

# SAFE RELINQUISHMENT OF INFANTS LAW

## A Guide for Firefighters

In May 2001, a state-wide law (1<sup>st</sup> Sub. H.B. 12 Provision for Legal Relinquishment of a Newborn, also known as the “Baby Drop-off Law”) went into effect in Utah. The law allows birth parents to anonymously give up custody of their newborn child without facing any legal consequences. A newborn may be turned over to hospital staff, no questions asked. The purpose of the law is to save the newborns from injury or death by providing a safe place for newborns and secrecy for parents. For a complete copy of this law, go to the Utah Code site: [http://www.le.state.ut.us/Documents/code\\_const.htm](http://www.le.state.ut.us/Documents/code_const.htm)

Ideally, newborns should be left at any 24 hour hospital in Utah. However, this is not always the case, as is evident by the December 30, 2006 drop-off of a newborn at a church in West Valley City. Even though this was not a hospital, the mother was clearly trying to utilize the spirit of the safe relinquishment law. If you are confronted with a similar situation, as long as there are no signs of abuse or neglect, **contact with and identification of the mother should not be attempted.**

IF A NEWBORN IS FOUND THAT IS BELIEVED TO BE ABANDONED UNDER THE SAFE RELINQUISHMENT OF INFANTS LAW, **FIREFIGHTERS SHOULD TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:**

1. If the infant needs emergency medical services, immediately take them to the nearest hospital and contact the **Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) at 1-800-678-9399**. Explain that the infant was voluntarily abandoned with or without abuse/neglect issues. A DCFS representative will meet you at the hospital.
2. If the infant is NOT in need of emergency medical services, call DCFS immediately and wait for them to come to you. Be prepared to provide DCFS with the following information:
  - Infant’s condition
  - Location of infant
  - Known abuse/neglect
  - Immediate needs of the infant

Once DCFS has arrived and taken custody of the infant, DO NOT attempt to contact or identify the mother unless there are abuse/neglect issues.