

Agenda Report

DATE: April 11, 2005

TO: CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: ADOPT A RESOLUTION RATIFYING PASADENA FIRE STATIONS AS SAFE SURRENDER SITES

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council adopt a Resolution in support of ratifying all Pasadena Fire Stations as Safe Surrender Sites and establishing procedures for accepting a newborn under the California Safely Surrendered Baby Law, as amended by the County of Los Angeles.

SUMMARY

The California Safely Surrendered Law allows an individual to give up an unwanted infant with no fear of arrest or prosecution for abandonment as long as the baby has not been abused or neglected. The law does not require that names be given when the baby is surrendered. Parents are permitted to bring a baby within three days of birth to any hospital emergency room or other designated safe havens in California. The baby will be placed in a foster or pre-adoptive home.

BACKGROUND

The Safely Surrendered Law (SB 1368), also known as the Safe Haven Law or the Newborn Abandonment Law was signed into law by Governor Davis in September 2000, and went into effect on January 1, 2001. On August 27, 2002, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution designating all Los Angeles County Fire Stations as Safe Haven Sites. Since the adoption of the resolution, Los Angeles County has succeeded with having 32 newborns safely surrendered. Unfortunately, during this same time, 31 newborns have been abandoned, with 24 of those babies not surviving. This program is a powerful vehicle to save infants' lives. Unfortunately, the general public cannot differentiate a Los Angeles County Fire Station from a Pasadena Fire Station located in Los Angeles County. Designating Pasadena Fire Stations as Safe Surrender Sites will ensure more safe sites are available for these babies.

Once the Resolution is ratified, a formal authorization is submitted through the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors' Chief Administrative Office. Immediately upon Board designation, all Pasadena fire stations will become legally designated Safe Surrender Sites. The Los Angeles Board of Supervisors will provide a press release. The City will then move forward to obtain Newborn Safe Surrender Kits and Signage, which include questionnaires in English and Spanish, fact sheets, Coded Wrist Identification Bracelets and an 18"x20" aluminum signs displaying the approved logo with Safe Surrender Site imprinted.

FISCAL IMPACT


There is no fiscal impact for this program.


Respectfully submitted,


CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
City Manager

Prepared by:

Approved by:


Kevin Costa
EMS Coordinator


Dennis J. Downs
Fire Chief

(attachment)

RESOLUTION NO.

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF PASADENA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SAFE HAVEN PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

WHEREAS, the State Legislature has enacted Health and Safety Code §1255.7 which allows any person having lawful custody of a minor child 72 hours old or younger to surrender physical custody of the child to an employee at a location designated by the Board of Supervisors; and

WHEREAS, the City of Pasadena Fire Department is desirous of having its fire stations so designated; and

WHEREAS, such designation is for the benefit of children and the community because it will provide a safe haven to newborns who are 72 hours old or younger;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA, CALIFORNIA THAT:

Section 1. The fire stations of the Pasadena Fire Department be designated by Los Angeles County as locations which may accept newborns who are 72 hours old or younger from a person who has lawful custody of the child.

Section 2. The City Manager or her designee is authorized to request that the Board of Supervisors for Los Angeles County designate the fire stations of the City of Pasadena as locations which may accept newborns who are 72 hours old or younger from a person who has lawful custody of the child.

Section 3. The City Manager or her designee is authorized to execute any documents which are necessary to effectuate this designation and which are

consistent with this Resolution, all of which are subject to approval by the City Attorney.

Adopted at the _____ meeting of the City Council of the City of Pasadena on the _____ day of _____, 2005, by the following vote:

AYES:

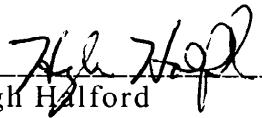
NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Jane L. Rodriguez, CMC
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Hugh Halford
Assistant City Attorney

No shame.
No blame.
No names.

Newborns can be safely delivered
at any Los Angeles County
hospital emergency room or fire station.



In Los Angeles County
1-877-BABY SAFE
1-877-222-9723
www.babysafe.org



Shirley N. Steinberg
Governor

Health and Human Services Agency
Glenn L. England, Secretary

Edward J. Fong, Director
Department of Social Services



Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Clifford A. Brantley, Supervisor, 1st District

Yvonne M. Salas, Supervisor, 2nd District

Zelma A. Aguilar, Supervisor, 3rd District

Robert M. Lopez, Supervisor, 4th District

Michael J. Bonavich, Supervisor, 5th District

For more information, call 1-877-222-9723 or visit www.babysafe.org

What is the Safely Surrendered Baby Law?

