



The Safe Haven Act is an Iowa law that allows parents to give up physical custody of their infant without being arrested or charged with abandonment.

Safe Haven locations include:



24-hour Hospitals



24-hour Fire Stations



Emergency medical care providers



If you don't see this Safe Haven sign, **DO NOT** leave an infant.



You may also contact an approved adoption service provider to coordinate the relinquishment of an infant.

## WHAT TO KNOW



**You cannot be arrested or charged** with abandonment.



The infant can be **up to 90 days old** at the time of surrender.



All information provided at the time of surrender is kept **confidential**.



**You do not need to attend** the court proceeding regarding the custody of the infant.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY INFANT?

**1** You may choose either the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or an approved adoption service provider to take custody of the infant.

**2** Within 30 days of surrender, a court proceeding will be held to terminate parental rights. You are not required to attend, but can choose to.

**3** The infant will be placed in a home approved for adoption.

## COURT HEARING TO TERMINATE PARENTAL RIGHTS

The date and time of the court hearing to terminate parental rights will be published in the newspaper where the infant was relinquished. Parents may receive personal service of the hearing if their identity is known.

- ▶ Parents do not need to attend court but can choose to.
- ▶ If either parent wishes to receive notice of the court hearing, their name and address may be given to:
  - ▶ The Safe Haven location where the infant was relinquished.
  - ▶ The Clerk of Court in the county where the infant was relinquished.
  - ▶ The Putative Father Registry.

## WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND?

If a parent wants to retain custody of their infant, either parent may attend the court proceeding in person to ask for custody.

At the hearing, be prepared to show evidence

- ▶ That you are the parent of the child
- ▶ **And** that granting custody to you, the biological parent, would be in the child's best interest.

The judge may order services to ensure parents have the supports they need to safely care for their infant.

## STATE LAW



Either parent of a newborn infant whose custody was released under the Safe Haven Act may intervene in court proceedings held regarding the infant and request that the Juvenile Court grant custody of the infant to the parent.

The requester must show by clear and convincing evidence that they are the parent of the infant. If the court determines that the person is the parent and that granting custody of the infant is in the infant's best interest, the court will issue an order granting custody to the parent. The court may order services for the infant and parent as are in the best interest of the infant.



### Safe Haven

To learn more information, scan the QR code or visit online at [hhs.iowa.gov/safe-haven](https://hhs.iowa.gov/safe-haven)