SAFE HAVEN GUIDELINES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRE, & HOSPITAL PERSONNEL

When a baby is brought to a police station, fire department, sheriff’s office, State Police headquarters, or hospital under Safe Haven, you should:

• **Take the baby**
  The parent can only be charged with a crime if the baby is older than 30 days or if the baby has been abused or neglected.

• **Offer support**
  If the birth mother surrenders the baby, she is free to walk away, but you should always offer to connect her to medical care at a local hospital. For referral to counseling services through a local community mental health center, call 1-501-686-9164 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Services may also be available through a local health unit of the Arkansas Department of Health. For a referral, call 1-800-462-0599 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Explain that by accepting services, she will not give up her legal protections or anonymity guaranteed under the Safe Haven law.

• **Don’t ask, but if someone tells...**
  The law requires that you take the baby no questions asked. Whenever possible, hand a Safe Haven medical questionnaire to the person surrendering the baby and stress that mailing the questionnaire will not compromise the parents’ legal protections or anonymity.

• **Document any information that is offered voluntarily. Useful information would include:**
  – Any physical or developmental problems the baby may have
  – Parent information, such as race, age and medical history
  – Baby’s birthplace and first name
  – Any prenatal care provided to the mother

• **Get the baby to the hospital**
  The baby should be taken immediately to a hospital emergency room, either via patrol car, ambulance or first aid squad. All information shared by the parent should be reported to the emergency room staff.

• **Ensure DCFS is notified**
  The receiving hospital is required to call the Department of Human Services Division of Child and Family Services at 1-888-482-5964. However, police staff also may call when a baby is surrendered to them under the Safe Haven law.