KENTUCKY REGISTRAR GUIDELINES

Revised 06/2026

Kentucky Office of Vital Statistics

Kentucky Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

REGISTRAR GUIDELINES - REVISED 10/2022

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Vital Statistics Directory

275 East Main Street, 1E-A
Frankfort, KY 40621
(502) 564-4212
WEBSITE - https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/vsb/Pages/default.aspx

Quality Assurance Representatives

(502) 564-4212, option 7
Fax: (502) 564-9398

Amendments (Certificates Older Than One Year Old)

(502) 564-4212, option 4
Fax: (502) 564-2904

Adoptions/Gender Changes

(502) 564-4212, option 5, sub option 1
Fax: (502) 564-2904

Court Orders/New Birth Corrections (Certificates Less Than One Year Old)

(502) 564-4212, option 5, sub option 2
Fax: (502) 564-2904

New Birth Registration

(502) 564-4212, option 7
Fax: (502) 564-2904

Homebirth Registration

(502) 564-4212, option 6
Fax: (502) 564-9398

Death

(502) 564-4212, option 2
Fax: (502) 564-5755
Kentucky-Electronic Death Registration System (KY-EDRS)
KY-EDRS Questions/Access (Toll Free) STATLINE 1 (866) 451-3781

Certification (Problems with Orders)

(502) 564-4212, option 1

VitalChek (Place an Order by Credit Card)

(Toll Free) 1 (800) 241-8322
ONLINE ORDERS - www.vitalchek.com/

Links for Commonly Used OVS Forms

Birth and Paternity

VS-37 Application for Certified Copy of Birth Certificate

VS-37 Application for Certified Copy of Birth Certificate (Spanish)

VS-8 Declaration of Paternity

VS-8 Declaration of Paternity (Spanish)

Death

VS-31 Application for Certified Copy of Death Certificate

VS-31 Application for Certified Copy of Death Certificate (Spanish)

VS-31B Application for Death Certificate (Funeral Director Use Only)

VS-32 Application for Certified Copy of Stillbirth Certificate

VS-32 Application for Certified Copy of Stillbirth Certificate (Spanish)

Example of Communicable Disease Statement

Example of Burial Depth Variance Letter

Disinterment/Reinterment

VS-35A Application for Permit to Disinter and Reinter in Same Cemetery

Next-of-Kin Clarification Letter and Permission to Disinter/Reinter Human Remains

Instructions for Funeral Home Letter (Clarifying Standing of Next-of-Kin)

VS-35 Permit for Disinterment/Reinterment in Same Cemetery

Marriage and Divorce

VS-230 Application for Certified Copy of Marriage/Divorce Certificate

VS-230 Application for Certified Copy of Marriage/Divorce Certificate (Spanish)

VS-300 Certificate of Divorce or Annulment

Instructions for Completing Certificate of Divorce or Annulment

Miscellaneous

Example of Letter of Correction for a Birth Record

Confidentiality

Emphasis should be placed on the confidentiality of vital records. Local registrars and their deputies shall protect the information on vital records from unwarranted or indiscriminate inspection or disclosure. There should be no accessing of confidential information by local registrars and health department employees except for the purpose of performing the specific job duties listed in this manual. Local registrars and their employees are prohibited from sharing with other federal, state, county, or municipal agencies of the government, or with the public, any information pertaining to vital records, other than what is authorized in the statutes listed below as being covered by Kentucky's open records policy. All original certificates, county copies, and other documents containing confidential information should be kept in a secure area. All Health-Department confidentiality agreements should mandate compliance with Kentucky statutes and regulations governing the confidentiality of vital records.

Authority: KRS 213.131, KRS 194A.060, KRS 213.991, KRS 434.840 to 434.860

Responsibilities of the Local Registrar

The local registrar is a representative for the Office of Vital Statistics (OVS) and should follow all procedures and practices established by the state registrar. The following list summarizes the common duties performed by local registrars and their employees; however, the preceding table of contents should be consulted for where to find more detailed information on each item listed below.

1. Appoints deputy registrars as needed for local health departments, nursing homes and health care facilities to provide for an efficient county vital statistics program.

   Authority: KRS 213.036 (3)

2. Provides select vital statistics forms and instructions to persons responsible for their completion.

   Authority: KRS 213.036 (4)

3. Preserves local copies of birth and stillbirth records filed prior to July 15, 2020 and maintain files and indexes in a systematic manner as prescribed by the state registrar to assure reasonable uniformity within the state.

   Authority: KRS 213.031 (4)

4. Provides services to parents wishing to complete a Declaration of Paternity (Form VS-8). Reviews declarations of paternity for completeness and accuracy before acceptance for registration.

   Authority: KRS 213.036 (5), KRS 213.041 (3), KRS 213.046

5. Maintains files (forms and instructions) for all Provisional Reports of Death (Provisionals) received. Reviews all Provisionals to ensure that reporting facilities properly include decedent's name, date and time of death, facility or location of death, and physician or medical certifier responsible for completing death certificate. Review all Provisionals to ensures that the sexton or other person in charge of the final disposition properly include the date, place, and manner of disposition.

   Authority: KRS 213.076 (1)(a), (1)(d), (9), (10)

6. Reconciles Provisional Reports of Death with the 677 Report (Death Index) on a monthly basis and reports funeral homes to OVS that are delinquent in submitting Provisionals.

   Authority: KRS 213.031 (4)

7. Mails any Provisional Reports of Death that are for **stillbirths (or fetal deaths)** to the state registrar (Attn: Quality Assurance Field Staff).

   Authority: KRS 213.031 (4)

8. Issues permits for disinterment and re-interment within the same cemetery.

   Authority: KRS 213.076 (11), 901 KAR 5:090

9. Maintains retention files for death index (permanent), disinterment permits (permanent), and cremations (5 years).

   Authority: KRS 213.146, KRS 213.031 (4)

10. Coordinates with OVS quality assurance field staff to ensure the enforcement of state laws and regulations relating to vital events in each county.

    Authority: KRS 213.031 (1)

11. Coordinates with OVS quality assurance field staff to educate and train all deputy registrars in their duties. This is especially important for deputy registrars who fill in for the local registrar during periods of his/her absence.

    Authority: KRS 213.031 (1)

12. Coordinates with OVS quality assurance field staff to educate and train local providers (i.e. hospital staff, coroners, hospice nurses, funeral home personnel, etc.) in the proper completion of vital records.

    Authority: KRS 213.031 (1)

13. Provides for security and protection of confidentiality of records.

    Authority: KRS 213.131 (1), KRS 213.991

Deadlines for Local Registrars

Inaccurate, incomplete, or delinquent data affects legal and statistical requirements in the vital statistics program. Certain deadlines must be met to ensure efficient operation of OVS systems.

1. **Declaration of Paternity (VS-8):** All Declarations of Paternity shall be sent to OVS within **three (3) working days** of completion. Please mail to the OVS address, Attn: Birth Amendment Unit.

   Authority: KRS 213.036 (5), KRS 213.046, KRS 213.031 (4)

2. **Provisional Report of Death (VS-34):** Any Provisionals that have **not been reconciled** with the 677 Death Index Report after the prescribed review period of the **third month following the date of death** shall be forwarded to OVS. Please mail to the OVS address, Attn: Quality Assurance Field Staff.

   Authority: KRS 213.031 (4)

3. **Provisional Report of Death (VS-34) for Stillbirths:** All Provisionals marked as, or proven to be, **Stillbirths (or Fetal Deaths)** shall be forwarded within **three (3) working days** to the OVS address, Attn: Quality Assurance Field Staff.

   Authority: KRS 213.031 (4)

Appointment of Local Registrars and Deputy Registrars

Local Registrar

The recommendation for a local registrar shall come from the director of the district health department. The request should be in the form of a letter, written on health department letterhead and addressed to the current State Registrar of Vital Statistics. The request shall be signed and dated by the director, and it should contain the same basic information, listed below, for requests to appoint deputy registrars. See **Example A** (page 11) for a template that can be used for drafting an appointment letter.

