

California's Safely Surrendered Baby Law

SB 1368

There is a way
to safely
surrender your
baby



1.877.BABYSAF
(1.877.222.9723)

Purpose



To provide a safe alternative for the surrender of a newborn baby (within 72 hours of birth) that prevents harm and possible death.

What is the difference between safe surrender, adoption, and abandonment?



Safely Surrender

- Safe place
- Confidential
- Protects parent(s)/legal guardian
- 72 hours to surrender a baby and 14 days to reclaim

Adoption

- Permitted at any age of the child
- Parent's rights

Abandonment

- Extremely dangerous
- Parents legally responsible

Who and Where?



Who can surrender a baby?

- Parent(s)
- Legal guardian
- Other person with lawful custody

Where can a parent/guardian surrender a baby?

To an employee of:

- Public or private hospital
- Designated city or county fire station

What is the process?



“I would like to Safely Surrender my baby”

Surrender at hospital or fire station with the logo



- Parent/legal guardian is free to go, no questions asked
- Guaranteed Confidentiality

- Matching bracelets are given to baby and parent/legal guardian

- 14 days to reclaim baby

- Hospital/fire station staff will notify the Child Welfare Agency (CWA) within 48 hours
- CWA reports to State Department of Social Services

- Voluntary Medical Questionnaire
- Personnel is required to offer but not mandatory to complete

- Baby is examined and provided medical treatment as needed
- Placed in a foster home
- “Cooling off” period begins

Can a parent reclaim the baby?



- Reclaim baby within 14 days
- Parent/legal guardian with bracelet can:
 - Bring the copy of the coded bracelet to the safe surrender site
 - Call 1.877.BABYSAF (1.877.222.9723)
- The Child Welfare Agency will:
 - Verify identity of individual with bracelet
 - Assess parent's circumstances and ability to care for the child
 - Cancel court hearing (if a court date has been scheduled)

What happens after 14 days?



- Parent/legal guardian can **NOT** claim a child after the 14 day period
- Child Welfare Agency will wait for court hearing to terminate parental rights
 - Adoption process can begin immediately

Number of Safely Surrendered Babies

California Data



YEAR	RECLAIMED	SAFELY SURRENDERED	TOTAL ABANDONED	ABANDONED SURVIVING	ABANDONED DECEASED
2001	0	2	20	7	13
2002	0	17	25	13	12
2003	0	25	13	5	8
2004	1	33	19	7	12
2005	0	52	11	4	7
2006	0	65	26	10	16
2007	1	47	8	4	4
2008	0	61	12	3	9
2009	1	57	8	2	6
2010	5	71	5	2	3
2011	2	48	5	1	4
2012	4	72	3	0	3
2013	2	62	6	2	4
2014	0	74	6	4	2
2015	5	83	6	5	1
2016	4	72	3	3	0
2017	5	90	2	2	0
2018	4	79	2	1	1
2019	3	81	6	4	2
2020	3	77	2	0	2
2021	6	79	4	3	1
2022	10	94	2	1	1
TOTAL	56	1341	194	83	111

YEAR	KERN Safely Surrendered
2006	4
2007	3
2008	4
2009	1
2010	8
2011	4
2012	7
2013	7
2014	7
2015	10
2016	2
2017	6
2018	8
2019	5
2020	8
2021	6
2022	5
2023	3
TOTAL	98

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/ocap/safely-surrendered-baby/data>

For More Information



- Kern County Department of Human Services – Child Protective Services
 - <https://www.kcdhs.org/services/child-protective-services/safely-surrender>
 - 661.631.6011
- California Department of Social Services – Child Welfare Agency
 - <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/safe-surrender-baby>
 - 1.877.BABYSAF (1.877.222.9723)