



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

ERIC L. PETERSON
FIRE CHIEF

4410 Cathedral Oaks Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93110

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

- Safely Surrendered Baby Program -

SANTA BARBARA, Ca. January 28, 2016 – A tragic event in Santa Maria occurred this week involving the death of a newborn baby leading to murder charges against the teenage mother. This Public Service Announcement serves as a reminder to the citizens of Santa Barbara County regarding abandoned babies.

The Safely Surrendered Baby (SSB) law allows a mother or person with lawful custody to bring an unwanted baby three days old or younger to any hospital or fire station in Santa Barbara County without fear of prosecution for child abandonment. No questions will be asked. The SSB law provides a safe alternative to desperate mothers who are unwilling or unable to keep their babies.

On July 29, 2011, the Safely Surrendered Baby Program was expanded to include all fire stations in the Santa Barbara County Operational Area (Santa Barbara City FD, Montecito FD, Santa Maria FD, Lompoc FD, Guadalupe FD, Carpinteria - Summerland FD, and Santa Barbara County Fire Department) in addition to all hospitals within Santa Barbara County. All fire department personnel have been trained to know the procedures for handling a safely surrendered baby incident.

On January 1, 2001 California became one of a dozen states to enact a new law that is intended to provide for the health and safety of unwanted newborn children. The “Safe Arms for Newborns” law (Senate Bill 1368) states that “no parent or other person who has lawful custody of a minor child 72 hours old or younger may be prosecuted for child abandonment if he or she voluntarily surrenders physical custody of the child to a designated employee at a public or private hospital emergency room or other location designated by the county board of supervisors.”

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