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

May 2014

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Release of information

Oregon vital records are confidential

Oregon records for births and deaths are confidential under the law. This is now true at the county as well as the state, because the law no longer provides ‘public abstracts’. The public abstract ended December 31, 2013 for deaths and was discontinued in 2008 for births. You can find the specific list of who is eligible to order certified copies by event type at http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/lawsstatutes/2013ors432.html.

Orders for certified copies are also confidential

We have emphasized that information on a vital record is confidential. This is true for information on order forms as well. Do not release information on an order form even to another family member. The potential customer can check with other family members on whether the record has already been ordered. The order form is confidential under [ORS 432.380\(16\)](#) because it includes protected information about the record. Order forms include the name, address, and relationship of the person ordering the certified copy. This is all the information someone would need to order certified copies pretending to be the legitimate customer.

Government access to records

Government agencies can access vital records information for official purposes. This does not mean an agency employee has an unquestioned right to any vital record at the county. Generally, an order form and payment for a certified copy are required.

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Release of information (Continued from page 1)

For official purposes of the public health department

Vital records can be shared for public health purposes with public health department (or the designated local public health authority under [ORS 432.375](#)). Information from vital records including contact information, newborn medical conditions, or cause of death can only be shared with employees of the local public health authority.

Sharing with the county clerk for voter registration

Sharing information from death records with the county clerk for the purpose of canceling a deceased person's registration to vote is the only release of information that can occur routinely without a specific request or order from the agency. This is because [ORS 247.570](#) specifies this transfer of information within five business days of receiving the report of death. Information is usually shared through a list, rather than a full copy of the vital record.



campus ballot drop box, by Chris Phan, flickr gallery, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/funcioruser/2960566450/>

Abuse and neglect investigations by mental health agencies

The state vital records office has an interagency agreement with OHA/Mental Health to provide uncertified copies of death records. These records are used for federally-mandated investigations. The state agreement allows local vital records offices to release uncertified copies (white copies)

for this purpose. The agreement does not allow the release of death records to private contractors providing mental health services. If you are contacted, request the mental health agency to fax a request on agency letterhead to confirm the agency and keep the letter for your files.

Use by other local, state or federal government agencies

While government agencies can access vital records information for official purposes, there are procedures that control the release. Representatives can order certified copies of specific records using the normal ordering process, including paying the fee for certified copies. If an agency purchases a certified copy, the agency cannot re-release the information on the certified copy by passing it to a person outside their agency. This is true for free veterans'-use-only certified copies as well.

FOIA requests

FOIA, or Freedom of Information Act, is a federal law that allows citizens to request information from federal agencies. Requests presented under the Freedom of Information Act should be directed to the Center for Health Statistics for a response. Written requests should be forwarded to the state vital records office as quickly as possible.

The State of Oregon also has laws on public requests for information. Any requests based on state law should also be sent immediately to the state vital records office.

Verification requests from government agencies

Oregon law defines a verification as confirmation of information on a vital record. At times counties are asked to

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Release of information (Continued from page 2)

“verify” information on a record for a local agency. If the agency needs to verify more detailed information than what appears on a vital record application, they should order a certified copy. Oregon’s rule on fees allows a government agency up to 10 free verifications per month. After 10 verifications in a calendar month, a fee of \$8 per verification is required. Verifications by the county and by the state are both included in the count for free verifications.

Social Security is the most frequent applicant for verifications. We usually provide all 10 free verifications within the first couple days of the month. If you receive a verification request from SSA or an agency that requests verifications frequently, we recommend referring the agency to the state office to coordinate verification services.

Out of state funeral homes and Oregon death records

The Center for Health Statistics recently clarified who can sign Oregon records as a funeral service practitioner. We are guided by the Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board which is the licensing authority for funeral homes, cemeteries, embalmers and funeral service practitioners (AKA funeral directors) in Oregon.

A funeral service practitioner licensed in Oregon

A funeral service practitioner licensed by the Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board can sign an Oregon Report of Death *regardless of where the funeral service practitioner works*. It does not matter if the business address of the funeral home is in Oregon, Idaho, Washington, or California. If the Oregon license starts with FS or CO, the county can register the record without question.

