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Safely Surrendered Baby Law Fast Facts

Background

The Safely Surrendered Baby Law (SSB) was implemented on January 1, 2001, with the intent to prevent harm and possible death to newborns.

The Law

The SSB law (California Health and Safety Code, section 1255.7) provides a safe alternative for the surrender of a newborn baby in specified circumstances. Under the SSB law, a parent or person with lawful custody can safely surrender a baby confidentially, and without fear of prosecution, within 72 hours of birth.

The SSB law requires the baby be taken to a public or private hospital, designated fire station or other safe surrender site, as determined by the local County Board of Supervisors. No questions will be asked, and California Penal Code Section 271.5 protects surrendering individuals from prosecution of abandonment.

The Process

At the time of surrender, a bracelet is placed on the baby for identification purposes and a matching bracelet provided to the parent or lawful guardian, in case the baby is reclaimed. A parent or person with lawful custody has up to 14 days from the time of surrender to reclaim their baby.

A medical questionnaire must be offered; however, it is a voluntary document and can be declined. The questionnaire is offered solely for the purpose of collecting medical information critical to the health and survival of the infant. All identifying information that pertains to a parent or individual who surrenders a child is strictly confidential.

Additional Information

SSB posters and brochures are available, free of charge, to requesting individuals and organizations. Visit our website at www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/safely-surrendered-baby or call 1-877-BABYSAF for more information.

In addition to California, all 50 states have such laws in place to discourage baby abandonment.