"Give Life a Chance"

**LAW**

Legislation was amended to provide a safe and anonymous alternative to abandonment.

**The Challenge**

Recent tragedies involving abandoned infants over the last few years in Minnesota have created cause for concern.

**The Solution**

What EMS Providers Need to Know

**What does the law state?**

A newborn baby: 1 hour to 7 days old

May be dropped off at a “Safe Place”

**Do’s**

1) Accept the baby, no questions asked.
2) Transport newborn to a hospital.

**Dont’s**

1) Ask identity of baby, mother or designated person.
2) Call the police.

Must be handed over unharmed to an employee of the “safe place”

**Hospital**

**Urgent care**

**Ambulance Service**

(in response to a 911 call)

For more information, visit

[www.mnems.org](http://www.mnems.org)

Questions?
Contact O.J. Doyle at 952-200-9513 or OJ4EMS@aol.com or Debbie Gillquist at 651-775-7400 or debgillquist@mnems.org

**What EMS Providers Need to Know**

EMS providers play a key role in carrying out this revised legislation.

**Who Worked Together to Expand the Current Law?**

Minnesota Legislature

Minnesota Department of Human Services

Minnesota Ambulance Association

**What is the name of the law?**

“Give Life a Chance”

**When did the law take effect?**

August 1, 2012

**What was the law called previously?**

The “Safe Place for Newborns” law

**“This amendment strengthens our law, ensuring children are safe, and giving frightened, sometimes distraught mothers an option if they are unable to care for their newborns.”**

Lucinda Jesson
Commissioner
Minn. Dept. of Human Services

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[www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us)
[www.mnems.org](http://www.mnems.org)
The “Give Life a Chance” law provides safe and anonymous alternative places for mothers (or a person acting with her permission) in Minnesota to leave their newborn child without questions if they are unable to care for them.

Formerly known as the “Safe Place for Newborns” law, it was amended in 2012 and took effect on Aug. 1, 2012. This Minnesota child welfare initiative is in response to tragedies involving abandoned infants over the last several years. It provides a safe and anonymous alternative to abandonment. The Minnesota Legislature, the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Ambulance Association worked together to expand the current law.

The “Give Life a Chance” law states that a newborn:
- Is defined as a child who is newborn to 7 days old.
- May be dropped off at a “safe place”, which includes a:
  - Hospital
  - Urgent care facility during its hours of operation
  - Ambulance service licensed under chapter 144E dispatched in response to a 911 call from a mother or a person with the mother’s permission to relinquish a newborn infant.
- Must be handed over unharmed to an employee of the “safe place”.

Emergency medical service (EMS) providers play a key role in carrying out this revised legislation. Safe place personnel, including ambulance personnel, are immune from criminal or civil liability if they are acting in good faith.

The amended law requires that:
- An ambulance crew must accept the baby “no questions asked”.
- The ambulance crew may not ask the identity of the baby, mother, or person with the mother’s permission and police are not to be called.
- An ambulance receiving a newborn must transport the newborn to the hospital.
- If the newborn is left at an urgent care center, employees are to call 911 and advise the dispatchers that the call is being made from a safe place for newborns and ask the dispatcher to send an ambulance or take another appropriate action to transport the child to a hospital.

Situations not covered by the law:
- The “Give Life a Chance” law does not apply if a mother admits herself into the hospital for the birth and provides identifying information (even if she wants to place her child under the law).
- Once a delivery occurs at a hospital, it creates a vital record and anonymity is no longer possible.