



The Gloria M. Silverio Foundation, 501(c)3  
www.asafehavenfornewborns.com

## Safe Haven for Newborns FAQs

### GETTING INFORMED:

#### 1 - Why is there a need for Safe Haven?

There is an escalating crisis in the United States. Mothers are keeping their pregnancy a secret, then disposing of the child after the birth. Safe Haven provides an alternative to a frightened girl/woman, who, in a moment of desperation, may do something drastic, destroying two lives, hers and her babies.

It is now a Florida Law, which allows a mother/ father an alternative to infant abandonment with your confidentiality protected. Resulting in:

A child's life is saved.

A mother/father is saved from a lifetime of guilt and criminal prosecution.

The hopes and dreams of parents waiting to adopt are fulfilled.

#### Note:

Many Hospitals and all staffed 24/7 Fire and Emergency Medical Service stations have signs with our logo and helpline # posted outside of their facility.

#### 2 - Why does this happen?

Newborn babies are being left to die by mothers who believe, for whatever reason, that they have no other alternative. While no one can fully understand why a person would endanger a vulnerable child, two common denominators present themselves – isolation and denial. Mothers (and fathers) who abandon a newborn child often believe that they have no alternative. They often believe that they are, and in fact they may be, utterly and completely alone. Living in this isolation, they are left to wrestle with problems that they are not psychologically or emotionally equipped to handle.

#### 3 - What is the stereotype of a person that abandons their baby?

The generally accepted stereotype of a person who abandons a newborn child is that of a teenage, underprivileged mother. However, our experience shows that this is a tragedy that crosses all categories of age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

#### 4 - Where can someone leave his or her baby under the "Safe Haven" program?

The baby may be taken to any hospital emergency room, staffed fire rescue station, or staffed emergency medical service station in the state of Florida.

REMEMBER, IT IS ABSOLUTELY MANDATORY to give the baby to a person working at one of these facilities. That is the only way to ensure that the baby will be safe & well taken care of.

People working at these facilities usually have some form of visible identification.

Tell the person that you want to leave your baby with "Safe Haven".

#### 5 - What happens if a baby is left at a designated "Safe Haven" location but not given to a person working at one of these facilities?

The person will face criminal charges.

#### 6 - What happens if a baby is left at a place other than a designated "Safe Haven" facility or in a unsafe place?

The person will face criminal charges.

**7 - Must the baby be taken to the closest hospital, fire rescue station or Emergency Medical Service station?**

No, the baby may be left at any hospital, staffed fire rescue station or staffed Emergency Medical Service station in the state of Florida.

**8 - Why must the baby be 7 days old or less?**

Because the first hours/days of a newborn's life are the most vulnerable, therefore, more urgent. Allows a mother/father to make a constructive and life affirming decision for the infant and themselves. The option of directly placing the baby with an adoption Agency is always available.

**9 - How can the "Safe Haven" location be sure that the baby is seven days old or less?**

The law actually states, "A newborn that a licensed physician reasonably believes to be approximately 7 days old or less."

**10 - What will they ask the person leaving the baby?**

Be assured – No one is going to try to find out who you are - The person leaving the baby is not required to answer any questions.

A Safe Haven for Newborns or the people at the facility where the baby is left may ask some medical history questions that will be placed in the baby's records, which may help answer future health questions. Also, referral information from "Safe Haven" is available for the parent to speak with someone about what they have been through and / or to receive medical attention.

The purpose of this program is to save the lives of newborns. Therefore, the premise is that a newborn left in safety without medical records is preferable to an unsafe abandonment resulting in an almost sure death.

**11 - Is it true that the police will not be called?**

The Police and the Department of Children and Families will not be called if the unharmed baby (approximately 7 days old or less) is taken to a hospital, fire rescue station or Emergency Medical Service station and given to a person who works there. If the parents follow these guidelines they will not be prosecuted for abandonment or neglect.

**12 - What happens to the baby?**

If the baby is left at a fire rescue or Emergency Medical Service station they will give the baby emergency medical services to the extent of their knowledge and then transport the baby to the closest hospital.

The hospital will take care of any emergency medical services the baby may require.

The hospital will contact on a rotating basis, a licensed child-placing agency from a list produced by the Florida Adoption Information Center (see Safe Haven Website). The baby will then be placed with parents who have been waiting to adopt a child.

**13 - What about father's rights?**

This program does not change any present laws regarding father's rights.

**14 - What if the parents change their mind and want their baby back?**

A parent of a newborn infant left at a hospital, emergency medical services station, or fire station under the "Safe Haven" law may claim his or her newborn infant up until the court enters a judgment terminating his or her parental rights which is approximately 30 days. A claim for the newborn infant must be made to the entity having physical or legal custody of the newborn infant or to the circuit court before whom proceedings involving the newborn infant are pending.