California's Safely Surrendered Baby Law allows parents to give up their baby confidentially. As long as the baby has not been abused or neglected, parents may give up their newborn without fear of arrest or prosecution.

How does it work?

A distressed parent who is unable or unwilling to care for a baby can legally, confidentially and safely give up a baby within three days of birth. The baby must be handed to an employee at a Los Angeles County emergency room or fire station. As long as the child shows no signs of abuse or neglect, no name or other information is required. In case the parent changes his or her mind at a later date and wants the baby back, workers will use bracelets to help connect them to each other. One bracelet will be placed on the baby, and a matching bracelet will be given to the parent.

What if a parent wants the baby back?

Parents who change their minds can begin the process of reclaiming their newborns within 14 days. These parents should call the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services at 1-800-540-4000.

Can only a parent bring in the baby?

In most cases, a parent will bring in the baby. The law allows other people to bring in the baby if they have legal custody.

Does the parent have to call before bringing in the baby?

No. A parent can bring in a baby anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week so long as the parent gives the baby to someone who works at the hospital or fire station.

Does a parent have to tell anything to the people taking the baby?

No. However, hospital personnel will ask the parent to fill out a questionnaire designed to gather important medical history information, which is very useful in caring for the child. Although encouraged, filling out the questionnaire is not required.

What happens to the baby?

The baby will be examined and given medical treatment, if needed. Then the baby will be placed in a pre-adoptive home.

What happens to the parent?

Once the parent(s) has safely turned over the baby, they are free to go.

Why is California doing this?

The purpose of the Safely Surrendered Baby Law is to protect babies from being abandoned by their parents and potentially being hurt or killed. You may have heard tragic stories of babies left in dumpsters or public bathrooms. The parents who committed these acts may have been under severe emotional distress. The mothers may have hidden their pregnancies, fearful of what would happen if their families found out. Because they were afraid and had nowhere to turn for help, they abandoned their infants. Abandoning a baby puts the child in extreme danger. It is also illegal. Too often, it results in the baby's death. Because of the Safely Surrendered Baby Law, this tragedy doesn't ever have to happen in California again.

A baby's story

At 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, July 25, 2002, a healthy newborn baby was brought to St. Bernardine Medical Center in San Bernardino under the provisions of the California Safely Surrendered Baby Law. As the law states, the baby's mother did not have to identify herself. When the baby was brought to the emergency room, he was examined by a pediatrician, who determined that the baby was healthy and doing fine. He was placed with a loving family while the adoption process was started.

Every baby deserves a chance for a healthy life. If someone you know is considering abandoning a newborn, let her know there are other options.

It is best that women seek help to receive proper medical care and counseling while they are pregnant. But at the same time, we want to assure parents who choose not to keep their baby that they will not go to jail if they deliver their babies to safe hands in any Los Angeles County hospital ER or fire station.



County of Los Angeles Safely Surrendered Baby Law

[What is the Law?](#) | [Find A Site](#) | [Public Info Materials](#) | [Training Materials](#) | [SSB Data](#) | [Contractor Info](#) | [Task Force](#) | [Contact Us](#)

How many babies have been safely surrendered in Los Angeles County (as of 03/15/05)

Year	Safe Surrenders	Abandonments
1999	0	6 (6 of which died)
2000	0	3 (3 of which died)
2001	0	14 (11 of which died)
2002	10	13 (8 of which died)
2003	8	8 (7 of which died)
2004	10	8 (7 of which died)
2005	4	1 (1 of which died)

Data Reports on Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Babies in Los Angeles County

- To review the report, "[Data on Abandoned Newborns - Los Angeles County 1999-2001](#)" click [here](#).
- To review the report, "[Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants in Los Angeles County 2002-2003](#)," click [here](#).



For more information on the Safely Surrendered Baby Law in Los Angeles County, please contact the County of Los Angeles Chief Administrative Office at (213) 974-4604 or [Click Here to Contact Us](#).

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The Safely Surrendered Baby Law

In January of 2002, a newborn baby was found alive in a trash can in Monrovia with its umbilical cord still attached. The infant, later known as "Baby Andrew," was taken to a nearby hospital where he was examined and found to be in relatively good health. Soon afterwards, the 16-year-old girl who had given birth to the baby was arrested and charged with attempted murder and child endangerment.

