

Many babies are abandoned by mothers who feel they are not ready to have children and think they have no option but to leave their newborn child. This Maryland law allows them to hand over an unharmed infant anonymously without fear of arrest or prosecution.

Maryland Safe Haven Program

- **Unharmed Newborn**
- **Give to a Responsible Adult**
- **Within 10 Days of Birth**
- **No Arrest or Prosecution**

COMAR 07.02.27



Maryland Department of Human Services
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

<http://dhs.maryland.gov/safe-haven/>



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Rafael López, DHS Secretary

DHR/PUB/SSA 2005-11/23 (Previous edition obsolete)



*Have you
been hiding your
pregnancy?*

*Are you
pregnant and
scared?*





What is the purpose of the Safe Haven Program?

The Safe Haven Program is designed to protect your newborn from danger or death and to protect you from legal action due to abandoning your baby. The program allows you to hand over your unharmed infant, within ten days of birth, without fear of being arrested or prosecuted.

What do you mean by unharmed?

In this case, unharmed means that the infant has not been abused or neglected since the time of birth.

Where can I take my baby?

You can take your baby to any Maryland hospital, clinic, or local police station.

When I get to the hospital or police station, what should I say?

All you have to do is walk in and say, "This is a Safe Haven baby," and walk away. You may be asked questions about the baby's health and family health history, but you do not have to answer any questions if you don't want to. The medical history of your baby will help the staff do a better job of providing the medical care your baby needs.

I'm too scared. Can somebody take the baby for me?

Yes they can. However it must be a responsible adult over 18 years of age. They just need to say, "This is a Safe Haven baby." They do not have to answer any questions, but providing the baby's medical history would be helpful.

After I turn over the baby, what will happen to him or her?

After you leave your baby at a Safe Haven location, he or she will receive any necessary medical attention before being discharged to the local Department of Social Services and placed for adoption.

What if I change my mind?

The goal is to have your baby placed with a permanent, stable family. However, if you should change your mind, you will need to call your local Department of Social Services.

Where can I get medical care? Will I be asked questions?

If you are experiencing pain, heavy bleeding, or have a fever, you should go immediately to the nearest emergency room or you can contact your medical doctor for assistance. Your medical provider may ask questions about your medical condition. A social worker or nurse can assist you with answering any questions if you are not comfortable. Remember, turning your unharmed baby over to a Safe Haven location is not against the law. You will not be arrested and will not be in trouble with the law.

To learn more about this alternative to abandonment, please contact your local department of social services. All calls can be anonymous. The number to your local department of social services can be found on the Maryland Department of Human Services' web page. When you call, ask to speak to someone about Maryland's Safe Haven program.

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