

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>64</h1>
Chapter:	Intake and Assessment	
Subject:	Baby Safe Havens	Page 1 of 2
Approved:	Cynthia K. Walcott, Deputy Commissioner	Final 2/27/07
Supersedes:		

Purpose

In 2006 the House and Senate established Baby Safe Havens by passing S.27. The new statute allows a parent, or person acting on his or her behalf, to anonymously hand infant 30 days to a person at a designated haven, as an alternative to abandonment. This policy clarifies expectations of Family Services staff if an infant is left at a Safe Haven.

Introduction

Parents (or a person acting on their behalf) can bring a baby, up to 30 days old, to any designated Safe Haven in Vermont without fear of being arrested or charged – as long as the baby has not been abused or neglected. For more information, see:

www.babysafehaven.vermont.com

Safe Havens have been directed to notify their local Family Services office when a baby has been surrendered.

Policy

When contacted about an infant left at a Safe Haven, designated Family Services staff will:

- ensure that law enforcement has been contacted to take the child into custody;
- request that law enforcement take steps to ensure that the infant has not been taken to the safe haven as part of any criminal act (e. g. kidnapping).
- enter the information as an intake into the SDM system as a Chapter 55 assessment;
- open a Chapter 55 assessment and respond immediately, working in collaboration with law enforcement using standard procedures for requesting an emergency detention order and a CHINS(A) petition.
- Notify the Operations Manager and Assistant Attorney General of the circumstances.

The following additional steps must be taken:

- Contact the Adoption Registry to determine a name for the child that will be registered with the Adoption Registry.

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- Contact the Family Services Child Benefits Unit to secure a social security number as soon as possible.
- Contact the Putative Fathers' Registry in the Chittenden District Court to determine if any man has come forward to identify himself as the child's father.
- Work with the Assistant Attorney General on appropriate strategies to identify and notify the child's other parent.
- Notify the Vermont Department of Health's Community Public Health Program (1-800-649-4357) that a baby is in our custody as a result of the Baby Safe Havens law. Provide them with the name and contact information of the assigned social worker.