The case caught the attention of the public and shined a light on the all-too-frequent issue of infant abandonment in Los Angeles County. In 2002, 13 infants were abandoned in the county, and of these eight died before they were found.

Since the passage of California's Safely Surrendered Baby Law, new parents in dire situations have an easy way to save the life of their child. Under the law, parents may surrender their newborn infants at hospital emergency rooms or other designated sites within the first 72 hours after birth without facing criminal prosecution for child endangerment. In Los Angeles, babies can also be taken to any designated Los Angeles County fire station (Call 877-BABY SAFE to learn about a Safe Surrender site near you). In 2002, the lives of 10 infants were saved because parents took advantage of the Safely Surrendered Baby Law. .

"The law is an easy way to save innocent lives," said Evelyn V. Martinez, Executive Director of First 5 LA, which is working with a variety of agencies throughout the county to get the word out about the law.

Under the Safely Surrendered Baby Law, parental information is confidential and infants will receive the medical care they need. Los Angeles County's Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) takes custody of these infants and moves them into adoptive homes as quickly as possible. Parents who have surrendered their infants have 14 days to reconsider their decision.

Although it's easy to simply label the parents in infant abandonment cases as callous or irresponsible, the situation facing these parents is usually much more complex than that. Women who ultimately abandon their infants often conceal or deny their pregnancy out of fear of discovery or authority. Although these women can come from any ethnic or economic background, they usually do not receive any prenatal care and or give birth in a hospital or other medical environment.

As the continuing deaths of abandoned infants in Los Angeles County demonstrate, the Safely Surrendered Baby Law won't do any good unless parents know about it. Parents need to know their options when making life or death decisions about their newborns. Anyone in the community can help: friends, grandparents, co-workers, service providers

or even acquaintances from church. The more people who know about the Safely Surrendered Baby Law, the more lives will be saved. It's that simple.

“Our goal is to not only better educate the public about this law, but more importantly, our goal must be zero babies thrown away,” said Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe, whose leadership has been essential in focusing attention on the law. A number of county agencies have been involved in spreading the word about the law, as well as First 5 LA, the Children's Planning Council, the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, First 5 LA, Infoline and other concerned members of the Los Angeles County community.

Those wanting information about specific Los Angeles County Safely Surrendered Baby sites in their neighborhoods should call **(877) BABY-SAFE ((877) 725-5111)**. The program's website in Los Angeles County is www.babysafela.org. Visitors to the site can learn more about the law and the County's implementation efforts, as well as download print materials and find a designated Safe Surrender site near them. Los Angeles County Safe Surrender sites will display a sign with the Safe Surrender logo, which shows a picture of an extended arm holding a baby.

(May 14, 2003)



County of Los Angeles Safely Surrendered Baby Law

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What is the Safely Surrendered Baby Law?

The Safely Surrendered Baby Law (also known as the Safe Haven Law or Newborn Abandonment Law) was signed into law by Governor Davis in September 2000 and went into effect on January 1, 2001. The law is to protect babies from being hurt or killed because they were abandoned. The law allows a legal guardian to confidentially surrender an infant, three days old or younger, to any hospital emergency room or other designated Safe Surrender site. As long as the baby has not been abused or neglected, any person may surrender the baby without fear of arrest or prosecution for child abandonment.

On August 1, 2003, legislation was enacted in the State of California that strengthens the existing Surrendered Baby Law by:

- Expanding the criteria for safe surrender personnel authorized to accept physical custody of "any personnel on duty at a safe surrender site" as opposed to "designated staff."
- Protecting the confidentiality of a parent who surrenders a child
- Requiring safe surrender sites to post uniform signage
- Requiring a safe surrender site to notify child protective services as soon as possible after a child has been surrendered
- Requiring child protective services to report information regarding the surrendered infant to California Missing Children Clearinghouse and National Crime Information Center
- Clarifying that possession of the identification bracelet does not establish parentage or a right of the child.

For more information on California's Safely Surrendered Baby Law, see below:

- **[SB 1368: Safely Surrendered Baby Law](#)**
- **[SB 139: Amending the Safely Surrendered Baby Law](#)**
- **[Fact Sheets: English | Spanish](#)**



For more information on the Safely Surrendered Baby Law in Los Angeles County, please contact the County of Los Angeles Chief Administrative Office at (213) 974-4604 or [Click Here to Contact Us](#).

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