

Safe Surrender of Newborns



What NC Law Says about Safe Surrender

What does the NC Safe Surrender Law say? NC law provides parents in crisis a way to surrender their newborn *safely, legally, and anonymously*. For a Safe Surrender to be considered legal:

- The infant must be surrendered by a parent to one of the designated safe persons:
 1. A health care provider, as defined under G.S. 90 -21.11, who is on duty or at a hospital or at a local or district health department or at a nonprofit community health center OR
 2. A first responder who is on duty, including a law enforcement officer, a certified emergency medical services worker, or a firefighter OR
 3. A social services worker who is on duty or at a local department of social services.

AND

- The infant must be determined by a medical professional to be less than 30 days old and free from abuse or neglect.

Why is there a safe surrender law? NC law gives parents in crisis a way to safely, legally, and anonymously surrender a newborn under 30 days old to a designated safe person on duty. Parents are allowed to hand their infant directly to one of these individuals without sharing any identifying information. Public awareness is crucial to help parents know this option exists. Help spread the word by distributing this fact sheet.

Can a family member safely surrender an infant? No— NC law specifies that a parent must surrender the infant.

What happens to the infant? The designated safe person on duty who receives the infant is required to keep it safe and warm and call the [local Department of Social Services \(DSS\)](#). DSS is required to attempt to locate the baby's non-surrendering parent to allow them to take the infant or request permission for adoption.

What happens if an infant is not handed directly to a designated safe person on duty? If a parent does not hand their infant directly to a designated person on duty, the infant will not be classified as safely surrendered. This may be deemed abandonment under NC law, which could lead to legal consequences for the parent.

What should the surrendering parent expect? The designated safe person on duty may ask the surrendering parent about their identity and relevant medical information to help facilitate an adoption. Designated safe persons should also advise that the surrendering parent is not required to give any identifying information and provide the surrendering parent with an [informational brochure](#). Alternatively, a surrendering parent may complete the [Safe Surrender Health and Information Form](#) in person or by mail to the local [DSS](#).

What about the non-surrendering parent? Any person who believes they are the parent of an infant who was safely surrendered should contact their local [DSS](#) immediately.

Is Safe Surrender the same as Safe Haven? Many states have what are called Safe Haven laws. These designate places where an infant may be surrendered. NC's law is unique in that it designates specific people on duty, not places.

For more information, visit the [NC DHHS Safe Surrender website](#).