Scope

This policy applies to all surrendered infants at Santa Barbara City Fire Stations within the guidelines of Health & Safety Code Sections 1255.7, 1797.220 and 1798 and CCR Division 9 Chapter 4, 100175.

Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures whereby pre-hospital care providers accept a newborn under the California Safe Haven Law. This law, as amended, allows a parent or other person having legal custody of a minor child 72 hours old or younger to surrender the minor child to any employee on duty at a designated fire station or emergency room without fear of arrest or prosecution, provided that the surrendered infant has not been abused or neglected. According to the California Safe Haven Law, any personnel or entity that accepts a surrendered child "shall not be subject to civil, criminal, or administrative liability for accepting the child and caring for the child in the good faith belief that action is required or authorized by this section, including, but not limited to, instances where the child is older than 72 hours or the parent or individual surrendering the child did not have lawful physical custody of the child." Note, however, that this section of the Family Code "does not confer immunity from liability for personal injury or wrongful death, including, but not limited to, injury resulting from medical malpractice."

Policy

Santa Barbara City Fire personnel shall follow the procedures outlined in this document to ensure that the surrendered infant is protected and medically cared for until delivered to the closest hospital emergency department.

Procedures

A. When an infant is surrendered to the fire station, personnel shall immediately notify dispatch of the situation. Dispatch will then dispatch the closest paramedic/ambulance transport unit.

B. Fire station personnel will assess the surrendered infant and treat as needed.

C. Initiate the first responder form.

D. Open the Newborn Safe Surrender Kit.

E.   Place a confidential coded identification bracelet on the surrendered infant's ankle and wrist. Then record the identification bracelet's code number on the first responder form.

F.   Give the surrendering party the business reply mail envelope contained in the kit. This envelope contains the California Safe Haven Law medical questionnaire in English and Spanish, an information sheet, and a matching coded identification bracelet. Advise the surrendering party that provided there has been no abuse or neglect of the surrendered infant, the parent or surrendering party may reclaim the surrendered infant within 14 days of surrender by taking the coded identification bracelet to the hospital where the surrendered infant will be transported by paramedic/ambulance staff.

H.   When the transport paramedic unit arrives, fire station personnel will provide them with a copy of the written report and a verbal report of the surrendered infant's care and status.

I.   If the surrendered infant appears to be greater than 72 hours old, abused, or neglected, the infant will still be accepted and provided with medical treatment as necessary.

J.   The paramedic/ambulance transport unit will initiate base station contact and begin transport to the closest appropriate hospital emergency department.

K.   The paramedic/ambulance transport unit will initiate care and treatment of the infant as needed.

L.   The paramedic/ambulance transport unit will complete an EPCR and will record the coded identification bracelet number.

M.   Upon arrival at the receiving emergency department, the transporting paramedic will provide a verbal and written EPCR report.

N.   As the final step in this process, the receiving hospital personnel will make verbal and written notification to the Santa Barbara County Department of Children and Family Services.

O.   Procedural changes to this policy may be made as needed and are the responsibility of the Fire Chief.

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