Authority: KRS 213.036 (2)

Deputy Registrar

The local registrar may appoint deputy registrars in the health department to help perform vital statistics duties. The local registrar should appoint at least one (1) deputy registrar in each of the county's hospitals, nursing homes, or any healthcare facility. These deputy registrars are responsible for the completion of Provisional Report of Death forms for the facility to which they are assigned. **However, appointments of registered nurses employed by hospices or other health facilities are not necessary, since authority is granted to them to sign Provisional Report of Death forms under KRS 314.181.**

To nominate a deputy registrar, the local registrar shall send either a memorandum, as outlined in **Example B** (page 12), or an appointment letter on health department letterhead, to the state registrar. Whether the request is sent in memo or letter form, it should include the following information:

- Name of appointee
- County of appointment
- Effective date of appointment
- Whether appointment is new or is replacing a prior registrar (name of prior registrar required)
- Appointee's place of employment
- Appointee's Address of employment
- Telephone number of appointee's employment
- Email address of appointee
- Signature of local registrar.

Authority: KRS 213.036 (3)

Where to Send

Appointment memoranda and letters can be emailed, faxed, or mailed to:

Attn: Quality Assurance Field Staff
Office of Vital Statistics
275 East Main Street, 1 E-A
Frankfort, KY 40621

Appointment Certificates

The quality assurance field staff will prepare a certificate of appointment for each nominee that is approved.

For a **deputy registrar**, the certificate shall be returned to the local registrar for signing and presentation to the new appointee. Any deputy registrar who is employed by a hospital, nursing home, or other medical facility should also receive:

- **A Cover Letter (Example C**, refer to page 13 below**)**, which addresses the nature of the appointment.

- **Duties of a Deputy Registrar in a Facility Where a Death has Occurred** (refer to page 14 below), which explains the duties of the deputy registrar in a facility where deaths routinely occur, such as a hospital or nursing home, or any other healthcare facility.

- **How to Complete the Provisional Report of Death** (refer to page 15-16 below), which explains how the Provisional Report of Death should be completed after a person dies and the body is released for burial or disposition.

For a **local registrar**, the certificate, after being signed by the state registrar and the cabinet secretary, shall be returned to the director of the district or local health department for presentation to the new appointee.

Example of Letter Appointing a Local Registrar
(Example A)

[District Health Department Letterhead]

[Date]

Jeffrey E. Sparks, Jr.
State Registrar of Vital Statistics
275 East Main Street, 1E-A
Frankfort, KY 40621
Attn: Quality Assurance Field Staff

RE: Appointment of Local Registrar

[Name of District Health Department] is submitting this request for the appointment of **[Name and Title of Appointee]** as the local registrar for the **[Name of County]** Health Department, located at **[Street Address, City, State, Zip]**. This appointment should be made effective as of **[dd/mm/yyyy]**. The appointee may be contacted by phone at **[phone number]**, or by email at **[email address]**.

[State whether this a New or Replacement position. If a Replacement position, include Name of Person being replaced]

[Name of Appointee] shall carry out the administrative duties required by the Office of Vital Statistics in compliance with KRS 213.036.

Sincerely,

[Signature of District Director]

[Name of District Director]
[Title of District Director]
[Name of District Health Department]

Example of Memorandum Appointing Deputy Registrar
(Example B)

TO: Jeffrey E. Sparks, Jr.
State Registrar of Vital Statistics

FROM: Local Registrar _____

County

SUBJECT: Deputy Registrar Appointment

DATE: _____

Please issue a certificate appointing _____

as deputy registrar for _____ County.

The effective date of the appointment is _____.

This appointment is ____ new (i.e. not replacing someone formerly holding this position)

____ replacement for _____

Please provide the following information for the recommended appointee:

Title or Position _____

Place of Employment _____

Address of Employment _____

_____

Work Telephone _____

Work Email _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Example of Letter of Duties for a Deputy Registrar
(Example C)

[DATE]

J. Jones, Deputy Registrar
Dover Manor Nursing Home
123 Our Street
Our town, Kentucky 40000

Dear J. Jones:

Enclosed with this correspondence is the Certificate of Appointment authorizing you, as a deputy registrar of vital statistics in **[Name of County]** County. In addition, a handout is included to assist in completing your duties as the deputy registrar in **[Facility Name]**.

Primarily, your responsibilities are to regulate the process of the "Provisional Report of Death" (VS-34) in your facility. You may sign a few blank Provisionals that may be used when you are off duty. However, the person responsible for providing Provisionals in your absence should be made aware of the procedures necessary to comply with the state law regarding this process.

If you should have any questions, or need assistance, please contact me at **[address, telephone number]**.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe
Local Registrar

Duties of the Deputy Registrar

Each county in the commonwealth has a local registrar. This person has been appointed by the Secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to regulate the operation of vital statistics in his/her county. Since one of the local registrars' main responsibilities is to carry out the provisions of the law relating to the registration and filing of deaths, local registrars have the authority to appoint at least one deputy registrar in each healthcare facility to ensure the timely and efficient completion of Provisional Reports of Death forms (VS-34).

Deputy registrars who issue Provisional Reports of Death (Provisionals) should understand and adhere to the following guidelines before releasing a body to a funeral director (or person acting as such).

When to Notify the Coroner

The deputy registrar should be familiar with circumstances that may require notification to the coroner's office per KRS 72.020 and KRS 72.25. If in doubt, the deputy registrar should contact the local coroner for details and procedures relevant to his/her facility. In brief, the coroner's office always should be informed regarding:

- Deaths resulting from drowning, homicide, suicide, accident, or any violent, sudden or unexplained cause – **in other words, any death that does not seem to be natural.**
- Deaths in which cremation is anticipated.

Purpose of a Provisional

The Provisional Report of Death serves several functions, which include:

a. Acting as an initial notification that a death has occurred.

b. Serving as a "receipt" for the facility where the death occurred that the next-of-kin properly authorized the body to be released to a funeral home (or person acting as such).

c. Providing the funeral director authority to accept custody of a body, and to also transport and/or dispose of the body.

d. Serving as a legal "contract" stating that the receiving funeral home will secure and file a death certificate with the Office of Vital Statistics.

e. Acting as a burial permit that lists the date and place of burial.

f. If cremation is planned, providing the coroner's authorization for cremation.

> ***NOTE:*** *With the exception of remains of fetal death, crematories will not accept a body unless the coroner has authorized the cremation.*

g. Providing a "tracking" process for missing or delinquent death certificates.

How to Complete the Provisional Report of Death (VS-34)

NOTE: In addition to the information listed below, instructions for completing the Provisional Report of Death are listed on the back of the form itself. *OVS recommends that deputy registrars also consult the CDC Physician's Handbook on Medical Certification of Death (available online at https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/misc/hb_cod.pdf) to understand how items listed on a Provisional relate to the completion of a death certificate.*

COMPLETING THE SECTIONS OF A PROVISIONAL

When completing a Provisional Report of Death, the deputy registrar should ensure that all information provided is legible, accurate, and complete.

Section (A) – To Be Completed by Facility, Coroner, or Hospice Nurse:

List the full legal name of the decedent.
List the date of death and hour of death (indicate AM or PM).
List the county where the death occurred and the county in which the decedent resided.
List the age, race, and sex of the decedent.
If decedent was a newborn and there were signs of life, list the minutes or hours that infant lived.
If decedent was a stillbirth, list age as "stillbirth" (do not list "newborn"), and include the number of weeks estimated for the gestation of the fetus (see page 23 for further information on fetal death).

FACILITY OR LOCATION OF DEATH: List the name and complete mailing address of the facility where the death occurred.

MEDICAL CERTIFIER OF CERTIFICATE: List the name and address of the **attending (pronouncing) physician** in charge of the patient's care for the illness or condition that resulted in death: this individual shall be designated as the **medical certifier** of the certificate. If available, the address of the medical certifier should also be listed in the space provided. **Please note that it is important to list the medical certifier correctly, because this individual shall also be responsible for completing the pronouncing and medical certification on the Kentucky Certificate of Death.**

Authority: KRS 213.076 (1) (2)

NOTE: *If death occurred more than thirty-six (36) hours after the decedent was last treated by a physician, or if the cause of death was not natural, then the* ***county coroner*** *will assume the role of medical certifier, and he/she should be listed (with his/her address) on this line.*

Authority: KRS 213.076 (4)

FACILITY NOTES: Include any notes that may be pertinent to the death. (e.g. "*Coroner called*; *DNR patient"*).

BLOOD AND BODY FLUID PRECAUTIONS ADVISED? This should always be checked **YES**.

KODA: To be completed as required by law.

