

### **1. There is a spelling error on my child's birth certificate, how can I correct it?**

An *Affidavit to Amend a Record* (VS24) may be used to correct errors but not to change information on the certificate. It should be used to correct spelling errors, add information to blank items, and correct items 1A-11 only. Complete the form and submit it to the [State Office of Vital Records](#). There is no fee to add an amendment within the first year after birth. After 1 year there is a fee payable to the state which must be submitted with your amendment. The current processing time for birth amendments and the amendment fee can be found at the [California Department of Public Health, Vital Records web site](#).

### **2. My child's birth certificate has the wrong gender, date of birth or other health information listed. How can I correct it?**

If the hospital makes an error when typing the date of birth, time of birth, gender or health information on the birth certificate, the hospital should complete the amendment form since the signature of the physician and/or hospital staff will be required. Contact the medical records department at your child's hospital of birth for additional information and assistance.

### **3. How can I change the name on my child's birth certificate?**

Changing information on the birth certificate (i.e. name changes, changing mother's name or translating names into another language) requires a court order. Court orders can be obtained through [Superior Court](#). Once a court order is obtained, you must complete an *Amendment of Birth Record to Reflect Court Order Change of Name* (VS23) and send it, along with the certified copy of the court order signed by the judge, and appropriate fees to the State Office of Vital Records. The current processing time for birth amendments through the state is approximately 7 months (subject to change without notice).

### **6. I am married. Why isn't the father listed on the birth certificate?**

If the mother was married to the father of the baby at the time of birth, it may have been a hospital error. This can be corrected by completing an *Acknowledgement of Paternity/Parentage* (VS22) and sending it along with a copy of your marriage certificate to the State Office of Vital Records. Upon receipt of the application, declaration, and payment of the required fee, the State will review the documents and, if acceptable, will seal the original birth certificate and issue a new one in its place.

### **7. When my child was born, I did not list the father on the birth certificate. Can I add the father now?**

If you were/are not married to the father of the baby or anyone else, you can add his name to the certificate by completing a *Declaration of Paternity* in front of a qualified witness (from a local child support agency, family law facilitator, local registrar, or notary public). A second form, the *Acknowledgement of Paternity/Parentage* should be completed. The original Acknowledgement of Paternity and a copy of the Declaration of Paternity, along with the appropriate fees should be mailed to the State Office of Vital Records. The original Declaration of Paternity should be mailed to the State Department of Child Support Services. Additional information regarding the POP (Paternity Opportunity Program) can be found at <http://www.childsup.cahwnet.gov/>

Upon receipt of the application and payment of the required fee, the State will review the documents and, if acceptable, will seal the original birth certificate and issue a new one in its place.

**8. The father of my baby is in the military and has orders for deployment that will prevent him from being at the hospital when our baby is born. Can he still be listed on the birth certificate?**

Yes, the father can sign the Declaration of Paternity in front of a qualified witness prior to deployment. The remainder of the form is completed after the baby is born and the mother's signature added in front of a qualified witness. A copy of the father's active orders must be submitted with the form. The mother should take both forms with her to the hospital at the time of birth.

**9. My baby was not born in a hospital. How do I register my child's birth to obtain a birth certificate?**

Parents who have a baby outside of the hospital must make an appointment to come to the Vital Records Office to register their baby's birth before the child's first birthday. Call our office at 805-981-5173 for additional information regarding the documentation required and the availability of appointments.

One year from the date of birth and thereafter, the birth must be registered with the State Office of Vital Records through the [Delayed Registration of Birth](#) process.

**10. Do I need a passport for my baby?**

For information regarding passport requirements, fees and the application process it is recommended that you consult the [U.S. Department of State](#), Bureau of Consular Affairs for up to date information.

**11. How do I correct an error on a death certificate?**

Most amendments to death certificates, such as those to correct spelling errors, the addition of information that was unknown at the time the certificate was initially prepared and correction of social security numbers can be completed by the mortuary listed on the certificate and submitted electronically for registration. Correction of other items such as marital status or medical information requires specific signatures on the amendment. These amendments cannot be completed electronically and therefore are subject to much longer registration and [processing times](#).

**12. Is the certificate I am ordering a certified document?**

Yes, the certificates that our office provides are certified, legal documents. The birth certificates that the hospital provides, however, are not.

**13. Do I have to pay for the first copy?**

There is no complimentary copy. A \$25.00 fee is charged for all certified copies of birth certificates or \$21.00 for all certified copies of death certificates that you order.

**14. Who is eligible to request a fee exempt birth certificate pursuant to AB 1733?**

A homeless person or a homeless child or youth on behalf of themselves, or any person lawfully entitled to request a birth certificate on behalf of a child can make a request for a birth certificate, if the child has been verified as a homeless person, youth or child.

**15. How may an applicant submit a request for processing?**

The best method is to submit an application and affidavit at the local county office in the county in which the person was born. If not presented in person, notarization of the application, as per statute, would be required.

**16. Can an applicant order multiple certificates?**

A person applying for a certified record of live birth is entitled to only one birth record per application for each eligible person verified as a homeless person or a homeless child or youth.

**17. Do I get the original certificate?**

No, the original certificate is archived at the state. You are able to purchase a certified copy, which is a legal document that can be used in a court of law.

**18. Can I pay over the phone or fax by credit card?**

Our office is not set-up to receive orders or payment by telephone or fax at this time.

**19. Can you fax me a birth/death certificate?**

A faxed copy of a birth or death certificate is not a certified copy. Our office only provides certified copies of birth and death certificates in-person or through the mail.

**20. How long does it take to obtain a certified copy of a record?**

For births or deaths, it takes about 2 weeks from the date of the event for the birth or death certificate to be ready. Mail-in requests paid by money order are processed the day they are received if the record is registered. Mail-in requests paid by personal check are held for 14 working days. You must include a SASE with your request.

In-person requests are processed in 5-10 minutes, if the record is registered.

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