

April/May 2016 County Webinar - Issuance of Vital Records - Q & A

Part 1: Laws and Policies

- Question:** Can we get clarification on eligibility for who can order a death record? We thought a cousin could order a record.

Answer: Eligibility for death records changed in law on January 1st 2014. A cousin is not entitled to order the record based solely on relationship. A cousin would need notarized permission from an eligible person or have a demonstrated property interest, such as when their name appears on an insurance claim or they are a beneficiary.
- Question:** Is the Matrícula Consular card acceptable proof of identify?

Answer: Yes, it is acceptable as ONE of the two documents if it includes a photo and address. The other document needs to be some sort of document that also shows their current address.
- Question:** Do we search for record information before you have them fill out the order?

Answer: No. You need to receive a completed order form and payment of the fee before you search for the record. The \$25 fee is for searching for the record and includes one certified copy if the record is identified.
- Question:** For a death record order, if it looks obvious that the person passed away in another county (by just looking at the application), can we send everything back to that person, or do we have to charge a record search fee for that, as well? (I haven't done the search yet, but only looked at the application and saw the person passed away in another county)

Answer: If you haven't done the search, you can issue a refund. The moment you start searching for a record is when you can no longer refund. So, if you determine that it is the wrong county based on information **appearing on the written order form** and you have not looked for the record in OVERS, returning it as a packet is fine. In addition, when the customer orders multiple records and no record is found, you can refund additional copy fees and keep only the first \$25 search fee.
- Question:** In the instance of someone coming to the counter and looking for a birth record and we did search for the record and saw that the person was born in another county, then we would have to charge the record search fee?

Answer: That is correct, and there is no refund because you searched for the record. If this is a common occurrence you may wish to ask the counter customer first about the county of birth before doing a search. Having the county or facility of birth on the order form might help spot these situations before searching for the record.

6. **Question:** On a birth certificate if the hospital makes a mistake, then the parent's still have to pay the \$5 fee if there is more than one record replaced?
Answer: Yes. For birth records there is one free replacement copy after any type of amendment. All death record replacements are charged a replacement fee when there is a change in the personal data. We wanted to allow for one free replacement for birth records since most orders are for one record, but collect some fees for the work when issuing a larger number of replacements are requested, especially when multiple amendments are made to the same record.
7. **Question:** In regards to exchanging a long form death certificate for a short form, in the past, if a family member brought in a record, and they needed a short form for the clerk's office, then we could exchange that.
Answer: That was in the past, when the short forms were very new, and funeral homes were not explaining to the family members what they would need them for. We think it should be clear now that families should order and get what they ordered. If replacement copies are needed after an amendment, we can replace with the form (long or short) requested at that time.
8. **Question:** Does this mean that if a mom that has noticed some personal information is incorrect and asks for a replacement it will be a free replacement, and then if she notices that her name is incorrect it will cost \$5 to replace, even though these are hospital data entry errors?
Answer: No. After each amendment, there is one free replacement. All additional copies replaced each time are \$5 each. If a second amendment occurs, another free replacement would be available at that time. However parents should be encouraged to review the record for accuracy so all amendments can be completed at one time.
9. **Question:** If they do need to make an amendment, there is an amendment fee?
Answer: For birth records, the amendment fee is waived when the error and correction are by the reporting source (hospital or midwife) within the first year (the majority of them). When the parent submits an affidavit, they pay the amendment fee in the first year. This occurs when the parent gave the hospital wrong information, so the hospital cannot correct the error. For death, there are no amendment fees charged in the first year after the death and no amendment fees for medical corrections at any time.
10. **Question:** How much do we charge for a search?
Answer: \$25 which includes the first certified copy. Additional certified copies of that record ordered at the same time are \$20 each.
11. **Question:** In regards to veteran's pre-paid envelopes, can we issue to our local veteran's office in our county?

Answer: Yes, but do not use the pre-paid envelopes which would send the record to Portland USDVA.

12. **Question:** The veteran's office has to request a veteran's copy in writing from us?

Answer: Yes, any orders you have for vital records needs to have an order form filled out. It is part of our policy to have orders keyed into OVERS, which allows the order to be documented. There is a service available that allows for free veteran's copies, but we need to ensure we are tracking them as an order, and tracking all certified copies on certificate paper. Local veteran's offices can request free veteran's copies, and you can give them the copy directly. The key component here, though, is that you are not giving these copies out to funeral homes and families anymore.

13. **Question:** Can we mail veteran's death records to another veteran's office if it is out of state, as long as the funeral home has indicated what that office is and we can verify that office?