Section (B) – To Be Completed and Signed by Local Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Coroner, or Hospice Nurse:

The deputy registrar should list his/her facility's name as the facility releasing the remains. The registrar will also need to record the name of the funeral home, or person acting as such (i.e. coroner, deputy coroner, medical examiner, or family member), who is taking custody of the body. If possible, the next-of-kin should authorize the release of the remains by signing live in the appropriate space; however, if the next-of-kin is not available in person, then authorization by phone is acceptable, provided that a witness affirms the next-of-kin's intention by signing in the space marked "Witness" (with the signatory's name printed above). The deputy registrar also must sign in this section.

Section (C) – To Be Completed and Signed by Funeral Director (or Person Acting as Such):

The funeral home's name and address must be listed, and the person picking up the body must sign in the space provided.

NOTE: *Only a licensed funeral director, embalmer, coroner, deputy coroner, medical examiner, or family member may pick up a body for transport or final disposition.*

Authority: KRS 213.076 (1) (d)

After Section (C) Has Been Completed:

- The **white** copy of the Provisional is to be given to the funeral director (or person acting as such). This is the permit to transport and dispose of the body.
- The facility releasing the body then sends the **yellow** copy to the local registrar in the county where the death occurred. This should be done on a weekly basis.
- The facility releasing the body must retain the **pink** copy in their records for a period of five (5) years.

NOTE: *See page 21 for additional Information on filing procedures for Provisionals.*

How to Re-order Forms

Maintain Supply

Supplying forms to providers and clients in their county is an important duty of a local registrar. The local registrar is responsible for ensuring that there is always an adequate number of current forms on hand to meet demand. To do this, the registrar should have a working knowledge of the annual number of births and deaths that occur at facilities under their jurisdiction, and distribute applicable forms accordingly (i.e., if a hospital has 200 deaths per year, then it should be supplied annually with 225-250 Provisional Report of Death forms). **It is usually necessary for a local registrar to establish a tracking method to ensure providers are properly supplied. It is further suggested that registrars keep at least a six (6) month supply of all forms on hand to avoid backlogs.**

The list of forms to be kept in the local health department appears on page 18. Only the most current versions of forms should be maintained and distributed. **All forms may be copied except for the Provisional Report of Death form (VS-34).**

NOTE: *Individuals requesting a Divorce or Annulment Form* ***(VS-300)*** *should be referred to the CHFS website at* https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/vsb/Pages/default.aspx *for a fillable version of the form.*

Ordering

All forms, **except the VS-34**, can be copied in office and/or printed directly from the OVS website (see page 18 for details). **Provisional Report of Death forms (VS-34)** must be ordered through the **Clinic Management System (CMS)**, using the **CDP Portal** (log in at https://portal.cdpehs.com/CDPPortal/Login.aspx). A user guide for the site is accessible at https://doc.cdpehs.com/cms/Kentucky_CMS_User_Guide.pdf.

Orders from the CDP Portal may be submitted on the 1st and 30th of each month; however, the Forms Ordering Schedule (on the Forms Order Edit screen) should be consulted to determine the date on which the order will be submitted to the printing department. Once printed, the Provisional forms will be shipped to the health department, together with other non-OVS forms that may have been ordered.

NOTE: *Orders from the CDP Portal often take four (4) to six (6) weeks to process, and, therefore, should be placed well in advance of depletion of stock.*

Contact the CMS/CDP Portal Help Desk at (502) 564-6663 if you have questions or problems regarding the ordering process. If you cannot get in touch with a representative at this number, contact the quality assurance field staff at OVS at (502) 564-4212.

Forms to Have in Local Health Departments

VS-8 **Declaration of Paternity** (most recent revision) – Provide to anyone who asks for this form.

NOTE: *A fillable form is also available for anyone to print at the OVS website at* https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/vsb/Forms/VS8.pdf.

VS-26 **Request for Verification of Birth/Death** – Provide to APPROVED AGENCIES ONLY (e.g. Community Based Services, Social Security, etc.—not to the public). Requests are to be sent directly to OVS. Local registrars should make copies of these Birth/Death Verification forms as needed.

VS-31B **Application for Death Certificate for Funeral Directors (color-coded)** – Provide to Funeral directors only.

VS-34 **Provisional Report of Death** – Provide to hospitals, coroners, nursing homes, hospices. ***ORDER FORMS THROUGH THE CDP PORTAL*** *(see page 17).*

VS-35A **Application for Permit to Disinter and Reinter in Same Cemetery** – Provide to funeral directors, cemeteries, attorneys, others who are aware of regulations.

Next-of-Kin Clarification Letter and Permission to Disinter/Reinter Human Remains – Same as above.

Instructions for Funeral Home Letter (Clarifying Standing of Next-of-Kin) – Same as above.

VS-35 **Permit for Disinterment and Re-interment in Same Cemetery** – Same as above.

VS-37 **Application for Birth Certificate** – Provide to the general public, as well as to schools, post offices, libraries, court clerks, etc., per their request. Please access the link below to ensure that the current version is used:
https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/vsb/Forms/VS37BirthApp.pdf.

VS-300 **Certificate of Divorce or Annulment/Circuit Court Clerks/Attorneys** – Only the fillable version of this form should be used. It is available at the OVS website at https://ovs.chfs.ky.gov/VS300Divorce.

DO NOT MAKE COPIES OF VS-300 FOR PUBLIC USE!

Declarations of Paternity

Local registrars shall provide for voluntary paternity establishment services. All health departments should post a notice stating that these services are available. Pamphlets pertaining to paternity services can be obtained from the Division of Child Support Enforcement. To assist with paternity declarations, each local registrar shall:

- Have available to the public two or (preferably) three Notaries Public (including the local registrar), who, in addition to being able to notarize the completed Declaration of Paternity Form (VS-8), are also able to assist the parents in properly filling it out.
- Check photographic identification to verify the parents' identities (i.e. confirm the mother and father are who they claim to be).
- Instruct the mother and father to thoroughly read the written explanation of their rights and responsibilities on the back of the Declaration of Paternity Form (VS-8) before they sign the form.
- Also provide an oral explanation to the mother and father of their rights and responsibilities listed on the back of the VS-8 before they sign the paternity. This may be done either by reading the rights and responsibilities to the parents, or by having them listen to or view an approved audio or video tape on the subject (if available).
- Review the completed VS-8 form to ensure that it: 1) is legible (preferably printed or typed); 2) has been completed fully and correctly; and 3) has been notarized in both the father's section and the mother's section.
- Make a copy of the form for the parents.
- Within three (3) working days, send the original Declaration of Paternity Form to:

Attn: Birth Amendment Unit
Office of Vital Statistics
275 East Main Street, 1 E-A
Frankfort, KY 40621

***NOTE**: Either parent can request a rescission of the paternity affidavit within sixty (60) days of the notarized signatures. Please contact the Birth Amendments Unit supervisor for the **Rescission Form (VS-8E)**.*

Authority: KRS 213.036 (5), 901 KAR 5:070 Section 1

Amending a Certificate of Live Birth

***NOTE**: After a Certificate of Live Birth has been filed with the Office of Vital Statistics (OVS), the certificate can only be amended by OVS. No amendments can be made at the local level.*

Incorrect Information on Child's Certificate of Live Birth

- If a parent receives a certified copy of a child's birth certificate that contains incorrect or missing information, he/she should call **(502) 564-4212 and ask to speak with the Birth Amendment Unit supervisor**. Requirements for amending a certificate will vary depending on who was responsible for the error and the specific item needing to be corrected or changed. The certificate must be returned to OVS with the required amendment document(s) and a signed-and-dated statement explaining why the certificate has been returned. Upon completion of the amendment process, a corrected certified copy shall be returned to the parent.
- If the hospital made an error on a certificate, then a statement on hospital letterhead requesting OVS to make the change usually will suffice. This statement must include the birth name on the certificate, the date of birth, place of birth, the error on the certificate and the correct information. The request also must be dated and signed by a hospital representative.
- **For homebirths filed with a county health department prior to July 15, 2020**, certain items on the certificate may be changed—provided they are listed correctly on the original homebirth worksheet—by a letter of correction sent to OVS by the local registrar (see page 4).
- For changes that do not involve hospital errors, parents should contact the OVS Birth Amendment Unit, as instructed above.
- Questions about changing a Certificate of Live Birth **prior to its being filed with OVS** should be directed to the Vital Events Unit supervisor, also available at (502) 564-4212.

