

City of El Cajon News Release



Fire Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Newborn Surrendered To El Cajon Fire Station

In December of 2007, the El Cajon Fire Department joined fire agencies from throughout San Diego County to become a designated site for the **Safely Surrendered Baby** program. The Safely Surrendered Baby law established hospitals as safe haven sites and allowed the Counties to designate other facilities, such as fire stations as safe haven locations.

Recently a young mother left her baby, just hours old, with El Cajon firefighters at Station 6 on Lexington Avenue. Firefighters provided immediate emergency medical care necessary, and transported the infant to a receiving hospital. Within a few days, the healthy baby girl was adopted.

El Cajon Fire Chief Mike Scott says, “The El Cajon Fire Department is honored to make our fire stations available for this valuable program. As a result of this recent event a life was saved, and a couple’s dream to adopt a child came true.”

In 2001, SB1368 became law and established the Safely Surrendered Baby program. The purpose of the law is to encourage parents to bring unwanted infants, up to three days old, to reception centers such as hospitals or fire stations, rather than abandon them in dumpsters or bushes. The law is to protect babies from being hurt or killed because they were abandoned. No names are required and the parent(s) will not be subject to prosecution for child abandonment. The baby will receive needed medical treatment and be placed in an adoptive home. There is a mechanism for parents to reclaim the infant within 14 days if deemed appropriate by Child Welfare Services.

Fire stations are located in the communities where people work and live, and have always been thought of as places where people can go to get help. A local fire station can be less intimidating than a hospital. The City of El Cajon has four stations; Station #6 at 100 E. Lexington Avenue, Station #7 at 695 Tyrone Street, Station #8 at 1470 East Madison Avenue and Station #9 at 1301 North Marshall Street.

For more information about the Safely Surrender Baby program please contact the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency at (858) 694-5700.

For information about this recent incident in El Cajon, please contact El Cajon Fire Division Chief Rick Sitta at (619) 441-1608.