Answer: Yes except that verification of the VSO is not required.

14. **Question:** To follow up with the previous questions, it has to be in writing on the death application?

Answer: Correct. You must receive a written order for the veterans' copies.

15. **Question:** When we get a death certificate from funeral home and it doesn't ask for a veteran's copy, does that mean we don't send a veteran's copy anywhere, not even to the State?

Answer: Yes. The law allows a free copy on request to support a pending application. So it is upon request that you provide free veteran's copies. If you see on the death certificate that the deceased individual was a veteran, you are not automatically making veteran's copies, someone has to request it. This is not a 'limited time offer' and families can choose to have veteran's use certified copies sent to any VSO office at a later time. If after six months, these orders would go the State office. When you get a death certificate from the funeral home, it is the funeral home who will usually ask you to order a veteran's copy. In the forms that we provided to funeral homes, there's a check box that asks if they want free veteran's copies, and they have to indicate where they want them sent. We have received some complaints from veteran's offices that some funeral homes aren't doing due diligence with the families on requesting veteran's copies. If counties would like to call the funeral home and prompt them/ ask them if they would like to update their order form for a veteran's copy, that is up to your county, but some counties and funeral homes are more diligent on following up with that need.

16. **Question:** Can orders be electronic?

Answer: There is a section in statute that requires funeral homes to complete an order form to confirm that they're eligible. We provided all funeral homes an example of an order form and they can send them to the counties however they want to. Statute now says that funeral homes should be completing an order form to counties, and this is where they check the box that indicates the veteran's copy. They can choose to fax this form to you, but it does need to be a paper order form.

17. **Question:** Where do we find the death certificate order forms, do we have to keep them on file and if so for how long?

Answer: The State asks you to comply with keying orders into OVERS, but as far as how long to keep paper orders on file is up to the individual county's retention schedule for those documents.

18. **Question:** Don't funeral homes have to sign off on the order forms?

Answer: Yes

Part 1: OVERS Demonstration

1. **Question:** Just want to clarify the void when creating a replacement copy for an amendment. Do we void the original order or only if we make an error?

Answer: The problem with voiding an entire order, is that you are also voiding the payment in the order. Unless you are re-keying in the payment information, you shouldn't be voiding an entire order. A better alternative is to send Kelly Stacey the security paper numbers to be voided, she will manually void those paper numbers, which keeps the original order attached and allows you to see in the issuance history that those certificates were voided.

2. **Question:** If a parent orders a birth record and they pay with a credit card, how do you recommend documenting this payment in the order?

Answer: Credit card payments in OVERS are only used for Vitalcheck and have other fees associated with them. If a customer pays by credit card at your county office, then you would just select cash or check as the payment source, not credit card, to avoid extra fees that should not be charged to the customer. You would have the option of documenting payment with a credit card in the comment section of the order.

3. **Question:** When we key in an order for a fully paper death record in OVERS, there is no existing record so we're not able to match an event. How do we enter the intaglio paper in the order, or do we wait until the record is registered?

Answer: For fully paper death records, you are correct that there won't be a match in OVERS. You are making a certified copy of the certificate from the original record in your

hand (as long as it is legally sufficient). However the order should be entered and completed immediately. You can enter in the security paper numbers into OVERS which links the security paper to the services/certificates that were issued. We don't want you to wait until the record is registered to key an order or finish an order. All orders should be keyed into OVERS right away, which is how we can track the security paper.

4. **Question:** When there are errors on a birth certificate and a customer needs information changed, how do we handle that?

Answers: Counties should refer the customer to the State office. Give the customer the certified copy that they ordered, even if a correction is needed. The first replacement certificate is free for birth records. Have the customer contact the amendments clerk at the State office (Amanda Vega). We will work with the customer and the hospital to resolve the issue and replace the incorrect certificate.

5. **Question:** When a parent notices discrepancies on the birth record, can they contact hospitals themselves?

Answer: We would prefer parents not contact the hospital directly. Please do not suggest to the parent that they do so. Sometimes parents can pressure hospitals to correct items that weren't originally on the birth worksheet. It isn't illegal for hospitals to make corrections to a record if the worksheet received from the parent does not include the information. We would like you to direct the customer to the State office.

6. **Question:** Can one person do cashier close for the whole county?

Answer: No, whoever keys orders has to complete the process individually. If four people have keyed in orders, then they each need to perform the cashier close process.

7. **Question:** Is it a requirement for counties to do cashier close?

Answer: Yes, and you do need to perform this process timely otherwise it'll be impossible to close.