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News from the Center for Health Statistics exclusively for county vital records offices, registrars and their deputies

November 2013

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What you need to know about annual renewal of vital records registrars and deputy registrars commissions

As the year end approaches, remember that annual renewal of commissions is required for all county vital records registrars and deputy registrars. Below is a list of answers to the most frequently asked questions about this yearly requirement.

Who must renew commissions?

All county and deputy vital records registrars.

Do I need to be commissioned if I don't use OVERS and only register and issue from paper death certificates?

Yes. Staff who register and issue from paper death certificates need to be commissioned as deputy registrars.

Do I need to be commissioned if I use OVERS to issue records?

Yes.

How is renewal done?

To renew, complete, sign and return the "Vital Records Commissions Form" to the state office. Each county and deputy registrar must complete and sign (by hand) a Vital Records Commissions Form. County registrars need to approve all deputies and lead deputies.

New commission certificates and a copy of the approved form will be sent to your office by December 31, 2013. Registrars and deputies who have **not** sent in their forms will no longer be authorized to register records or issue certified copies of certificates after January 1, 2014, and access to OVERS will be terminated.

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Renewal of registrars commissions (Continued from page 1)

When is the deadline to submit the form?

The form must be submitted to the state office no later than December 13, 2013.

What is the purpose of renewing commissions?

Renewed annual commissions ensure that county and deputy registrars understand their responsibilities, including providing timely notice to the state office. It also provides the state office with an accurate list of county and deputy registrars, including commission changes that occurred within the year.

What happens if the county does not have a registrar?

Remember that records issued during a period of time when no registrar is appointed are **legally invalid**. The registrar position must be filled at all times. A gap between registrars would create a **lack of authority** to register, issue or make amendments at the county office.

What is the potential for fraud?

When employees in the county or deputy registrar positions change, the state registrar

Correction affidavits needed

The state office requires affidavits for changes to paper and hybrid death records after they are printed and signed. There are several reasons for this requirement:

1. It is a legal requirement that all changes be documented to avoid fraudulent changes to the record.
2. The affidavit documents who requested the change and the footnote documents who reviewed and approved it.
3. It is important for the electronic record to be updated after a change to its

must be notified in writing. If the state office is not notified when the registrar leaves office, that person will continue to have access to records for that county office. This is a **potential for fraud**.

Where can the Vital Records Commissions Form be found, and where should it be sent?

The form is available on our website at: <http://1.usa.gov/ItaFYa>. The completed form should be sent to:

Lynda Jackson
Center for Health Statistics
800 NE Oregon Street, Suite 225
Portland, OR 97232-2162
Lynda.L.Jackson@state.or.us
Fax:971-673-1201

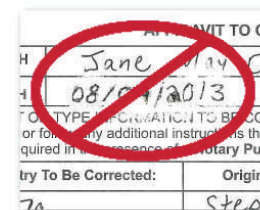
Attached to this newsletter is a copy of the Vital Records Commissions Form and additional information on county registrar commissions.

If you have any questions, please contact JoAnn Jackson, at 971-673-1160 or by email at joann.jackson@state.or.us. ❖



corresponding paper record. The affidavit and footnote alert our office to the change and ensure that the electronic record is updated when a paper record is received.

Sometimes the state office receives calls about errors on death records issued from **OVERS** that do not appear on the paper death record. These discrepancies can be caused by manual changes to hybrid death records after they were printed.



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Correction Affidavits Needed (Continued from page 2)

For example, we often find correction fluid (“Wite-Out”) or small handwritten corrections that are not explained. All of these changes require follow up with the funeral home.

Please make sure a correction affidavit is submitted when you find corrections to hybrid and paper records. Look for correction fluid or other changes to the death record. This will ensure the electronic record is correct once the paper record is submitted.

There is one small exception to the requirement for correction affidavits. If the error is an obvious one that is not in the cause of death section—a misspelling of July or the name of a county, for instance—the item can be corrected and a note added in

pencil to the back of the death record documenting the change. All death records with corrections that are not obvious, like the spelling of names, should have an affidavit and be documented with a footnote before they are registered and issued.

