

Safe Haven Law
Guidelines for Emergency Care Facilities

Updated September 2018

Safe Haven Law Summary

The Safe Haven Law, enacted April 2000, is intended to encourage a parent who is otherwise tempted to abandon or discard a child, to instead, ensure that the infant will be provided medical care and shelter and ultimately be adopted by others. The law gives parents a mechanism to safely and anonymously relinquish the care of their newborn to the state without fear of prosecution. The law provides relinquishing parent an affirmative defense against criminal abandonment if the circumstances meet the criteria for “safe haven relinquishments” as spelled out in Chapter 13, Articles 1149-1160 of the Louisiana Children’s Code. By placing the infant in the hands of an employee at a Safe Haven Facility, the parent is in essence voluntarily relinquishing his or her parental rights to the child for the ultimate purpose of adoption.

The following criteria must be met in order to qualify as a Safe Haven Relinquishment:

1. The infant must be less than 60 days old;
2. The infant has not been a victim of abuse or neglect; and
3. The infant must be relinquished to an employee at a designated Safe Haven facility. The infant must be relinquished to an employee at a designated Safe Haven facility. If the parent is unable to travel to such a facility, he/she may call “911” and a law enforcement officer, fireman and/or Emergency Medical Service (EMS) provider shall be dispatched, to confirm the Safe Haven Relinquishment.

Safe Haven Law

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What does the law mean by “Safe Haven”?

A. “Safe Haven” refers to a designated emergency care facility where a parent may anonymously leave his/her infant child, with the intent of placing the child for adoption, without fear of prosecution.

Q. What qualifies as a “designated emergency care facility”?

A. “Designated emergency care facilities” includes any of the following:

- Any hospital licensed in the state of Louisiana;
- The following medical clinics during normal and customary hours of operation: local or parish public health units, licensed rural health clinics, licensed ambulatory surgical centers, and Federally Qualified Health Centers;
- Any manned fire station;
- Any manned law enforcement station; and
- Any Child Advocacy Center accredited by the National Children’s Alliance, during normal and customary hours of operation.

Q. If someone leaves an infant with me, do I need to get a name or other identifying information?

A. A person leaving an infant in compliance with this law is not required to give his/her name. The parent has the option of providing medical or genetic history information to assist the child’s care and parenting.

Q. If a person is considering relinquishing an infant but wants information on other options, what should I do?

A. If a person with an infant expresses interests in avenues other than relinquishment, such as placing the child for adoption, put the person in contact with the local parish DCFS Child Welfare office.

Q. What happens to the baby after he or she is surrendered?

A. If a child is relinquished to a designated emergency care facility other than a hospital, the child will be immediately brought to a hospital for medical assessment and treatment. After a child is received, a representative of the designated emergency care facility shall immediately notify the Department of Children and Family Services of the relinquishment. Upon notification, DCFS will initiate legal proceedings to obtain custody of the child and initiate legal proceedings to free the child for adoption.

Q. What happens to the parent who relinquishes the child?

A. An employee of the facility or the dispatched emergency responder will offer the parent a card with toll-free numbers, 1-855- 4LA-KIDS (1-855-452-5437) and 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373), to call if the parent wants to give medical information about the baby or learn about their parental rights.

Q. What happens if the parent who relinquishes the child changes his/her mind?

A. The relinquishing parent has 30 days to seek to reclaim parental rights of the infant. They are to contact their parish DCFS Child Welfare office for additional information.

Q. Where can people call for additional information regarding the Safe Haven Law?

A. They can call toll-free 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373) or 1-855- 4LA-KIDS (1-855-452-5437).

The entire Safe Haven Law is outlined in LA Children's Code Chapter 13, Articles 1149-1160.

