



The Safe Haven Act in Iowa mandates that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is responsible for taking care of and having legal custody of an infant when relinquished at a hospital, healthcare facility, fire station or through a newborn safety device.

The Safe Haven Act requires HHS to comply with the following steps.

1 The hospital, health care facility or first responder informs HHS of taking custody of an infant by dialing the Child Abuse Hotline at **1-800-362-2178**.

2 **Hotline personnel will immediately notify appropriate HHS field staff** and a child protective worker will be assigned to the infant's case.

IF The call is received during regular office hours.	THEN The child protective worker should notify the adoption unit in the county where the Safe Haven is located and direct them to locate an appropriate pre-adoptive foster home for the infant.
IF The call is received after hours.	THEN The local protocol for placement of children after hours should be followed.

3 HHS must:

- ▶ Immediately notify the Juvenile Court and the County Attorney of the action taken and the circumstances surrounding the action.
- ▶ Request an Ex Parte Order from the Juvenile Court ordering HHS to take custody of the infant in accordance with the requirements of Iowa Code section 232.78.

4 **Upon receiving the order, HHS shall take physical custody of the infant.**

5 IF The infant has not yet been examined by a medical professional.	THEN The infant should receive a medical exam prior to placement in a foster care setting.
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

6 **Within 24 hours** of taking custody of the infant, HHS must notify the Juvenile Court and County Attorney in the county where the infant was relinquished in writing of:

- ▶ The action taken by HHS.
- ▶ The circumstances surrounding the action.

Upon written notification the County Attorney will:

- 1** File a Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) petition and a petition for Termination of Parental Rights with respect to the infant in accordance with Iowa Code section 232.87 and 232.111(2)(a).
- 2** A hearing on the CINA petition filed pursuant to this subsection shall be held at the earliest practicable time.
- 3** A hearing on the Termination of Parental Rights petition shall be held **no later than thirty days** after the day the physical custody of the infant was relinquished, unless the Juvenile Court continues the hearing beyond the thirty days for good cause.
- 4** Notice of a petition shall be provided to:
 - ▶ Any known parent.
 - ▶ Person authorized to relinquish custody of the infant.
 - ▶ The employee of the Safe Haven who took custody of the child.
 - ▶ Any putative father registered with the state registry.
 - ▶ Others in accordance with the provisions of Iowa Code Chapter 233.
- 5** If there is any reason to believe the infant may be Native American, the appropriate officials should also be notified pursuant to the Federal Indian Child Welfare Act, 25 U.S.C. §§ 1905-1963.
- 6** Prior to holding a Termination of Parental Rights hearing, notice shall be provided as described in Iowa Code section 600A.6.
- 7** Reasonable efforts that are made regarding the infant shall be limited to the efforts made in a timely manner to finalize a permanency plan.