

How to Purchase Informational Copies & Access Historical Vital Records

Beginning January 1, 2021, a new vital records law goes into effect that changes access to vital records. The new law creates non-certified, informational copies of birth records and short form death records for public access. It also releases historical vital records to State Archives after specified timeframes. Certified copies (or certificates) of birth, death, and fetal death records are limited to qualified applicants.

To purchase a non-certified informational copy of birth and short form death records, you must:

- 1** Provide required information.
- 2** Pay the fee. Fees start at \$25.



Center for Health Statistics

Certification Services
Washington State Department of Health
ContactCHS@doh.wa.gov
360-236-4300



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To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.

What is a non-certified informational copy?

Non-certified informational copies of birth and death records are not issued on the certified paper with security features and cannot be used for legal purposes. It will contain a watermark stating “Cannot be used for legal purposes. Informational only.” These are primarily used for genealogy and family history purposes.

Informational copies of birth records contain the same information as a certified birth copy.

Informational copies of short form death records contain the same information as the certified short form death copy. It does not contain cause and manner of death information or the social security number of the decedent.

Non-certified informational copies are not available for the following records: long form death, fetal death, marriage, and divorce records.

1 Required Information

The required pieces of information to order a non-certified informational copy of birth record are:

- First, middle, and last name of the subject of the record
- First and last name of all the parents listed on the record
- Date of birth (Month, Day, Year)
- City or county where the birth occurred

The required pieces of information to order a non-certified informational short form death record are:

- First and last name of the decedent
- Approximate date of death (Month and Year)
- City or county where the death occurred

2 Fees

The fee for non-certified informational copies of birth and death records is \$25. Additional service fees may be added depending on order method. Order methods include online through www.VitalChek.com, by phone 1-866-687-1464, mail, or in-person when in-person services resume.

Important Note: No refunds will be given if a record could not be located. Check with the agency or business to ensure they will accept non-certified informational copies prior to purchasing it.

Historical Vital Records at State Archives

The Department of Health will transfer vital records to State Archives at specified timeframes:

- 100 years after the date of birth or fetal death
- 25 years after the date of death
- 25 years after the date of marriage or divorce

You must request historical vital records from State Archives directly. State Archives determines the fee for requesting these records, not the Department of Health. Visit the State Archives website at www.sos.wa.gov/archives.

Visit our website at www.doh.wa.gov/vitalrecords for more information.