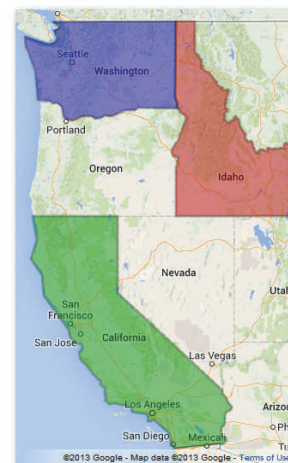
If you receive infrequent requests for verification of death or birth from a local police agency, these are usually safe to provide since the volume of requests by these agencies is low and you can be certain of the source of the request. Do not verify by providing a copy of the record. Instead, confirm the facts of birth or death that the agency has provided. Include the state file number, then sign and date a statement that the record is on file. We recommend that you only verify for local police agencies where you know the person or the local police agency number can be verified.

Questions

If you have questions, either generally or about specific situations, please contact Carol Sanders at the Center for Health Statistics at Carol.A.Sanders@state.or.us or 971-673-1178. ❖

A funeral service practitioner employed by funeral home licensed in another state and registered with Oregon as a removal entity

Any funeral service practitioner *employed by a funeral home registered with the Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board* can sign an Oregon Report of Death. Somewhere on the paper record, it needs to show that this is a registered removal entity. This might be as simple as adding RR after the funeral service practitioner’s license or after the name of the funeral home. This will only be an issue with fully paper records



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Out of state funeral homes (Continued from page 3)

or records dropped to paper by a Medical Examiner.

All Oregon Vital Events Registration System (OVERS) users are screened for appropriate access so records can be registered and issued. Currently, only Washington funeral homes can apply to be a registered removal

Paternity establishment for married mothers

How can county offices help a married mother add the father to her child's birth record? Typically this question is asked when the mother is married to someone who is not the father during the pregnancy (300 days prior to the date of birth).

The legal process can be complicated since under Oregon law the husband is presumed to be the father of the child. The husband must be disestablished by court judgment before the biological father's name can be added to the birth record. We recommend that you refer customers to our FAQs web page on paternity at: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates/ChangeVitalRecords/Pages/paternityfaqs.aspx>.

Only attorneys should provide legal advice to the parents about establishing paternity, including how to petition the court. Often a parent will need the assistance of an attorney to complete this process. We also do not advise them whether the Division of Child Support (DCS) will take their case and assist them to disestablish or establish paternity. Parents may call DCS directly to find out whether they qualify for assistance.

If parents report they have a court judgment to establish or disestablish paternity but have questions about the amendment process, have them contact Tony Bojanowski. Tony

entity. Idaho does not have the reciprocal law to qualify. An Idaho funeral home will need to employ an Oregon licensed funeral service practitioner to sign the Report of Death.

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Hampton at 971-673-1191 or Karen.R.Hampton@state.or.us. ❖

will review the wording of the court judgment and advise the parents whether the document is acceptable. His email address is: anthony.m.bojanowski@state.or.us or parents may fax a copy of their documents to him for review at 971-673-1201.

A man who was married to the mother while she was pregnant with a child



but whose name is missing from the birth record can have his name added with a correction affidavit. Both parents must be willing to sign the correction affidavit. Proof of marriage prior to the birth is required as well as the amendment fee, certificate fee, (or return of a certificate), order form and ID.

We greatly appreciate the help county offices provide for paternity establishment. Requests from married mothers, however, are more complicated and need care and review before instructions are provided. At the state office we refer these cases to the paternity specialists who have the experience with the legal language required and can explain the requirements to the applicant clearly. ❖

Live birth verification for home births without a licensed attendant

New requirement in OAR 333-011-0220 for proof of live birth for babies born at home without a medical attendant.

Mothers may visit your offices with their babies and ask you to complete a Vital Record Office Verification of Live Birth form.

Appearing in person with a baby is one way to fulfill a new requirement for home births when a licensed attendant was not present. The rule requires that mothers with children under one year of age must include evidence that a live birth resulted from their pregnancy. One option for



Newborn (2 of 5), by Liam Wilde, flickr gallery, https://www.flickr.com/photos/bean_baker/4090944240/

proof of live birth is to present their child to a County Vital Records Office. The clerk who “views” the child, completes the Vital Record Office Verification of Live Birth Form, copies the mother’s photo ID and then faxes these items to the state vital records office. These instructions are included on the form. Please send an email request to Amanda.L.Vega@state.or.us for an electronic version of the form.

