



WHITESTOWN MUNICIPAL COMPLEX

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WHITESTOWN DESIGNATES NEWBORN SAFE HAVEN LOCATIONS

Ordinance protects unwanted newborns

Whitestown now has several places where parents can safely take unwanted infants without fear of prosecution. Town council members passed a resolution on February 10th, 2015 which designates all Whitestown Fire Stations, the Whitestown Metropolitan Police Station and the new Whitestown Municipal Complex, where the police department is located, as 'Newborn Safe Havens'. All are regularly staffed with emergency medical providers.

The Indiana Safe Haven Infant Protection Act:

- Allows a distressed parent to give up an unwanted infant safely, legally and confidentially
- Preserves the parent from arrest or prosecution for abandonment
- Requires no names or records
- Permits babies less than 45 days old to be given up at any hospital emergency room, fire station or police station in Indiana
- Makes medical treatment and social services available to the birth mother
- Puts the child into the custody of the Indiana Division of Family & Social Services Administration, which places the infant in a foster or pre-adoptive home

Sen. Jim Merritt authored the state legislation, Senate Enrolled Act 330, which was enacted in 2000 after an abandoned newborn was found frozen to death on a snow bank just outside an emergency room entrance of a Northside Indianapolis hospital. The law was created to prevent mothers from disposing of their newborn infants in an unsafe and tragic way.

All 50 states now have Safe Haven laws, which have saved the lives of at least 1,000 infants nationwide. Since Indiana adopted the law in 2000, the National Safe Haven Alliance has recorded six lives saved in our state. It has also recorded 20 illegal abandonments, of which at least 7 were fatal. These statistics prove the continued need to make residents aware of Safe Haven locations. "Reporting methods vary so the exact number of lives saved is not available, Merritt said, "but one child saved is worth the effort on the part of state and local officials."

Safe Haven Hotline: 1-877-796-HOPE (4673)

Safe Haven Website: <http://www.safehaven.tv>

Fast Facts:

- Whitestown is the fastest growing community in Indiana
- A population of about 3,000 in 2010 has swelled to about 5,500 residents, with the projected population expected to be about 12,000 residents in 2020

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