Paternities/Adoption

***NOTE:** Local registrars are now only concerned with the following procedure in reference to births that were filed in their office **prior to July 15, 2020**.*

Paternity and adoption actions are considered confidential. Whenever an adoption or paternity action has been completed by OVS, a VS-10 notification form will be sent to the local registrar in the county of birth, or, in cases where the mother's county is different from the birth county, to the mother's county. These forms are sent monthly from OVS. When the local registrar receives a VS-10, the county copy of the birth record should be pulled from the local volume and returned to OVS. The copies, along with the VS-10, are to be returned within five (5) working days of receipt and should be sent to the attention of the Amendment Unit.

For Your Information Only

Information letters are initiated by OVS to obtain missing or additional information to fully complete certificates of birth and death. If the information is needed for a birth certificate, a letter is mailed to the birthing facility. If the information is needed for a death certificate, the form is mailed to the funeral home or physician listed on the death certificate.

Authority: KRS 213.121, 901 KAR 5:070

Provisional Reports of Death

Notification of Death

Each death occurring in the commonwealth shall be registered in accordance with prescribed laws and regulations. Whereas death certificates are filed directly with the state OVS, Provisional Reports of Death (Provisionals) are sent to the local registrar in the county where the death occurred. In addition to serving as the initial notification of the death, the Provisional also acts as: a release for the body; a notification that organs are to be donated; a record of who will be responsible for filing the death certificate; and the coroner's authorization for cremation.

Instructions

The local registrar provides Provisional Report of Death forms (VS-34) to the facilities where deaths are commonly reported, such as hospitals, extended care facilities, hospice organizations, and coroner's offices. Some counties also distribute Provisionals to funeral homes upon request. The VS-34 is a three-part, color-coded form, and the individual pages should be utilized as follows:

The **white copy** (original) is presented to the funeral director, or person taking possession of the remains, and accompanies the body throughout disposition. It is then sent, within five (5) working days of the final disposition, to the local registrar in the county where the death occurred. The local registrar should notify the funeral director if the white copies of the Provisional are not being received.

The **yellow copy** is sent by the facility to the local registrar of the county where the death occurred within one (1) week of the death. It serves as the official notification that a death has occurred in the registrar's county.

The **pink copy** is retained by the facility where the death occurred, by the coroner, or by the hospice organization. Instructions for completion of the Provisional Report of Death are on the back of the form. Please also note that:

- A Provisional must be completed for transportation of any limb(s) or organ(s).
- A Provisional must also be completed for any stillbirth (i.e. reportable fetal death) that occurs in a hospital. Both the yellow and white copies of Provisionals for stillbirths should be forwarded directly to OVS within three (3) working days of receipt by the local registrar.

Next-of-Kin Possession

Facilities should be made aware that it is **permissible for the next-of-kin to take possession of a body for the final disposition without the involvement of a funeral home**. However, in these cases the facility should explain to the next-of-kin transporting the remains that he/she is thereby responsible for sending the white copy of the Provisional to the health department in the county where the death occurred within five (5) working days after disposition. **The local registrar will then be responsible for completing the death certificate.**

Reconciling Provisionals with 677 Report (Death Index)

Filing System for Provisionals

Each local registrar is responsible for maintaining a filing system for the completed Provisional Reports of Death that occur in the registrar's county. **Provisionals received by the registrar for deaths that occurred in other counties should be sent to the appropriate county registrar.** Provisional reports should be kept in alphabetical order; and each Provisional must be retained until it has been reconciled with the 677 Report per the procedures discussed below.

677 Report

The **677 Report (Death Index)** is an alphabetic index of all death certificates received by the OVS on a monthly basis. Deaths occurring in a particular month usually will not appear before the report for the subsequent month (i.e. if a death occurs in January, it probably will not appear before the February report). **The Death Index for each month must be checked against all Provisionals received within thirty (30) days of receipt.**

How to Reconcile

The name and date of death on the Provisional should be matched with the name and date on the Death Index. The names of the decedent may contain spelling variations, or first names (or for female, the last names) may be completely different, so all entries must be checked carefully to account for these circumstances. **If there is a match, the Provisional should be discarded, unless a cremation is indicated (see below). If a name on a Provisional does not appear on the 677 Report for the month immediately following the death, then the Provisional should be held so it can be checked against Death Index for the two (2) following months.**

If the name of the decedent appears on the Death Index for either of these subsequent months, then the Provisional may be discarded at that time. However, if the name does not appear on any of the three (3) consecutive 677 Reports against which it has been checked, then the registrar should **call the funeral home to ask if a Certificate of Death has been issued for the decedent.** If a death certificate has not been filed, then the registrar should forward the Provisional to the quality assurance field staff at OVS with a note providing the reason stated by the funeral home for not having completed the certificate.

If Disposition is Cremation

If the disposition was cremation, then the white copy of the Provisional, with the coroner's signature in section D, **must be retained for a period of five (5) years from the date of death.** If the name of the decedent cannot be matched with the Death Index as described above, then a copy of the Provisional should be sent to the OVS quality assurance field staff, with original being retained for the local registrar's cremation file.

Not Open Records

Neither the Provisional Report of Death (VS-34) nor the 677 Report (Death Index) is considered an open record. Therefore, these reports should NOT be made accessible to the public in any manner.

Stillbirths and Fetal Deaths

Stillbirths (and other fetal deaths) do not appear on 677 Report. Moreover, as of July 15, 2020, county health departments stopped receiving stillbirth certificates from hospitals. Therefore, since local registrars are not able to reconcile Provisionals received for stillbirths and fetal deaths, these should be sent to the OVS quality assurance field staff within three (3) working days of receipt.

Reporting Requirements

A Stillbirth Certificate must be filed for a fetus of twenty (20) weeks gestation or more, or of a weight of 350 grams (approximately 12.3 ounces) or more.

If a fetus is **less than twenty (20) weeks and less than 350 grams**—and did not take a single breath or show any vital signs—**then no certificate will be filed.**

However, both a Certificate of Live Birth and a Certificate of Death must be filed for any infant death—regardless of weight or gestational estimate—if the infant took even a single breath and/or demonstrated any vital signs (such as a heartbeat). The chart below should be reviewed for clarification of the reporting requirements.

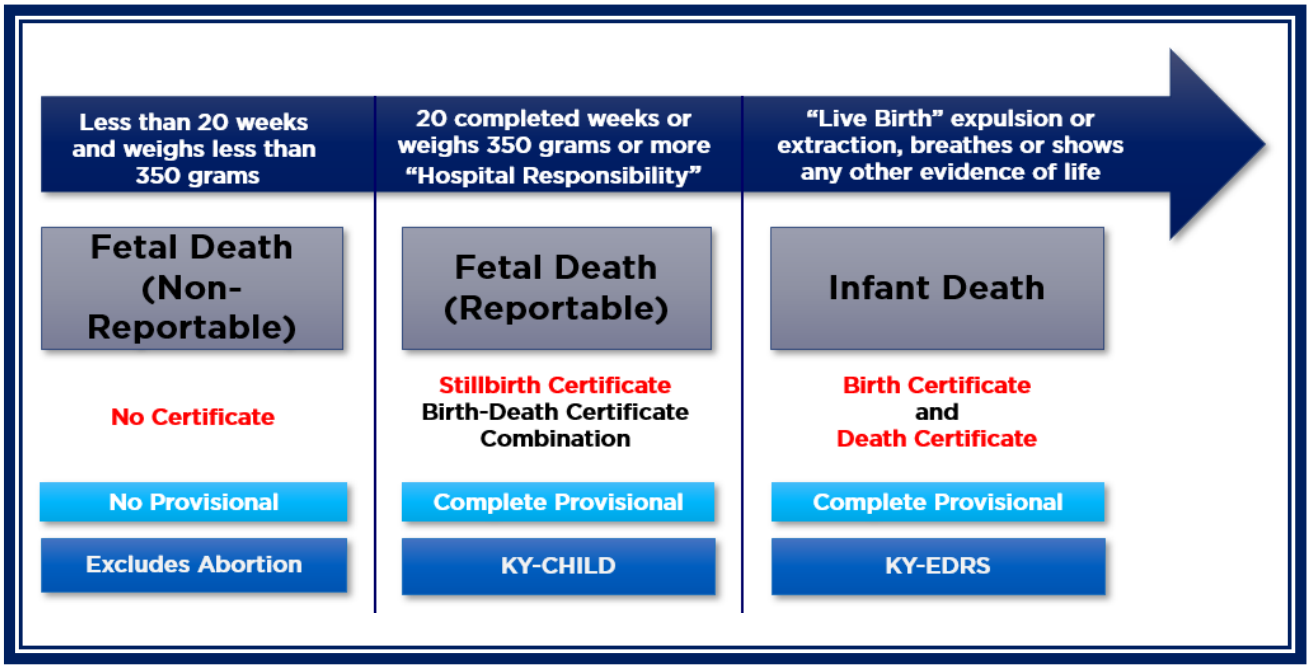

Fig. 1 – Shows all reporting requirements for fetal deaths, stillbirths, and infant deaths.

