



REGION 11 CHICAGO EMS SYSTEM POLICY	Title: Abandoned Newborn Infant Protection
	Section: Patient Care
	Approved: EMS Medical Directors Consortium
	Effective: June 1, 2023

ABANDONED NEWBORN INFANT PROTECTION

I. PURPOSE

- A. To define EMS responsibilities under the *Abandoned Newborn Infant Protection Act*.
- B. This legislation allows a parent to relinquish a newborn infant, whom a physician reasonably believes is 30 days old or less, to personnel of a hospital, police station (including campus police), fire station, or emergency medical facility which are considered "Safe Havens".
- C. The parent may remain anonymous and is immune from liability, as long as the infant is unharmed. The Act provides a safe alternative to a parent who may be considering abandonment of a newborn.
- D. All Illinois Safe Havens must display a uniform sign to visually help identify their location as a safe haven.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Newborn infant: A child who a licensed physician reasonably believes is 30 days old or less at the time the child is initially relinquished and who is not an abused or neglected child.
- B. Relinquish: To bring a newborn infant, who a licensed physician reasonably believes is 30 days old or less to a hospital, police station, fire station, emergency medical facility, and to leave the infant with personnel of the facility, if the person leaving the infant does not express an intent to return for the infant or states that he or she will not return for the infant.
- C. Emergency Medical Professional: Includes licensed physicians and any EMS personnel as defined in the EMS Systems Act.
- D. Fire Station: A fire station within the State that is staffed with at least one full-time person.

III. POLICY

- A. EMS personnel in the Chicago EMS System will provide assessment, treatment, and transportation to the closest EDAP hospital for relinquished infants.
- B. EMS personnel are required to provide the necessary documents to the relinquishing parent as specified in this Act.

IV. INFANT CARE AND HOSPITAL CONTACT

- A. The relinquishing person is presumed to be the infant's biological parent.



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- B. Assess the infant. Look particularly for any signs of abuse or neglect.
- C. Ask the relinquishing parent for the infant's name and date of birth.
- D. Ask the relinquishing parent if they have any medical issues that need to be addressed.
- E. If the child is presumed to be more than 30 days old, or has been abused or neglected, EMS personnel should proceed as if the child is abused or neglected. Follow the **Reporting Abused and/or Neglected Patients Policy** and file a report with DCFS. While this is all that is required under the Act, refusing to take an infant presumed to be older than 30 days or one who is abused or neglected from a parent who wishes to relinquish him or her could possibly result in harm to the infant. It is in the best interest of the child to accept them and proceed as below.
- F. Initiate emergency treatment that is necessary per Region 11 EMS Protocols under implied consent and keep the infant warm.
- G. Transport to the closest, most appropriate Region 11 EDAP hospital with pre-notification.
- H. Complete a patient care report on the infant. List the infant's name as "Baby Doe" if it is unknown.

V. COMMUNICATION WITH THE RELINQUISHING PARENT

- A. EMS personnel must offer the relinquishing parent the packet of information specified in the Act (see below), and if possible, **verbally inform the parent that:**
 - 1. **His or her acceptance of the information is completely voluntary;**
 - 2. Completion of the *Illinois Adoption Registration* form and *Medical Information Exchange* form is voluntary;
 - 3. By relinquishing the infant anonymously, he or she will have to petition the court to prevent the termination of parental rights and regain custody of the child. This information is included in a brochure in the packet.
 - 4. If the parent returns within 72 hours to reclaim the infant, they should be told the name and location of the hospital to which the infant was transported.
- B. **Information to give to relinquishing parent** - Hospitals, fire stations, police stations, and emergency medical facilities must offer a "Safe Haven Information Packet" to the relinquishing parent that contains the following:
 - 1. Brochure on Safe Haven law information and optional self-mailer registration form.
 - 2. Brochure on the Illinois Adoption Registry and Medical Information Exchange (IARMIE).



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3. Brochure on post-partum health information for the mother.
 4. Brochure on the Save Abandoned Babies Foundation which includes resources on counseling and adoption services.
- C. Document on the infant's patient care report that the "Safe Haven Information Packet" was offered to the parent and whether it was received.

VI. RESOURCES

- A. The forms required above are located at the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs>