

COLORADO SAFE HAVEN FOR NEWBORNS

Safe Haven Procedures for Hospital or Emergency Clinic Personnel

CRS 19-3-304.5

As amended by HB26-1024, effective August 12, 2026.

If a parent voluntarily delivers a child to a firefighter, as defined in section 18-3-201 (1.5), or a staff member who engages in the admission, care, or treatment of patients at a hospital or community clinic emergency center, as defined in subsection (9) of this section, when the firefighter is at a fire station or the staff member is at a hospital or community clinic emergency center, as defined in subsection (9) of this section, the firefighter or staff member of the hospital or community clinic emergency center shall, without a court order, take temporary physical custody of the child if:

- (a) The child is thirty days old or younger; and
- (b) The parent did not express an intent to return for the child.

CRS 18-3-201 (1, 1.3)

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Requirements

- Infant must be 30 days old or younger
- Infant must be unharmed
- If your situation does not meet these criteria, contact local law enforcement for assistance

Following these steps properly provides the parent immunity from prosecution related to abandonment; however, this does not provide immunity from potential child abuse or neglect charges, if applicable.

Procedure (May Vary By Hospital)

When a parent voluntarily delivers a child to a healthcare employee, the employee shall:

- Take temporary custody of the child
- Perform any necessary act to protect, preserve, or aid the physical health and safety of the child
- Allow the relinquishing parent to remain anonymous and leave without being pursued, provided that the infant shows no signs of abuse or neglect and is 30 days old or younger
- Perform a basic assessment of the infant's condition
- Have lead notify law enforcement (required within 24 hours under CRS 19-3-304.5(2))

- Call the Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at **1-844-CO-4-KIDS (1-844-264-5437)**, staffed 24/7, to notify the county department as required within 24 hours. Tell the call-taker this is a Safe Haven surrender, not an abuse report.

You May...

- Accept the newborn
- Evaluate the newborn
- Offer the mother a medical evaluation
- Provide the mother/parent an opportunity to give pertinent health information about the infant/birth. You may ASK, but you may NOT compel.
- Provide the National Safe Haven Alliance hotline for aftercare/counseling resources **888-510-BABY (2229)**

You May NOT...

- Request any identification from the parent
- Ask the parent for any information beyond the health history of the infant
- Discuss any legal rights of the parent beyond your scope of expertise
- Use or make any inflammatory remarks or statements
- Use the word "abandonment"

If the infant is older or there is evidence of abuse

NO SHAME, NO BLAME, NO NAMES

- Voluntarily accept the child
- Encourage the parent to stay to discuss placement options
- Call the crisis hotline for resources
- If the parent leaves or there is evidence of abuse/neglect, notify law enforcement
- Do NOT confront/accuse

This information has not been reviewed by legal counsel.