



## Emergency Baptism Policy

The proper place for baptism is a church or oratory; however, in a case of urgent necessity or some other compelling pastoral reason, Baptism may be celebrated in a hospital, institutional setting, or other location of emergency. In these emergency situations, when a Catholic priest administers Baptism in danger of death, it is expected that he will administer Confirmation also.<sup>1</sup> When a priest is not available for an emergency Baptism, a deacon or properly catechized layperson should be sent immediately. A priest can later administer Confirmation if warranted.

An infant in danger of death is to be baptized without delay. An adult in danger of death can be baptized if, having some knowledge of the principal truths of the faith, the person has manifested in any way at all the intention to receive baptism and promises to observe the commandments of the Christian religion.

If baptism is administered neither by the pastor nor in his presence, the minister of baptism, whoever it is, must inform the pastor of the parish in whose territory the baptism was administered.

All emergency baptisms are to be recorded in the sacramental register for Baptism of the territorial parish in which the Baptism took place. The pastor must carefully and without delay record in the baptismal book the names of those baptized making mention of the minister, parents, sponsors, witnesses if any and the place and date of the conferred baptism, together with an indication of the date and place of birth. If Confirmation was also administered it is recorded along with the Baptism in the territorial parish.

In order to ensure the accurate recording of emergency baptisms within the Archdiocese of San Antonio, a uniform document will be used to notify the proper pastor in the event of an emergency Baptism (and Confirmation, when appropriate). This document will be titled: "Notice of Emergency Baptism" and will be the preferred method of notifying the pastor of the territorial parish of an emergency Baptism.

The "Notice of Emergency Baptism" form will be completed by the minister of baptism as soon as possible after Baptism is administered. The minister of Baptism is responsible for submitting the notice to the territorial parish in which the hospital or institution is located.

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<sup>1</sup> When a priest is called to administer Baptism in danger of death, the Code of Canon Law indicates that he should proceed with emergency Confirmation as well, unless, as an exception, prudence would indicate, perhaps in consultation with the parents, that the infant likely will survive, and Confirmation can be delayed until the usual age of Confirmation. Any baptized Catholic not yet confirmed, who is in danger of death, should receive emergency Confirmation.



The Notice of Emergency Baptism form will be made available to all on the archdiocesan website [www.archsa.org](http://www.archsa.org).

An emergency Baptism of a child under the age of seven is to be followed by the Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church (Chapter VI of the 2020 Order of Baptism of Children), in the parish church proper to the child's parents unless a just cause suggests otherwise. If ceremonies are supplied at a later date, the parish where the ceremonies are supplied should notify the parish that holds the baptismal record so that a notation regarding these ceremonies can be made in the person's baptismal record.

Following the norm of law, Catholic hospitals and other Catholic institutions are not responsible for maintaining a sacramental register for Baptism or other sacraments that take place in their facilities. It is the responsibility of the pastor of the place where the baptism is celebrated to record in the parish baptismal book the information required by law. Catholic hospitals and other Catholic institutions do not have the authority to issue sacramental certificates intended to establish reception of a Sacrament.

Catholic hospitals and other Catholic institutions that currently maintain or store a sacramental register for Catholic baptisms or other Catholic sacraments will deposit those registers with the Archives and Records Management Office of the Archdiocese of San Antonio for preservation and storage.

If you have questions, please contact either the Department for Pastoral Ministries, the Judicial Vicar, or the Office of the Chancellor at 210-734-2620 or [archsa.org](http://archsa.org). This policy and the Notice of Emergency Baptism can be found at [archsa.org](http://archsa.org) >Department for Pastoral Ministries> Sacraments> Baptism>Emergency Baptism.