WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BABY AFTER IT IS SURRENDERED?

1. The hospital or fire station staff will take care of the baby, and you will not be charged for the cost.

2. You will not be charged with a crime involving the abandonment as long as the baby was not abused or neglected. If the baby shows signs of abuse or neglect, child welfare services must conduct an investigation.

3. The county child welfare agency will find a caring foster family to take care of the baby. In most cases, the baby will be placed with a family who is ready to adopt. If an adoptive family isn’t available right away, the baby will be placed with a temporary foster family until an adoptive family is available. Most surrendered babies are adopted very quickly.

4. A court hearing must be held to terminate parental rights before the baby can be adopted. Once the court terminates your parental rights, it will give custody to the county child welfare agency. This means you will no longer be considered the parent of the newborn and won’t be able to make decisions for him or her. Since surrendering a baby is confidential, you will not receive notice of the court hearing.

For more information on what to do if you’re thinking about surrendering a baby call:

1.877.BABYSAF  
(1.877.222.9723)

or Visit:

http://www.babysafe.ca.gov
**HOW DO I SURRENDER A BABY?**

- You can surrender a baby up to three days after birth.
- Go to a hospital or fire station with the Safe Surrender logo and give the baby to any staff member.
- Staff will give you and the baby matching ID bracelets to help you reconnect with the baby if you change your mind.
- You only have 14 days from the date you gave up the baby to regain custody.

**To find the nearest safe surrender site, call 1-877-BABYSAF (1-877-222-9723)**

**What information do I have to give when I give up a baby?**

No information is required.

You will be asked to complete a health questionnaire. This is completely voluntary in order to help us keep the baby safe and healthy. All information you provide will be kept confidential and will follow the baby.

**What if I change my mind?**

You have 14 days after your surrender to reclaim the baby.

You should bring your copy of the ID bracelet back to the safe surrender site or call the county child welfare agency. If you need help reclaiming the baby, you can call 1-877-BABYSAF (1-877-222-9723) and ask to be directed to your county child welfare department.

**Can someone help me to decide?**

Yes.

You can call 1-877-BABYSAF (1-877-222-9723) to speak privately with a social worker about the best option for you and the baby.

**What is the difference between a safe surrender and an adoption?**

- **Safe Surrender**
  - With Safe Surrender, you will have total confidentiality and your name will remain private. You will not have to go to court. You only have 72 hours to surrender a baby and you can only reclaim a baby 14 days after the surrender. After the surrender is complete, it will probably not be possible for the child and you to reconnect – there will be no documentation linking you and the child.

- **Adoption**
  - You can choose adoption for the child at any age. You can choose to have a closed or an open adoption and you may be able to choose the baby’s new family. You will have 30 days to change your mind after voluntarily placing the child for adoption. An adoption leaves open the possibility that you and the child can maintain a connection or reconnect in the future.

**INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT (ICWA):**

**What if the baby’s biological father or mother is a member of an Indian tribe, or is eligible for membership in an Indian tribe?**

The baby may be covered under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

**What is ICWA?**

ICWA is a law that helps keep Native American or Alaska Native children with Native American or Alaska Native families. It gives greater protections and rights to Indian children and their families, and also creates rights for the tribes to be aware of and participate in child custody proceedings regarding Indian children.

Any information you can provide that allows the child welfare agency and the court to identify the baby’s tribe will help ensure that the baby gets the benefits and protections of ICWA.

**Does the child welfare agency need to know?**

If you or the baby’s other parent has Native American heritage, it is important that the child welfare agency have that information in order to make sure these rights are protected.

**Who will contact my tribe?**

If you are surrendering a baby and want her or him to stay in the Native community, please provide additional information so that the child welfare services agency can contact the child’s tribe.

**To what extent can a parent maintain a connection with the child?**

If the child is taken into care by the child welfare agency, any information you can provide that allows the child welfare agency and the court to identify the baby’s tribe will help ensure that the baby gets the benefits and protections of ICWA.

**What if the baby’s biological father or mother is a member of an Indian tribe, or is eligible for membership in an Indian tribe?**

The baby may be covered under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).