Out-of-State Burial Permits

An out-of-state burial-transit permit, issued by other states to accompany a dead body brought into the commonwealth, shall be the authority for disposition and shall serve in the place of a Provisional. **Funeral directors should be made aware to send out-of-state permits back to the state (or county) listed on the permit after the final disposition**. There is no defined retention schedule for out-of-state permits sent to a Kentucky registrar; therefore, the local registrar may dispose of them following the disposition of the body.

Authority: KRS 213.076, KRS 213.081, KRS 213.146

Certificates of Death

Whose Responsibility

The funeral director, or person acting as such (coroner, deputy coroner, medical examiner, or family member), who first takes custody of a body shall be responsible for filing the death certificate (VS-1A). The funeral director (or other responsible party) has five (5) days to complete the Funeral Director's section (top) of the form, and then submit the record to the medical certifier. The Medical Certifier's section (bottom) must be completed, signed, and returned to the funeral director within five (5) working days by the physician. In cases where the coroner is the medical certifier, the coroner has five (5) working days after receiving inquiry results pertaining to the death to complete, sign and submit the death certificate to OVS. When a funeral director is not involved, the responsibility for preparing and filing the death certificate shall be upon the person who first takes custody of the body (i.e. parents, hospital). **The local registrar is responsible for helping to prepare a death certificate when a family reports a death that does not involve a funeral director**.

Effective January 1, 2015, all certificates of death have been required to be filed through Kentucky's Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS). The only exemptions to filing through EDRS are cases in which either an out-of-state funeral home or a family member took possession of the body. In these instances, filing death certificates on paper is permitted. Questions pertaining to filing death certificates on paper should be directed to the quality assurance field staff at OVS.

Requests for Certified Copies

The most expedient and preferred method to place initial orders of certified copies of death certificates is through EDRS at the time of filing a death record. Kentucky Funeral Directors who prefer not to place their initial order for certified copies through EDRS have the option to use the Application for Death Certificates for Funeral Director Use Only (**VS-31B—current revision)**. **This form can only be used to order copies at the time the death certificate is filed.** The local registrar is responsible for providing the funeral homes with the link to the VS-31B form upon request. The link, or copy of the form, should only be given to funeral home personnel.

Initial orders by funeral directors for certified copies of death certificates should include the three (3) free verifications, with at least one (1) verification retained by the funeral home for reference. Certified copies and verifications will be issued no later than two (2) working days from the date that the death record is filed, provided that the certificate is error free and an order is placed through EDRS.

The Application for Death Certificate (VS-31 form, see page 4) is used to order additional certified copies after the initial filing of the death certificate. This form can be used by funeral homes and the general public alike. Orders for additional copies normally require three (3) to four (4) weeks to fulfill.

Authority: KRS 213.076

Permit to Cremate

Permit

Section D of the Provisional Report of Death (VS-34) serves as the permit required by Kentucky law for the cremation of human remains. The funeral director, or person acting as such, shall be responsible for having the coroner of the county where death occurred to complete Section D on the white copy (original) of the VS-34. The funeral director (or person acting as such) shall then present the original copy, bearing the coroner's authorization, to the crematorium. After cremation, the crematorium must complete Section E on the Provisional, and forward it for filing to the county registrar where death occurred. Because cremation is considered type of final disposition, cremated remains do not require any type of form or permit for further transportation.

Per KRS 213.081 (2), the provisions listed above shall not apply to the cremation of fetal death remains in the absence of any indication of a criminal act.

Retention of Permit

The local registrar shall retain the completed Provisional for a period of five (5) years if disposition is cremation.

Authority: KRS 213.081, KRS 213.146

Communicable Disease Statement

A **Communicable Disease Statement**, also known as a **Letter of Non-Contagion**, is usually required to transport a deceased body from Kentucky to another country. For such inquiries, the local registrar should advise the funeral director (or other person requesting this letter) to contact the coroner of the county of death. However, in instances where the coroner is unable or unwilling to provide a letter, then the Director of the Local Health Department of the county of death shall assume responsibility of issuing this statement. The statement, which should be signed by the director of the health department and notarized, must speak to the body being free of contagion (based on the medical information listed on the death certificate) and being suitable for transport.

An example of a Communicable Disease Statement issued by a Health Department is provided on page 27.

Example of Communicable Disease Statement
(Example D)

[Health Department Letterhead]

Communicable Disease Statement

[Date]

RE: **[Name of Decedent]**
Date of Birth: **[mm/dd/yyyy]**
Date of Death: **[mm/dd/yyyy]**

To Whom It May Concern:

Based on the cause of death listed in the medical section of death certificate provided to me, I confirm that **[Name of Decedent]** did not die from a communicable disease. Therefore, to the best of my knowledge, the body is free of contagion and suitable for transport.

[Signature of Director]

[Name of Director]
[Title of Director]
[Name of District Health Department]

Subscribed & affirmed before me this the ____day of _____ year _____

Name of Notary (Print): _____

Signature of Notary: _____

Notary Identification Number: _____

Notary's Commission Expires on: _____
(Month) (Day) (Year)

Notary Seal (black ink only)

Hospice Deaths

Pronouncement of Death

When a patient who is receiving services of a licensed hospice program dies at home or in a hospice inpatient unit, a registered nurse employed by the hospice organization may make the pronouncement of death. The hospice nurse shall complete and sign the Provisional Report of Death (VS-34) to release the remains for transportation and disposition. Hospice nurses need not be appointed deputy registrars, as they are authorized by statute to make pronouncements of death and to release bodies for disposition.

*The cause of death shall be completed on the certificate of death by the physician, advanced practice registered nurse, physician assistant, dentist, or chiropractor in charge of the patient's care for the illness or condition which resulted in death, except when inquiry is required by **KRS 72.400** to **KRS 72.475**.*

Contact the Coroner

Per KRS 72.020 and KRS 72.025, the county coroner should be immediately notified for deaths that occurred under certain circumstances. As a general rule, the hospice nurse should contact the coroner if:

He or she feels the death was not from natural causes; or
The hospice nurse was not in attendance at the death; or
The coroner has issued a directive to be notified whenever any out-of-health-facility death occurs.

The coroner may complete and sign the Provisional Report of Death when making a pronouncement of death. It is also permissible for a family member to sign the Provisional to release the body for transportation and disposition (see above, page 16).

Authority: KRS 213.076 and KRS 314.181

Disinterment/Reinterment

*A permit is required to disinter or move any human remains. If the body is being moved or relocated in the same cemetery, the permit is obtained from the local registrar in the county where the cemetery is located. The applicant **MUST** provide next-of-kin permission as defined below or a court order.*

Disinterment/Reinterment in Same Cemetery

The local registrar should provide the following forms to any applicant requesting to disinter/reinter human remains in the same cemetery. A permit for disinterment/reinterment cannot be issued unless all three (3) of these documents have been fully and accurately completed.

1. **VS-35A (most current revision), "Application for Disinterment/Reinterment in the Same Cemetery" (see example on** page 30**).** This form must be signed and dated by requestor and the local registrar.
2. **"Next-of-Kin Clarification Letter and Permission to Disinter/Reinter Human Remains" (see example on** page 31**).** This letter must be signed, witnessed, and notarized by all surviving next-of-kin of the same class.
3. **"Funeral Home Letter" (see instructions on** page 32**).** This should be in the form of a statement, on funeral home letterhead, signed and dated by the funeral home director, verifying that all required next-of-kin have given written permission for the removal of the remains.