Before amending the death record, please check for the signature of the funeral service practitioner on the affidavit. The state office has noticed a recent increase in unsigned affidavits that must be replaced before records can be corrected.

If you have questions about affidavits or changes to the personal information on death records, please contact Patty Thompson at 971-673-1163 or patricia.a.thompson@state.or.us. ❖

Vital Records Modernization Law effective January 1, 2014

House Bill 2093, the Vital Records Modernization Bill, will require a few changes at county vital records offices. Our overall processes and collaborative relationship will continue. Specific changes include:

- County registrars will need to apply to be a vital records office. This one-time application allows counties to choose whether to issue certified copies of birth records, death records or both. The application should be resubmitted in the future only if the county changes the types of certified copies it wants to issue. The form is attached to this newsletter. We do not expect any problem in supporting the need for county vital records offices. You are *vital* partners for our work and important local resources for families.

- Public abstracts end. The 24-hour notice of receipt of body will continue, but this is exclusively for county vital records use. New cards are being printed and will be distributed to funeral homes in November. As of January 1, there is no public information available for birth or death records.

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- Order forms are required for all orders, including orders by the funeral home. The state office is distributing forms to funeral homes electronically so the funeral homes can minimize the amount of information needed (and time

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required) to complete each order form. This will provide the county office with documentation on every order.

- “Short form” certified copies of death records are required for property transfers. One county recently learned it did not have this service available in OVERS. Each county is set up individually and while the intent is that all counties match, omissions do happen. Please confirm that your office has the “Death CC Short” service available in a death record order.

To support this change, the state office will:

1. Post instructions for both OVERS and paper records for county vital records offices that may be unfamiliar with this service.
2. Provide information and examples of short forms to county clerks, as well as an informational handout for the public.
3. Work with funeral homes to educate families on short vs. long forms. This will be part of the

County reports now electronic

County public health staff have received weekly, then monthly, reports on births for several years. Reports include registered births that occurred in the county, first births that occurred in the county, and births that occurred to residents outside of their county. Beginning in September, the monthly reports have been combined into a single document. The document is sent as an attachment to an email. This allows CHS to send reports more quickly with less expense, and provides the

standard order form mentioned above.

- Amendments to marital status of the decedent have separate rules. This question often creates controversy among family members. The state office will have a flow diagram for county offices and funeral homes.
- Doctors from Washington, Idaho and California can certify the cause of death for Oregon records. Nurse practitioners and physician assistants can certify Oregon records if they are allowed to sign death records in their own state.

Finally, the evidence required to register births that occur out of facility without a licensed birth attendant (home births) has changed. Please refer all questions on home births and delayed births to Becki Buskirk (971-673-1147 or Becki.Buskirk@state.or.us) in the state office.

If you have any questions on changes in vital records law, please contact Karen Hampton at 971-673-1191 or Karen.R.Hampton@state.or.us. We are happy to answer your questions and support this transition. ❖

flexibility to send the reports to more than one person if needed.

Beginning in October, reports are sent through *secure* email. Please open the email and follow the link to download the reports. CHS is using secure email because the reports contain names and addresses of infants. If you have questions on the county reports, please contact Lynda Jackson at 971-673-1164 or Lynda.L.Jackson@state.or.us. ❖

Wanted—Newsletter topics

Have a question or idea for a future newsletter article? Contact Judy Shioishi at 971-673-1166 or judy.shioishi@state.or.us. Judy collects ideas for articles and then shares them with the writing team.

Thank you to the contributors of this newsletter: Carol Sanders, Patty Thompson, Karen Hampton, Judy Shioishi, JoAnn Jackson, Cynthia Roeser, Carolyn Hogg, Lynda Jackson, Jackie Muir, Craig New, Jennifer Woodward

We're just a phone call away

Have a question? Try asking one of the helpful CHS staff listed below.