To see all the requirements for home births see OAR #333-011-0220 Registering Live Births that Occur Outside of a Facility and Without a Licensed Attendant within One Year of the Date of Birth: http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars_300/oar_333/333_011.html ❖

County Vital Records orders and use of OVERS

All orders entered into OVERS

All orders must be entered into OVERS to track issuance of certified copies and security paper. This is not a new requirement. This policy was included in the first County *Matters of Record* in Spring 2009 along with instructions on how to complete an order for either a hybrid or paper record. It was also reported in the newsletter for Spring 2010 and has been part of the vital records instructional memorandum and triennial review since January 2011. Every county has reported during their official review that all orders are entered and completed into the OVERS system.

This policy was included in the first County *Matters of Record* in Spring 2009 and again in the Spring 2010 county newsletter.

Entering all orders into the system is important because it allows every piece of security paper to be tracked through a simple search by number. Since certified copies of vital records do not expire, inquiries can be made twenty years or more after the issuance. As reported in Spring 2009:

This allows both the counties and the state to more easily track orders by applicant, registrant, or date of receipt and track intaglio paper. This also allows us to better monitor the number of certificates issued, which is one indicator of potential fraud.

Matters of Record News from the Center for Health Statistics Concerning Oregon County Vital Records, Spring 2009 page 2.

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The Spring 2009 issue included instructions for entering orders for fully paper or hybrid death records.

Counties should enter the issuance through the order processing screen(s). For hybrid records, match the record and override the edit that the record hasn't been registered in the system. For paper records, save as 'no match' and proceed with the order.

Revising County Vital Records Order

We all want to do the best job we can for our customers. When new parents want birth certificates for their infants, they often ask county agencies for assistance.

The state receives many county order forms from customers. Unfortunately, these orders cannot be fulfilled timely because the county forms have not been updated to include new requirements. In 2010, the state birth order forms were changed to include the applicant's signature and a copy of their current valid identification as required information.

An incomplete order form requires us to contact the customer directly (first by telephone or email).

If contact is not made, a letter is sent to the customer requesting the required information or documentation. This creates extended

delays for orders and unhappy customers for all of us. Currently, by filling out and submitting a county birth order form, the customer does not know that they are sending an incomplete order that we are

We ask that all counties standardize their forms to include a signature line and a request for current, valid ID.

In both cases, the certified copies will be made from the paper record in hand. (page 3).

Questions

If you have any questions about entering orders into OVERS or any other item in either the Instructional Memorandum or triennial review, please contact Judy Shioishi, Field Liaison, by email Judy.Shioishi@state.or.us or telephone (971-673-1166). ❖

unable to fulfill. It is important that Vital Records staff at the state and county levels are on the same page with these new requirements so that we may fulfill all vital record orders in a timely manner and maintain the level of customer satisfaction that we are all known for.

We would ask that all counties standardize their forms to include a signature line and a request for current, valid ID. This should greatly reduce the chance that this required information is missed by the customer, resulting in significantly more orders that are complete and ready to be processed.

Items not to include on the order form:

Information requested on the birth order form must be limited to those items required for issuance. Please do not request additional information, such as the marital status of the parents at time of birth. If the parent appears on the birth record, they are eligible to receive a certified copy regardless of how their name came to be on the record. If you receive an order from a father who is not listed and need to find out whether to send an Acknowledgement of Paternity Affidavit, you may follow up by calling the applicant.

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Certified copies of birth records are issued with a parent-parent format when:

- Marital status on birth record is reported as Oregon Registered Domestic Partnership,
- Marital status on birth record is reported as married and hospital notifies the Center for Health Statistics that parents are of the same sex, or
- Parents request parent-parent format.

The format cannot be corrected at the county office. If a parent receives a certified copy in a mother-father format and would prefer a parent-parent format, please refer them to the Center for Health Statistics.