***NOTE:** An order from a court of competent jurisdiction for the removal and reinterment of the remains will substitute for the **Next-of-Kin Letter (Item #2)** and **Funeral Home Letter (Item #3)**.*

Upon receipt and approval of the above-mentioned documents, the local registrar will complete form **VS-35, "Permit for Disinterment and Reinterment in Same Cemetery" (see example on** page 33**)** based on the information listed on the VS-35A. To finalize the process:

- The local registrar shall stamp the permit with the county health department seal and make a copy (if needed, a health department seal can be ordered through any office supply store).
- The local registrar shall give the stamped permit to the applicant.
- The applicant shall return the completed permit to the local registrar within ten (10) days after the reinterment has been completed.
- The registrar shall retain the completed permit indefinitely.

Disinterment/Reinterment in a Different Cemetery

When one or more bodies are to be disinterred for reburial in a different cemetery, or for other disposal, a permit is required. The application and permit shall be obtained from the OVS quality assurance field staff. Applicant may call (502) 564-4212 for further information.

Authority: 901 KAR 5:090

VS-35A
(Rev. 10/2016)

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
OFFICE OF VITAL STATISTICS

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT TO DISINTER AND REINTER IN SAME CEMETERY

_____ County Health Department/Center
_____ Kentucky

Name of Deceased: _____ Date of Death: _____

Age at Death: _____ Place of Death: _____

Name of Cemetery: _____ Date(s) of Removal: _____

Name and Address of Responsible Person or Firm: _____
_____
_____

I hereby certify that the information above is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I am familiar with, and will abide by all applicable laws and regulations relating to the burial of human remains and disinterment procedures.

_____ _____
(Requestor's Signature) (Date)

Approved: _____ Date: _____ Permit No. _____
(Local Registrar Signature)

NOTE: If reinterment is to be in a different cemetery or a different method of disposal is planned, the Permit must be obtained from the State Registrar in the Office of Vital Statistics.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LOCAL DISINTERMENT PERMIT

Applicant completes the local disinterment application (VS-35A) and returns the completed form to the county health department in which the disinterment/reinterment will occur.

Local Registrar makes sure the application is complete. If the application is complete, the Local Registrar will issue the Permit for Disinterment and Reinterment in the same cemetery.

Local Registrar stamps the permit with the raised seal for the county, and makes a copy of the permit for retention until the permit is completed and returned by responsible parties.

The Local Registrar affixes the original permit to the application for permanent retention in the local office.

EXAMPLE

Fig. 2 – Shows a copy of Form VS-35A the Application for Permit to Disinter and Reinter in Same Cemetery.

NEXT-OF-KIN CLARIFICATION LETTER &
PERMISSION TO DISINTER AND REINTER HUMAN REMAINS

Name of Deceased: _____

Place of Death: _____ **Date of Death:** _____

Present Grave Site: _____

New Grave Site: _____

Class of Next-of-Kin to Deceased: _____
(Wife, Husband, Parent(s), Children, Brother, Sister, etc.)

The paramount right is in the surviving spouse, if the parties were living in the normal relations of marriage. It will require a very strong case to justify a court in interfering with the wish of the survivor.

If there is no surviving spouse, the right is in the next line of kin in the order of their relation to the decedent in the following order:

1. **Children of proper age (18).** Must have permission of all children above age 18.
2. **Parents.** Must have permission from both parents (if one is deceased, state on above-mentioned line).
3. **Brother(s) and/or sister(s).** Must have permission of all living brothers and sisters above age 18.
4. **More distant kin.** May be modified due to circumstances of special intimacy or association with the decedent.

I (We), the undersigned being the next of kin of the above-mentioned deceased, do hereby certify that the information above is accurate and complete to the best of my (our) knowledge and being the next of kin do hereby this date request that the above mentioned deceased be disinterred from the present resting place and re-interred at the above-mentioned cemetery. I (We) do hereby give permission to _____ **of** _____**, KY,**
(Responsible Party, i.e. Funeral Home, etc.) (City, Town, County)
to complete said disinterment and re-interment in accordance with the law and do hereby hold this establishment harmless from any liability that may arise from such procedures.

_____ Next of Kin

_____ Next of Kin

_____ Next of Kin

_____ Next of Kin

_____ Next of Kin

_____ Next of Kin

Dated this the _____ **day of** _____**, 20**___**.** _____ Notary's Signature

_____ Notary's Name (please print) _____ Notary ID no. _____ My Commission Expires

EXAMPLE

Fig. 3 – Shows a copy of Next-of-Kin Clarification Letter.

Funeral Home Letter

Please submit a letter on your funeral home letterhead, addressed to the local registrar of the county in which the current grave is located. The letter must be signed and dated by the funeral director, explaining the next-of-kin authorization for the disinterment/reinterment.

Content

The letter should state that the person, or persons, listed as next-of-kin (with names listed) are the *only closest surviving next-of-kin* for the decedent (include decedent's name and date of death). It should also indicate that permission for disinterment has been obtained from all members of the same familial class, and whether there is a surviving spouse. Moreover, if any of the circumstances listed below apply, they must be addressed in the letter.

- If there is no surviving spouse, and the children are requesting the disinterment, then all children over eighteen (18) years of age must give permission.
- If there is no surviving spouse or children, then both parents must give permission.
- If there is no surviving spouse, children, or parents, then all siblings must give permission.

Please call the local registrar if other next-of-kin are making the request.

How to Submit

Completed Funeral Home letters may be either mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to the local registrar's office.

VS-35
(Rev. 10/2016)

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
OFFICE OF VITAL STATISTICS

_____ County Health Department

PERMIT FOR DISINTERMENT AND REINTERMENT IN THE SAME CEMETERY

Permission is hereby granted for disinterment and reinterment of the remains of the individual listed below. This permit is issued solely to authorize the transfer of these human remains from one gravesite to another gravesite in the **same** cemetery. The Sexton of the cemetery or, if there is no sexton, the person or firm responsible for the transfer, must certify the dates of disinterment and reinterment, and return this permit to the Local Registrar within ten days following reinterment.

If disinterment and reinterment do not both occur between sunrise and sunset of the same day, explain below the reason for the delay, and the location of the body during the interval between disinterment and reinterment.

Name of deceased: _____ Age at death: _____

Name of cemetery: _____

Name and address of person or firm responsible: _____

_____

_____

Local Registrar Signature: _____ Date: _____

This is to certify that the remains identified above were disinterred on _____ and reinterred on _____ and that the work was performed under the direction of _____.

(Responsible Party/Sexton Signature)_____

This permit, properly endorsed by the sexton, was returned to my office for permanent retention on _____.

Local Registrar Signature _____ Date: _____

NOTES: _____

_____

_____

EXAMPLE

Fig. 4 – Shows a copy of Form VS-35 the Permit for Disinterment and Reinterment in Same Cemetery.

Family Cemeteries

Inquiries

Inquiries are frequently made regarding the establishment of private or family cemeteries on private property. There are no state regulations about family cemeteries. The jurisdiction falls to the local government.

- The landowner should contact the city or county zoning commission or the county attorney's office to inquire about local ordinances.
- The depths of burial regulations apply to privately owned cemeteries.
- The same regulations apply for obtaining a permit to disinter and reinter a body in a family-owned cemetery.

Authority: 901 KAR 5:090

Burial Depth Variance

Administrative Regulation

901 KAR 5:090 *Burial and disinterment of dead bodies.*
Section 1. Interment

(2) *Where impenetrable rock is encountered the local health department may, upon proper application, grant a variance to the depth of burial requirements of this administrative regulation.*

Requests for a burial depth variance should be submitted in writing by a funeral director (or other person in charge of the burial) to the local registrar in the county where the interment is to occur. These requests should: 1) list the name of the decedent, the date of death, the name and location of the cemetery, the burial plot number (or other designation), and the expected date of burial; 2) provide an account of the circumstances encountered during excavation; and 3) specify the attainable depth for the burial.

When the local health department renders exceptions to burial depth, this is to be coordinated with county environmental management staff for acknowledgement. The local registrar should make a written record of that coordinating activity and retain it, along with a copy of the exception letter, in an appropriately marked health department file. **An example of a Burial Depth Variance letter is provided on page 35.**

Example of Burial Depth Variance Letter
(Example E)

[Health Department Letterhead]

Burial Depth Variance

[Date]

RE: Burial for: **[Name of Decedent]**

Date of Death: **[mm/dd/yyyy]**

Name of Cemetery: **[Cemetery Name]**

Location of Cemetery: **[City, State, Zip Code]**

Burial Plot Number or Designation: **[Number or Plot Description]**

Expected Date of Burial: **[mm/dd/yyyy]**

To Whom It May Concern:

The health department of **[Name of County]** County has, upon the recommendation of the county environmental management staff, approved the request for a burial depth variance submitted by **[Name of Requestor or Funeral Home]** for the interment of the decedent listed above. This request has been granted in conformance to 901 KAR 5:090 (2), which allows an exception to the burial depth prescribed in 901 KAR 5:090 (1) for cases in which impenetrable rock is encountered during excavation for the interment of a dead body.

