

Forsyth County EMS

Patient Care Policy: Infant Abandonment

Background: The North Carolina Infant Homicide Prevention Act provides a mechanism for unwanted infants to be taken under temporary custody by a law enforcement officer, social services worker, healthcare provider, or EMS personnel if an infant is presented by the parent within 7 days of birth. Forsyth County Emergency Medical Services (FCEMS) will accept and protect infants who are presented in this manner, until custody of the child can be released to the appropriate medical facility.

“A law enforcement officer, a department of social services worker, a health care provider as defined in G.S. 90-21.11 at a hospital or local or district health department, or an emergency medical technician at a fire station shall, without a court order, take into temporary custody an infant under 7 days of age that is voluntarily delivered to the individual by the infant's parent who does not express an intent to return for the infant. An individual who takes an infant into temporary custody under this subsection shall perform any act necessary to protect the physical health and well-being of the infant and shall immediately notify the department of social services. Any individual who takes an infant into temporary custody under this subsection may inquire as to the parents' identities and as to any relevant medical history, but the parent is not required to provide this information.”

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide protection to infants that are placed in custody of FCEMS personnel under this law and protection to FCEMS and it's personnel when confronted with this issue.

1. Initiate the Pediatric Assessment Procedure, the Newly Born Protocol and other treatment protocols as appropriate.
2. Keep infant warm.
3. Contact the On-Duty EMS Shift Supervisor and the Forsyth County DSS worker on call via Shift Supervisor as soon as the infant is stabilized, and transport the infant to a medical facility as per local protocol ensuring that the infant is secured in appropriate child restraint device for transport.
4. Document protocols, procedures, and agency notifications in the Patient Care report (PCR).

Approved by:
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October, 2003

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