**SAFE HAVEN FOR NEWBORN BABIES**

**OVERVIEW**

A. A parent may voluntarily deliver a child, 72 hours or younger, to an EMS worker, peace officer or hospital without expressing an intent to return for the child. Upon doing this, the parent is protected from criminal prosecution and may remain anonymous if the child has not been harmed or neglected in any way. If the child has been harmed or neglected, the parent can be arrested and prosecuted. (ORC 2151.3516)

B. The parent may leave the premises at any time after turning over custody of the child, when abuse and/or neglect are not suspected, and is not required to complete any paperwork or accept any of the material that is available to them.

C. The person or government entity that takes possession of a child and provides temporary emergency care is immune from any civil or criminal liability unless the person or entity has acted in bad faith or with malicious purpose.

D. The person receiving the child is authorized to perform any act necessary to protect the physical health and safety of the child.

**PROCEDURE**

A. The parent presents a newborn baby, who is reasonably believed to be 72 hours old or younger, to the EMT who shall accept the baby.

B. Upon taking possession of the child, the EMT shall do the following:

1. Perform any act necessary to protect the child’s health or safety.
2. Examine the baby for any obvious signs of injury or abuse. If the child has been neglected or harmed, immediately notify the appropriate law enforcement agency with jurisdiction. Attempt to obtain the parent’s identity without placing yourself in danger.
3. If possible, make available to the parent who delivered the child, the forms* necessary to gather medical information concerning the child and the child’s parents. Offer to assist the individual in completing the forms as needed. The person may take the forms with them and return completed forms in the enclosed envelope.
4. If possible, give the person who delivered the child to you, materials* that describe services available to assist parents and newborns.
5. Transport the child to closest most appropriate facility. An EMT who takes possession of child shall perform any medical service/treatment the EMT is authorized to perform that is necessary to protect the physical health or safety of the child.
6. Notify the County’s Children Protective Services
7. Notify the local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction about EMS taking custody of a Safe Haven Baby.

**IF EMERGENCY CARE IS NECESSARY, DO NOT DELAY CARE OR TRANSPORT TO GATHER INFORMATION OR WAIT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT.**

*Forms and materials are available from the local Children’s Protective Services. Also found in the Safe Haven kits at each station in Portage County.