Frequent Contacts

Field Liaison Judy Shioishi 971-673-1166	Delayed Filings Becki Buskirk 971-673-1147
Paternities Debbie Gott 971-673-1155	Filiations Tony Bojanowski 971-673-1143
Birth Corrections <1 year, Amanda Vega 971-673-1169	Adoptions Debbie Draghia 971-673-1152
1+year, Johanna Collins 971-673-1137	Security Paper/Voids Karen Wagner 971-673-1193
Death Corrections Patty Thompson 971-673-1163	OVERS Helpdesk 971-673-0279

CHS Managers

State Registrar Jennifer Woodward 971-673-1185	OVERS Manager Karen Hampton 971-673-1191
Amendments/Certification Supervisor: Carol Sanders 971-673-1178	Data Processing Supervisor Cynthia Roeser 971-673-0478
Statistics Manager Joyce Grant-Worley 971-673-1156	Certification Supervisor Karen Ragan 971-673-1182
Registration Manager JoAnn Jackson 971-673-1160	

The Center for Health Statistics' office is located at:

800 N.E. Oregon St.,
Suite 225
Portland, OR 97232-2162

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 14050
Portland, OR 97293-0050

Telephone: 971-673-1180

Website: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/PHD/ODPE/CHS>

OVERS website: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates/RegisterVitalRecords/overs/Pages/index.aspx>





PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION
CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS
COUNTY REGISTRAR AND DEPUTY REGISTRAR
VITAL RECORDS' COMMISSIONS

County: _____

Official Entity name: _____

Name: _____
(First) (Last)

Title: (Mark one) Registrar _____
Deputy Registrar _____
Lead Deputy Registrar _____

Business Telephone #: _____ Fax#: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Physical Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Mailing Address (if different): _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

I have read and understand the duties attached:

Printed name Signature Date

County Registrar's approval for Lead Deputy Registrars and Deputy Registrars

Printed name of County Registrar Signature Date

STATE VITAL RECORDS USE ONLY

Approved by State Registrar on: _____
Date Jennifer A. Woodward, State Registrar

Commission expires on: _____



County Vital Records Duties Overview

- 1) Appoint a County Registrar and Deputy Registrars if required. Notify State Vital Records of appointments. Only trained and authorized staff may register or issue Vital Records.
- 2) Register non-electronic reports of death (hybrid or fully paper). Forward all paper report of birth to Center for Health Statistics for registration.
- 3) Issue certified copies of birth and death records up to six months following the events as specified in application to operate county vital records office.
- 4) Charge all appropriate fees established by State Vital Records.
- 5) Maintain physical security of all vital records and intaglio paper used to produce certified copies.
- 6) Track all orders for certified copies of records via the Oregon Vital Events Registration System.
- 7) Maintain an inventory of intaglio paper via the Oregon Vital Events Registration System.
- 8) Accept submission of Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity Affidavits (45-21). Make sure parents *hear* the Rights and Responsibilities statement, and assist them in obtaining notarization. Send the form and any appropriate fee to the Center for Health Statistics.
- 9) Provide advice and instruction to private sector partners (funeral directors, medical certifiers, midwives, and birth clerks).
- 10) Participate in Triennial Reviews of Vital Records operations.



Application to Operate as a County Vital Records Office

On behalf of _____ County, I am applying for authorization to register reports of death and issue certified copies of vital records.

_____ County wants to issue certified copies of:

___ Birth ___ Death ___ Both birth and death records

County needs and interests that will be met through having a county vital records office include:

(E.g., local representative for completeness and timeliness of reports of death, local registration of paper or hybrid records, local/faster issuance of certified copies to families, revenue to local public health department, etc.)

Days and hours of operation: _____

Signature _____ Date signed _____

Print name _____

Title _____

Address _____

Telephone number _____

Email _____

This form is required by 2013 Oregon House Bill 2093. Once submitted, counties will not need to complete this form in the future unless services or hours change.