[Signature of Local Registrar]
[Printed Name of Local Registrar]
[Name of County Health Department]

Verifications of Birth

Local registrars may issue verifications of births **(NOT COPIES OF RECORDS)** to the public without charge when certified copies are not required. However, providing birth verifications is **optional**. It is the decision of the local or district health department to make the verification service available for birth records filed in their office or accessible through resources made available to them through OVS.

Definition

The purpose of a Verification of Birth is to either **confirm or refute information that the requestor has provided** on the verification form (see below). DO NOT PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BEYOND THIS SCOPE OF INQUIRY.

Form

If a health department wishes to issue verifications, a verification form will need to be designed by their office. Prior to use, OVS must approve the form. Samples should be sent to the quality assurance field staff for approval.

The form must state "Verification of Birth" and must incorporate the following items **(No other information can be verified on the form):**

- Name of the registrant, according to the record on file.
- Date of birth.
- County of birth.
- Date the birth was filed.
- File number.
- Signature of the local registrar and the date issued.
- Name of the health department.

NOTE: *All verification forms must also include a statement that the form is not a certified copy of the Certificate of Live Birth, and that, per KRS 213.136 (1) and (6), a certified copy can only be purchased from the State Office of Vital Statistics.*

NOTE: *A sample of the form for birth verifications created by the county health department must be approved by OVS before the form is put into use.*

Authority: 901 KAR 5:040 Section 2

Do Not Perform Verifications For

- School systems. **Parents must instead present certified records.**
- Driver's licenses. **Applicants must instead present certified records.**
- Community Based Services or Social Security. These entities have access to electronic databases containing information for all births dating from 1911 to present**,** which make it unnecessary to provide verifications for them.
- Requests received on form VS-26 (Request for Verification of Birth/Death). This form is intended for use only by OVS and should not be processed by local registrars. All verification requests received on form VS-26 should be forwarded to OVS.

Resources for Accessing Vital Records

The Office of Vital Statistics (OVS) maintains over fifteen (15) million original vital records in a secured environment. These original records are carefully numbered and filed in books (volumes). The successful retrieval of a specific record requires an index listing that identifies an individual certificate and the specific volume in which the certificate is located. OVS provides various means for local registrars to access certain information pertaining to birth and death records from these listings. These resources include: Birth and Death Lists (available annually from OVS upon request), an electronic Birth Record Index (available through KOG), and the 677 Report Death Index (transmitted electronically each month to local registrars). This information may be used internally within the registrars' offices either for official business or to facilitate birth verifications.

In addition, each health department maintains its own records' resources, which include hardcopies of birth and stillbirth records filed prior to July 15, 2020, and hardcopies of death records filed prior to 1993. Moreover, each health department has been provided birth and death microfiche index files and a microfiche reader.

NOTE: *NONE OF THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE LOCAL REGISTRAR SHOULD BE MADE ACCESSIBLE FOR PUBLIC VIEWING. ONLY THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED ABOVE FOR BIRTH VERIFICATIONS MAY BE PROVIDED, UPON WRITTEN REQUEST, TO PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS. ANY OPEN RECORDS REQUESTS SHOULD BE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE OFFICE OF VITAL STATISTICS.*

Authority: KRS 213.131

Summary of Records for Health Departments

Birth Records

- **Birth Microfiche**. Consists of two (2) sets of microfiche for the years 1911 through 1988: One set is indexed by the mother's maiden name, the other is indexed by the child's surname.
- **County copies of Birth and Stillbirth certificates** filed prior to July 15, 2020. These should continue to be maintained by local registrars.
- **Annual Birth Lists** issued by OVS and sent to local registrars.
- **Electronic Birth Record Index** (accessible at https://kog.chfs.ky.gov/home/).

Death Records

- **Death Microfiche**. This has been provided to each health department for the years 1911 through 1993.
- **County copies of Death Certificates** filed prior to 1993.
- **Annual Death Lists** issued by OVS and sent to local registrars.
- **677 Report (Death Index)**, transmitted electronically to each health department on a monthly basis (accessible at https://kog.chfs.ky.gov/home/).

County Copies of Birth and Stillbirth Records

County copies of birth records and stillbirth records were maintained by each local registrar until July 15, 2020, when it was mandated by the Kentucky legislature that all birth and stillbirth records be sent directly to the state Office of Vital Statistics. County copies from these records may continue to be used by local registrars for birth verifications; however, it should be noted that county copies may not reflect the current information if these records were later amended. Amendments to certificates have always been made only at OVS, with no notice of amendment being forwarded to county health departments. Therefore, requestors should be informed that the information on their verification may not always be correct, if provided by the county health department. To obtain a certified copy, which reflects the most recent information, an application and fee must be submitted to OVS (see below).

Local registrars should also be aware that the provisions in **KRS 213.131 (5)** specifying that after one hundred (100) years after the date of birth, and fifty (50) years after the date of death, the records of these events shall become public records, **only applies to records in the custody of the state registrar**.

***NOTE: KRS 213.131 (5)**: If one hundred (100) years have elapsed after the date of birth, or fifty (50) years have elapsed after the date of death, the records of these events in the custody of the state registrar shall become public records and information shall be made available in accordance with regulations which shall provide for continued safekeeping of the records.*

Ordering Certificates from OVS

Only the Office of Vital Statistics (OVS) is permitted to issue certified copies of certificates. Records of events that occurred outside of the Commonwealth of Kentucky are not available from OVS. Applications for birth, death, stillbirth, and marriage/divorce certificates are provided to the general public by the local registrar, by OVS, or by downloading the forms from the OVS website. School systems, post offices, libraries, and other agencies request birth applications in bulk for public access during certain times of the year. It is the local registrar's responsibility to provide either the OVS link for application downloads or the most current revision of hardcopy forms to such agencies when they are requested. It is also the local registrar's duty to notify these agencies of any policy updates (such as fee adjustments) in advance of their implementation.

Kentucky is an open record state. As such, the Kentucky legislature has decreed that anyone who pays the proper search fee and includes the required information to identify the record may obtain a certified copy of a birth, death, stillbirth, marriage, or divorce certificate.

OVS began registering birth and death records in January 1911. The registration of marriage and divorce records began in June 1958. Currently, the following fees shall be charged for any search or copy of a record:

BIRTH	***$10.00***
DEATH	***$6.00***
STILLBIRTH	***$6.00***
MARRIAGE/DIVORCE	***$6.00***

Phone Orders

To order certificates by phone, customers may call toll free (800) 241-8322. Orders will be accepted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There is an additional fee for this service. UPS overnight and weekend delivery services are also available for additional fees.

Mail-In Orders

Birth Certificates

A written request for a birth certificate may take up to thirty (30) working days to process. Written requests must include a check or money order in the correct amount, made payable to the **Kentucky State Treasurer**. A completed application (VS-37) or a written request should include the full name at birth, date of birth, county or city of birth, mother's full birth name, and father's name. **Link for VS-37 download**: https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/vsb/Forms/VS37BirthApp.pdf.

Stillbirth Certificates

A written request for a stillbirth certificate may take up to thirty (30) working days to process. Written requests must include a check or money order in the correct amount, made payable to the **Kentucky State Treasurer**. A completed (VS-32) or a written request should include the full name at birth, date of event, place of death, and mother's maiden name. **Link for VS-32 download**: https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/vsb/Documents/VS32IIRev012012.pdf.

Death Certificates

A written request for a death certificate may take up to thirty (30) working days to process. Include with the request a check or money order made payable to the **Kentucky State Treasurer** for the correct amount. A completed application (VS-31) or a written request should include the decedent's name, date of death, and county of death. **Link for VS-31 download**: https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/vsb/Forms/VS31DeathApp.pdf.

