

Safe Haven for Newborn Babies

Don't Abandon Your Newborn, Take Your Baby to a Safe Haven

Every year, newborn babies are abandoned by their parents. Some of these newborns get sick, injured and sometimes die before they are located. If left alone, a newborn baby can die within a few hours, even a few minutes, if the weather is hot or cold.

Alabama law provides an option for parents who do not wish to keep their newborn. A parent can take a newborn baby who is unharmed and is 72 hours old or younger to a hospital that is licensed and operates an emergency department. The emergency medical services provider who has taken possession of the newborn must notify the Department of Human Resources before the close of the first working day after taking possession. When the baby is ready for discharge from the hospital, the Department of Human Resources will place the baby in a foster home and a permanent plan will be implemented. Parents who voluntarily relinquish a newborn (72 hours old or younger) to a safe haven have an affirmative defense to prosecution for nonsupport, abandonment or endangering the welfare of the child if unharmed.

For more information, call your local Department of Human Resources, Alabama District Attorneys Association, local District Attorney's Office or contact a local hospital.