Safe Haven Law

Responsibilities for Designated Emergency Care Facilities

- Designated staff must be available during regular hours with knowledge about the Safe Haven responsibilities, requirements and protocol for the facility. The infant must be relinquished to an employee at a designated Safe Haven facility. If the parent is unable to travel to such a facility, he/she may call “911” and a law enforcement officer, fireman and/or Emergency Medical Service (EMS) provider shall be dispatched, to confirm the Safe Haven Relinquishment.
- All staff persons are to be familiar with the Safe Haven contact person and emergency procedures.
- Relinquishing parents are to be provided with the Safe Haven card which is to include the name, address, and phone number of the emergency care facility.
- Medical/genetic forms are to be available for the parent if he/she wants to provide medical/genetic information about the child.
- For facilities other than hospitals, procedures for immediate transfer of infant to hospital are to be developed and implemented.
- Upon receipt of relinquished child, the Department of Children and Family Services must be notified by the emergency care facility.
- Assurance that confidentiality of both parent and child will be maintained by all employees of the designated emergency care facility.

“Absent evidence of willful or intentional misconduct or gross negligence in carrying out these responsibilities, the representative and other staff of the designated emergency facility shall be immune from civil and criminal liability in any legal action arising from the examination, testing, care and treatment of the infant.” Art. 1152 G.

24 Hour, Statewide Child Protection Hotline
1-855-4LA-KIDS (1-855-452-5437) or
1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373)

DCFS Child Welfare – Parish Offices

<p>Acadia 600 North Avenue G Crowley, LA 70527 Phone: (337) 788-7503</p>	<p>Allen 213-A North First Street Oberlin, LA 70655 Phone: (337) 639-2963</p>
<p>Ascension 1078 E. Worthy Street, 1st Floor Gonzales, LA 70737 Phone: (225) 644-4603</p>	<p>Assumption 1416 Tiger Drive Thibodaux, LA 70302 Phone: (985) 447-0945</p>
<p>Avoyelles 607 Tunica Drive West Marksville, LA 71351 Phone: (318) 253-7734</p>	<p>Beauregard 1891 Highway 190 West DeRidder, LA 70634 Phone: (337) 463-2069</p>
<p>Bienville 223 Pine Street Minden, LA 71055 Phone: (318) 371-3004</p>	<p>Bossier 1525 Fairfield Ave., Room 424 Shreveport, LA 71101 Phone: (318) 676-7323</p>
<p>Caddo 1525 Fairfield Avenue, Room 424 Shreveport, LA 71101 Phone: (318) 676-7323</p>	<p>Calcasieu 1919 Kirkman St. Lake Charles, LA 70601 Phone: (337) 491-2470</p>
<p>Caldwell 1401 Stubbs Ave. Monroe, LA 71201 Phone: (318) 362-5417</p>	<p>Cameron 1919 Kirkman St. Lake Charles, LA 70601 Phone: (337) 491-2470</p>
<p>Catahoula 124 Airport Road Jonesville, LA 71343 Phone: (318) 339-6030</p>	<p>Claiborne 223 Pine Street Minden, LA 71055 Phone: (318) 371-3004</p>
<p>Concordia 1648 Carter Street Vidalia, LA 71373 Phone: (318) 336-8611</p>	<p>DeSoto 1525 Fairfield Ave., Room 424 Shreveport, LA 71101 Phone: (318) 676-7100</p>

<p>East Baton Rouge 160 South Ardenwood Baton Rouge, LA 70806 Phone: (225) 925-6500</p>	<p>East Carroll 1707 Felicia Drive Tallulah, LA 71282 Phone: (318) 574-5201</p>
<p>East Feliciana 12476 Feliciana Drive Clinton, LA 70722 Phone: (225) 683-3734</p>	<p>Evangeline 116 SW Railroad St., Ste. A Ville Platte, LA 70586 Phone: (337) 363-6011</p>
<p>Franklin 2406 West Street Winnsboro, LA 71295 Phone: (318) 435-2188</p>	<p>Iberia 705 Bayard St. New Iberia, LA 70560 Phone: (337) 373-0029</p>
<p>Iberville 23075 Highway 1 Plaquemine, LA 70764 Phone: (225) 687-4373</p>	<p>Jackson 223 Pine Street Minden, LA 71055 Phone: (318) 371-3004</p>
<p>Jefferson - West 2150 Westbank Expressway, Suite 601 Harvey, LA 70058 Phone: (504) 361-6161</p>	<p>Jefferson Davis 107 North Cutting Avenue Jennings, LA 70546 Phone: (337) 824-9649</p>
<p>Lafayette 825 Kaliste Saloom Road. Ste. 260 Lafayette, LA 70508 Phone: (337) 262-5901</p>	<p>Lafourche 1416 Tiger Drive Thibodaux, LA 70301 Phone: (985) 447-0945</p>
<p>Lincoln 811 North Service Road East Ruston, LA 71270 Phone: (318) 251-4101</p>	<p>Livingston 28446 Charlie Watts Road Livingston, LA 70754 Phone: (225) 686-7257</p>
<p>Madison 1707 Felicia Drive Tallulah, LA 71282 Phone: (318) 574-5201</p>	<p>Morehouse 1045 East Madison Bastrop, LA 71220 Phone: (318) 283-0820</p>

