



Minnesota Vital Statistics Act Updates

Summary

This initiative will make changes to the Minnesota Vital Statistics Act, Minnesota Statutes, 144.211-144.226. These changes address potential security concerns related to birth records and identity theft, and make technical updates to align with Minnesota's state-of-the-art electronic Minnesota Registration & Certification System (MR&C), launched in 2011. The proposed changes will ensure timely registration of vital events and secure statewide issuance of birth and death certificates.

Further, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently approved a revision of the *U.S. Model State Vital Statistics Act and Model State Vital Statistics Regulations* to aid states with best practices in vital records management. Many of the proposed statutory changes, in particular those pertaining to security, will align Minnesota with the new national standards.

Key Features

Vital record security/identity theft deterrence

- Changes classification of Minnesota birth records to confidential in order to prevent the use of birth record information for fraud and identity theft. Birth record information will continue to be available for public health purposes, research, child support enforcement, and child protection as it is now. An individual's birth certificate will be available to the individual; his or her parent, legal custodian, guardian, conservator, health care agent; an agency that requires it by statute; or by court

order. Other than those authorized to obtain a birth certificate, no one will be able to access sensitive information – such as mother's maiden name – from a birth record as they can do currently.

- Adopts national standards for security of vital records system, including security of personnel and physical/electronic environment.
- Provides statutory direction and authorization in the correction and amendment of vital records.

Technical changes

- Modifies language to reflect changes in registration from paper to electronic and from local or county registration to state registration.
- Changes name of program to the "Office of Vital Records" to better communicate functions performed.
- Revises definitions of terms for improved clarity, e.g., "authorized representative," "legal representative," and "verification."

Other changes

- Requires payment for all certificate or records amendments, eliminating a no-cost option that has discouraged appropriate verification prior to registration and resulted in unnecessary errors.
- Authorizes the use of entirely electronic verification/certification of births and deaths, adding efficiency, security, and speed of processing financial and legal transactions.
- Allows the commissioner to make revisions to rule to conform to statutory changes and best practices in vital records.

For more information:

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