### **15 - I would like to adopt a baby left at a "Safe Haven". Who do I contact?**

Safe Haven's mission is to save the lives of infants in danger of being abandoned. We do not receive physical custody of the babies or are involved in anyway with the adoption process.

If you are interested in adoption call the Florida adoption information center at 1-800/96-Adopt and please visit our website at [www.asafehavenfornewborns.com](http://www.asafehavenfornewborns.com) to:

Learn more about the adoption process.

View a list of "Safe Haven" licensed child placing agencies in Florida.

See other helpful links.

### **16 - Can't we help girls/women before they get to this stage?**

That is one of the hopes of Safe Haven for Newborns. We emphasis "Please don't wait until your baby is born." They can call our 24/7 multilingual referral helpline number (1-877-767-BABY(2229)). We hope that girls/women will call this number before they have their babies-effectively thwarting a crisis before it begins. We also hope that our message is reaching young mothers to realize that they are not alone.

The community cares about them.

There is confidential help available.

### **17 - Who pays for the medical cost of the newborn?**

Medicaid pays the cost of medical care for an unharmed relinquished newborn by virtue of the same laws that existed prior to passage of the "Safe Haven Law".

### **18 - Does such legislation encourages abandonment?**

No – leaving a baby at a "Safe Haven" is the last option and is a compassionate alternative to abandoning a baby to a almost sure death. The mother is encouraged to talk to someone even before the baby is born and is encouraged to either keep the baby or to go through the normal channels of the adoption process. She also is encouraged to seek prenatal care.

Obviously this Law is not the final answer to the societal problems contributing to the cause of infant abandonment but it provides a compassionate approach to saving the lives of innocent and helpless babies. This law is a positive outcome for all involved: a child's life is saved; a mother or father is saved from lifetime of guilt, anguish and criminal prosecution; the hopes of a family waiting to adopt a child are fulfilled. We believe - If one life is saved, all our efforts are truly worthwhile!

### **19 - Is "A Safe Haven for Newborns" and "Safe Place" the same program?**

No – Two totally different programs - The "A Safe Haven for Newborns" is a Florida Law.

The Safe Place program is an excellent program for youth (under age 18) having problems of abuse, neglect, lost or in some dangerous situation with a drunk or unsafe driver or just wanting to talk to someone about a problem.

The Safe haven for Newborns allows mothers, fathers or whoever is in possession of an unharmed newborn, approximately, seven days old or less (to be determined by a (Licensed Physician) to leave them at Safe Havens: any hospital, staffed fire station, or staffed emergency medical service station, with no questions asked, totally anonymous, free from fear of prosecution. These "Safe Havens" working to receive these babies coupled with the identity protection of the parent, make this Law an effective tool in preventing unnecessary deaths of newborns in the state of Florida.

### **20 - Do other States have similar legislation?**

All 50 states have enacted some version of "Safe Haven" legislation.

## **21 - What is the Helpline all about?**

First of all it is absolutely confidential.

Our helpline is staffed by caring individuals who will assist you in your time of need and will never judge you. It is a state wide, toll free, multilingual, referral helpline and available 24/7 (1-877-767-2229).

## **22 - Who is the Gloria M. Silverio Foundation – “A Safe Haven for Newborns”?**

We are a Florida non-profit 501(c) 3 organization dedicated to eliminating infant abandonment in the state of Florida, through education, prevention and community involvement. Through our “partnering efforts” in all 67 Florida Counties, our public awareness efforts and the availability of our statewide multilingual 24/7 helpline, we are saving lives.

## **23 - What if I have questions not addressed here?**

If it is a crisis, call the 24/7 referral helpline: 1-877-767-2229.

All other questions, visit our website at [www.asafehavenfornewborns.com](http://www.asafehavenfornewborns.com), email us at [safehaven@asafehavenfornewborns.com](mailto:safehaven@asafehavenfornewborns.com) or call us at our administrative office: 305-882-1304, ext 103.

## **24 - How can I help?**

Volunteer your time – there are many ways: Please email us at [safehaven@asafehavenfornewborns.com](mailto:safehaven@asafehavenfornewborns.com) or call us at our administrative office: 305/882-1304, ext: 103.

Donations: We are private, non profit, 501(c)3 Florida organization and your donations will help us continue to save little lives:

Mail to: Gloria M. Silverio Foundation. “A Safe Haven for Newborns”  
6801 NW 77th ave. Suite 404  
Miami, FL 33166

Or go on line and donate thru our secured donation process (see our website at [www.asafehavenfornewborns.com](http://www.asafehavenfornewborns.com)).