<p>Natchitoches 106 Charlene St. Natchitoches, LA 71457 Phone: (318) 357-3128</p>	<p>Orleans 1450 Poydras St., 16th Floor New Orleans, LA 70112 Phone: (504) 680-9100</p>
<p>Ouachita 24 Accent Drive Monroe, LA 71201 Phone: (318) 362-5417</p>	<p>Plaquemines 2150 Westbank Expressway, Ste. 601 Harvey, LA 70058 Phone: (504) 361-6161</p>
<p>Pointe Coupee 1919 Hospital Road New Roads, LA 70760 Phone: (225) 638-4846</p>	<p>Rapides 900 Murray St., 2nd Floor Alexandria, LA 71301 Phone: (318) 487-5054</p>
<p>Red River 106 Charlene St. Natchitoches, LA 71457 Phone: (318) 357-3112</p>	<p>Richland 24 Accent Drive, Ste. 106 Monroe, LA 71202 Phone: (318) 362-5417</p>
<p>Sabine 195 Marthaville Road Many, LA 71449 Phone: (318) 256-4104</p>	<p>St. Bernard 3510 General Meyer Ave. Algiers, LA 70114 Phone: (504) 361-6800</p>
<p>St. Charles 429 West Airline Highway, Suite M LaPlace, LA 70068 Phone: (504) 652-2938</p>	<p>St. Helena 606 South First Street Amite, LA 70422 Phone: (985) 748-2001</p>
<p>St. James 429 West Airline Highway, Suite M LaPlace, LA 70068 Phone: (504) 652-2938</p>	<p>St. John 429 West Airline Highway, Suite M LaPlace, LA 70068 Phone: (504) 652-2938</p>
<p>St. Landry 6069 I-49 S. Service Road, Suite C Opelousas, LA 70570 Phone: (337) 942-0050</p>	<p>St. Martin 1109 South Main St., Second Floor St. Martinville, LA 70582 Phone: (337) 394-6081</p>
<p>St. Mary 604 2nd Street Franklin, LA 70538 Phone: (337) 828-5278</p>	<p>St. Tammany 300 Covington Center - Suite 1 Covington, LA 70433 Phone: (985) 893-6225</p>

<p>Tangipahoa 606 South First Street Amite, LA 70422 Phone: (985) 748-2001</p>	<p>Tensas 2406 West Street Tallulah, LA 71295 Phone: (318) 435-2188</p>
<p>Terrebonne 1012 W. Tunnel Blvd. Houma, LA 70360 Phone: (985) 857-3630</p>	<p>Union 206 E. Reynolds Dr., Suite J Ruston, LA 71270 Phone: (318) 251-4106</p>
<p>Vermilion 2729 Veterans Memorial Drive Abbeville, LA 70510 Phone: (337) 898-1430</p>	<p>Vernon 300 Vernon Street New Llano, LA 71461 Phone: (337) 238-7030</p>
<p>Washington 1017 Ontario Ave. Bogalusa, LA 70427 Phone: (985) 732-6800</p>	<p>Webster 223 Pine Street Minden, LA 71055 Phone: (318) 371-3004</p>
<p>West Baton Rouge 23075 Highway 1 Plaquemine, LA 70764 Phone: (225) 687-4373</p>	<p>West Feliciana 12476 Feliciana Drive Clinton, LA 70722 Phone: (225) 683-3734</p>
<p>Winn 1408 E. Lafayette Street Winnfield, LA 71483 Phone: (318) 648-6805</p>	