Baby Law, (also known as the Safe Haven Law or Newborn Abandonment Law), which allows for a parent to legally, confidentially, and safely give up a baby within the first 72 hours of the baby's life. On October 7, 2005 Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation permanently extending the Safely Surrendered Baby Law, beginning on January 1, 2006.
2. This law is designed to protect a baby from being unsafely and illegally abandoned and to offer a last resort to parents who, in a time of severe emotional distress, may believe they have no other options. The hope is that by allowing parents to legally surrender a child to an employee at a hospital emergency room or fire station, they will do so, ensuring the child's safety and their own freedom from prosecution.
3. California's Safely Surrendered Baby Law allows parents to confidentially give up their baby, 72 hours old or younger. Parents may give up their newborn without fear of arrest or prosecution, providing the baby has not been abused or neglected,
4. The law guarantees confidentiality to the surrendering adult. A parent who safely surrenders a baby does not have to give their name. If a parent chooses to give

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their name or other identifying information, only individuals who need to know the identity and whereabouts of a surrendering parent will have access to such information, thus guaranteeing confidentiality. Such individuals may include the judge and the attorneys in court who ensure that the baby is safe and placed in a pre-adoptive home.

5. The law allows the parent or other person with legal custody to bring the baby to a Safe Surrender site. The law does not allow a parent to leave his or her newborn at the entrance of a Safe Surrender site. To ensure the safety of the newborn, the parent or person with legal custody must give his or her baby to an employee at the Safe Surrender site.

E. Procedure

In the event a parent decides to safely surrender a baby at any SDFD fire station the company officer shall insure the following procedures are followed:

1. Welcome the parent or person surrendering the infant. Do not be judgmental; this is an emotional and difficult time for them.
2. Determine that the infant is less than 72 hours old or younger. Accept the infant (even if it appears older than 72 hours) and begin to assess for any medical needs.
3. Notify FCC of a walk-up incident at the station and request an ALS unit (if one is not in quarters) to respond. Request that the dispatch not voice the call information overhead. Initiate an EMS Pre-Hospital Patient Report (PPR) for the infant and mother, if appropriate.
4. Locate and open the Newborn Safe Surrender Kit. Hand the surrendering person the enclosed business reply mail envelope containing the Safe Haven medical questionnaire, an information sheet, and a copy of the coded, confidential bracelet. Place the smaller coded, confidential ankle bracelet on the infant and record the code on the EMS PPR.
5. Ask the parent or person surrendering the infant to fill out a questionnaire designed to gather important medical history information, which is very useful in caring for the baby. Although filling out the questionnaire is not required, it is encouraged. If they choose, they can take the questionnaire home and mail it in, once it has been completed. The medical questionnaire does not require any information that would compromise confidentiality.

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6. Once on scene, EMS personnel shall assume custody of the baby, initiate base hospital contact, and continue to assess and provide for any medical needs of the baby.
7. The company officer shall contact San Diego County Health and Human Services, Child Welfare Services by phone at 1-800-344-6000 to report a safe surrendered incident.
8. An ambulance shall transport the infant to the receiving hospital and transfer custody of the baby to a designated hospital employee. A copy of the PPR shall be provided to the hospital staff.
9. FCC shall notify the Shift Commander, the respective battalion chief and the PIO of the safe surrender incident.