

Abandoned Infants

319.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance to Fresno County Fire Protection District personnel who encounter abandoned infants or children. This policy does not apply to infants who are surrendered within 72 hours of birth under the Safely Surrendered Baby Law (Health and Safety Code § 1255.7), as provided in the Safely Surrendered Baby Policy.

319.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Abandoned child - Any child, who is not in the care of a parent or guardian, an adult family member, a responsible sibling, a responsible caregiver, a law enforcement officer, a social services representative or another person who is providing a safe environment for the child, except those surrendered within the guidelines of the Safely Surrendered Baby Policy (Health and Safety Code § 1255.7).

319.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Fresno County Fire Protection District to make the safety, health and well-being of an abandoned child a primary consideration. Notification to the appropriate law enforcement agency regarding the child should be the secondary consideration.

319.3 MEDICAL PROCEDURE

Abandoned children who have apparent medical needs or are unable to provide information regarding their health history or acute medical conditions, nutrition and allergy history or other significant health information should be treated as medical patients, receive the appropriate pre-hospital medical evaluation and be delivered to an appropriate medical facility for further evaluation.

319.4 MANDATED REPORTER REQUIREMENTS

Non-volunteer firefighters, paramedics, EMT 1 and II and other District members certified under Health and Safety Code Division 2.5 § 1797 et seq. are designated as mandated reporters (Penal Code § 11165.7). Mandated reporters shall notify a police or sheriff's department or a child welfare agency as soon as practicable and shall send a written report concerning the abandoned child to that same agency within 36 hours (Penal Code § 11166(a)).

If a mandated reporter of this District relinquishes control of an abandoned child to a law enforcement officer and, by mutual agreement, the officer assumes responsibility for complying with the mandated reporter requirements, the District mandated reporter may forego submitting a written report (Penal Code § 11166(h)).

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319.5 RELINQUISHING CONTROL

District members may relinquish control of an abandoned child at any time to a law enforcement officer or to a representative of a child welfare agency having jurisdiction over abandoned children. Members may also relinquish control of an abandoned child to a physician, nurse or social services representative at a receiving medical facility or to a representative from a licensed children's shelter or other facility approved by the child welfare agency having jurisdiction over abandoned children.

Members should not release an abandoned child to a parent, family member, guardian or other person without first notifying a law enforcement officer and a representative of a child welfare agency having jurisdiction over abandoned, abused or neglected children.