

Baby dropped off at Mesa Fire Department

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What began as a normal work day Monday at an east Mesa fire station briefly turned into an episode of four men and a baby.

During a busy day of responding to calls, firefighters at the Mesa Fire Department station at Power Road and Southern Avenue were interrupted by a knock on the door about 5 p.m.. The unexpected visitor? A healthy baby boy in the arms of a woman ready to find another home for him.

The woman indicated she wanted to give him up under the Baby Safe Haven Law, said Capt. Eric Hagerman, who was supervising the four-man crew on Monday. She came inside, we took the baby and she left. Were not sure who the woman was, whether she was the mother or someone else. She said the baby was born on Saturday.

Neatly dressed, well-taken care of and crying off and on, the baby was looked over by the staff as part of a routine medical check before he was taken to Banner Cardon Childrens Medical Center.

As of Tuesday morning, preparations already were made to place the baby with a pre-determined family, according to Hagerman.

Arizonas Baby Safe Haven Law, which was founded in 2001, allows newborns 72 hours old or younger to be anonymously dropped off at a staffed fire station, a hospital, an adoption agency or some churches with no questions asked.

The law allows parents to surrender their newborn child anonymously, without facing charges of child abuse, said Forrest Smith, a Tempe Fire Department spokesman. Children who are left with providers must be 72 hours old or younger.

This is the second time this year a baby has been dropped off at a safe haven location in the Valley, according to Ken De Felice, a spokesman for the Baby Safe Haven Office in Phoenix. Since 2006, there have been 17 instances in which babies have been given away under the law.

Hagerman rode with the boy to the hospital in an ambulance from the station.

When I talked to some of the hospital staff, they said they had had a few newborns under the Baby Safe Haven Law, Hagerman said. I think its a good opportunity for someone who is not ready of being a mother. This way, the baby is safe and is placed with a pre-determined family in a safe and loving environment.