The link to the most current state vital record order forms can be found at:

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates/GetVitalRecords/Pages/forms.aspx>. We greatly appreciate your assistance! ❖

Oregon Health Authority
Center for Health Statistics

Oregon Birth Record ORDER FORM

QUANTITY _____ Number of certified records requested.
\$20 first record/\$15 each additional copy
of the same record ordered at the same time.

1. Full name on record: _____
(First) (Full middle) (Full last)

2. Date of birth: _____ 3. Sex: _____ 4. Place of birth: _____ **OREGON**
(MM/DD/YYYY) (M or F) (City) (County)

5. Mother's full legal name at birth: _____
(or Parent #1) (First) (Full middle) (Legal name at birth)

6. Father's full name: _____
(or Parent #2) (First) (Full middle) (Full last)

7. Your relationship to person named in line 1: _____

8. Reason for needing record: _____

9. Daytime telephone number: _____ 10. Email: _____

11. Name of person ordering: _____

12. Your address: _____

13. City/State/ZIP: _____

14. Person ordering: Attach legible photocopy of current, valid ID or legal representative document. See back of form for alternative ID options.

15. Required signature of person ordering: _____

In accordance with law — ORS 432.350, only the person named on the record

OFFICE USE ONLY		
DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE		
Certificate number:		
	1	2
Film		
Film (P)		
Computer		
Indexes		
Index (P)		
DF/CO		

Refund: \$ _____

Excess fee Out/state
 No record Uncompleted

Check #: _____

Adding to the Communication Tool Box – County Webinars

The partnership between the county vital records' offices and the Center for Health Statistics is essential to a statewide vital records system. We want to support that partnership with timely and useful information through a variety of resources. We have a field liaison, a county training series for new deputy registrars, newsletters, and staff willing to answer any questions. We know that gaps

still occur and we are always looking for ways to improve our communication.

New tool – webinars

The Center for Health Statistics has recently added webinars to the communication tool box. The webinar format allows a speaker to present information to a group, and then have

an active discussion on the topic. We will schedule webinars quarterly on a variety of subject areas, starting with the Vital Records wheel:



- Collecting
- Registering
- Amending
- Storing
- Selling
- Analyzing

Update county web pages

In accordance with [Oregon Law ORS 432.380, Section 2a](#), in order for a person to obtain a certified copy of a vital record, it is required that applicants provide a copy of their valid photo identification and signature before the certificate can be released. It is strongly encouraged that counties update orders



Email addresses

Remember to double check your email address before sending your email. ❖

The next webinar will occur June 24th at 9 AM and June 26th at 2 PM. The focus of the webinar will be registration.

Webinars are being added to your existing communication and training methods. Distance training, newsletters and other methods of sharing information will continue.

Please share your ideas for newsletter articles, training subjects or webinar topics. If you have any suggestions (or questions), please contact JoAnn Jackson at 971-673-1160 or JoAnn.Jackson@state.or.us. ❖

forms and web pages to include the new requirements, and to do so in a way that makes the requirements as *visible as possible*. This should reduce the number of calls and/or emails to customers in order to obtain this required information. Oregon Vital Records is currently reviewing the state order forms to make the signature and ID requirement more apparent to customers. ❖

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: Karen Hampton, Carol Sanders, JoAnn Jackson, Kelly Stacey, Melissa Alarcon Evans, Becki Buskirk, Judy Shioishi, Lynda Jackson, Karen Rangan, Eddy Conrad-Wiggins, Tony Bojanowski, Christopher Bass, Karen Cooper, Krista Markwardt, Carolyn Hogg, 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	Data Processing Supervisor Cynthia Roeser 971-673-0478
Amendments/Certification Manager Carol Sanders 971-673-1178	Certification Supervisor Karen Rangan 971-673-1182
Statistics Manager Joyce Grant-Worley 971-673-1156	
Registration Manager JoAnn Jackson 971-673-1160	
OVERS Manager Karen Hampton 971-673-1191	

The Center for Health Statistics' office is located at:

800 N.E. Oregon St.,
Suite 225
Portland, OR 97232-2187

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

General information: 971-673-1180
Order vital records: 1-888-896-4988

Website: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates>

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