Marriage/Divorce Certificates

A written request for marriage or divorce records may take up to thirty (30) working days to process. The Office of Vital Statistics (OVS) has marriage and divorce records on file from June 1958 to the present. Copies of marriage certificates prior to June 1958 can be obtained from the County Court Clerk's office in the county where the license was issued. Copies of divorce certificates prior to June 1958 may be obtained from the Circuit Court Clerk's Office that granted the decree. When ordering from OVS, include with the request a check or money order payable to the **Kentucky State Treasurer**. A completed application (VS-230) or written request should include the names of the married parties, the county where the license or decree was granted, and the date of the event. **Link for VS-230 download**: https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/vsb/Forms/VS230MARRIAGEDIVORCEAPP.pdf.

Where to Send Request

Requests for certificates are to be mailed to:

Office of Vital Statistics
275 East Main Street, 1 E-A
Frankfort, KY 40621

To Order in Person

An applicant may come directly to OVS to receive same-day service for certified copies. Requests are usually processed within one (1) hour after submission. Office hours are 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. **It is important for applicants to submit their walk-in orders in person no later than 3:30 PM to receive same day service.**

NOTE: *Hours of operation and/or public access are subject to change. OVS always recommends that applicants call first, at (502) 564-4212, to verify hours before coming in person.*

OVS Drop Box

A Drop Box is located directly outside the Visitor's Entrance of the OVS office. This box may be used to drop off orders for birth, death, stillbirth, and marriage/divorce certificates when the office is closed. A supply of envelopes and application forms are usually stocked in trays attached to the drop box for customers' use. Please note that applications must be fully completed and accompanied by a check or money order made payable to the **Kentucky State Treasurer** for the correct fee for the order to be accepted. The completed applications are collected daily. Requests received from the Drop Box may take up to thirty (30) working days to process. Further instructions pertaining to drop off orders are printed on the box itself.

Fig. 5 – Shows the OVS Drop Box located at the OVS office.

AUTHORITY: KRS 213.136 (1) (2) (6), KRS 213.141, 901 KAR 5:050

How to Contact State Vital Statistics Offices

NOTE: *The information provided below was current when these Guidelines were issued. However, it is recommended that NCHS website be accessed at* https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w *in case of more recent updates.*

PLACE OF EVENT	WEB ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
ALABAMA *	https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov	334-206-5418
ALASKA *	http://dhss.alaska.gov	907-465-3391
ARIZONA *	https://azdhs.gov	602-364-1300
ARKANSAS	https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov	800-637-9314
CALIFORNIA *	https://www.cdph.ca.gov	916-445-2684
COLORADO *	https://www.colorado.gov	866-300-8540
CONNECTICUT *	https://portal.ct.gov	860-509-7700
DELAWARE *	https://www.dhss.delaware.gov	302-744-4549
DIST OF COLUMBIA *	https://dchealth.dc.gov	202-442-9303
FLORIDA *	http://www.floridahealth.gov	904-359-6900
GEORGIA	https://dph.georgia.gov	404-657-2700
HAWAII	https://vitrec.ehawaii.gov	808-586-4539
IDAHO *	https://www.idaho.gov	208-332-1824
ILLINOIS *	http://dph.illinois.gov	217-782-4977
INDIANA *	https://www.in.gov	800-457-8283
IOWA	https://idph.iowa.gov	515-281-4944
KANSAS *	http://www.kdheks.gov	877-305-8315
KENTUCKY *	https://chfs.ky.gov	502-564-4212
LOUISIANA *	http://www.ldh.la.gov	225-342-9500
MAINE *	https://www.maine.gov	888-664-9491
MARYLAND *	https://health.maryland.gov	410-767-6500
MASSACHUSETTS *	https://www.mass.gov	617-740-2600
MICHIGAN *	https://www.michigan.gov	517-335-8666
MINNESOTA	https://www.health.state.mn.us	651-201-5970
MISSISSIPPI *	https://www.msdh.ms.gov	601-206-8200
MISSOURI *	https://health.mo.gov	573-751-6387
MONTANA *	https://dphhs.mt.gov	406-444-2685
NEBRASKA	http://dhhs.ne.gov	402-471-2871
NEVADA *	http://dpbh.nv.gov	775-684-4242
NEW HAMPSHIRE	http://sos.nh.gov	603-271-4650
NEW JERSEY	https://www.state.nj.us	609-292-4087
NEW MEXICO *	https://nmhealth.org	505-827-0121
NEW YORK *	https://www.health.ny.gov	855-322-1022
NEW YORK CITY *	https://www1.nyc.gov	212-788-4520
NORTH CAROLINA *	https://vitalrecords.nc.gov	919-733-3526
NORTH DAKOTA	https://www.health.nd.gov	701-328-2372

PLACE OF EVENT	WEB ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
OHIO	https://odh.ohio.gov	614-466-2531
OKLAHOMA *	https://www.ok.gov	405-271-4040
OREGON *	https://www.oregon.gov	971-673-1190
PENNSYLVANIA *	https://www.health.pa.gov	844-228-3516
RHODE ISLAND *	https://health.ri.gov	401-222-5960
SOUTH CAROLINA *	https://www.dhec.sc.gov	803-898-3630
SOUTH DAKOTA *	https://doh.sd.gov	605-773-4961
TENNESSEE *	https://www.tn.gov	615-741-1763
TEXAS	https://dshs.texas.gov	888-963-7111
UTAH	https://vitalrecords.utah.gov	801-538-6105
VERMONT	https://www.healthvermont.gov	800-439-5008
VIRGINIA *	http://www.vdh.virginia.gov	804-662-6200
WASHINGTON *	https://www.doh.wa.gov	360-236-4300
WEST VIRGINIA *	http://www.wvdhhr.org	877-448-3953
WISCONSIN *	https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov	608-266-1373
WYOMING	https://health.wyo.gov	866-571-0944

*** Indicates states that accept orders through www.vitalchek.com.**

Information Concerning Foreign Births and Deaths

The United States Department of State should be contacted for information on how to obtain a report of birth or death that occurred abroad if the individual involved was a U.S. citizen at the time of the event's occurrence. The State Department's web site, https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/while-abroad.html, is easy to navigate and contains a wealth of information. For those without internet access, the State Department can be contacted either by phone or mail at:

U.S. Department of State
Passport Vital Records Section
44132 Mercure Circle
PO Box 1213
Sterling, VA 20166-1213
Telephone: (202) 485-8300

Birth of U.S. Citizens Abroad

Parents of a child born abroad to a U.S. citizen or citizens should contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate as soon as possible to apply for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad of a Citizen of the United States of America (CRBA), also known as Form FS-240. According to U.S. law, a CRBA provides proof of U.S. citizenship, and may be used for the same purposes as a U.S. Birth Certificate.

As of January 3, 2011, the U.S. Department of State began issuing a new Consular Report of Birth Abroad form (FS-240). This form replaced the earlier Certificate of Report of Birth (DS-1350), which ceased being issued on December 31, 2010. All previously issued FS-240 and DS-1350 documents are still valid for proof of identity, citizenship, and other legal purposes.

For specific information on how to order replacement copies of, or how to amend, a CRBA, see: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/while-abroad/birth-abroad/replace-amend-CRBA.html.

Death of U.S. Citizens Abroad

The death of a U.S. citizen in a foreign country should be reported to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate office. If reported, and if a copy of the local death certificate and evidence of U.S. citizenship are presented, the consul will prepare a Consular Report of Death of a U.S. Citizen Abroad. A copy of the report of death is then filed permanently in the U.S. Department of State. For information on how to obtain copies of a report of death, the requestor should either call or write the State Department (see above), or visit their web site at: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/while-abroad/death-abroad1/consular-report-of-death-of-a-u-s--citizen-abroad.html.

Exclusions to the above include:

- Reports of Death filed before 1963. These are maintained by the National Archives and Records Service, Diplomatic Records Branch, Washington, DC 20408. Requests for such records should be sent directly to that office.
- Reports of death of person serving in the Armed Forces of the United States (Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, or Coast Guard) or civilian employees of the Department of Defense are not maintained by the U.S. Department of State. In these cases, requests for copies of records should be sent to the National Personnel Records Center (military Personnel Records), 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63132-5100.

Births and Deaths Occurring on Vessels or Aircraft on the High Seas

When a birth or death occurs on the high seas, whether in an aircraft or on a vessel, the record is usually filed at the next port of call.

- If the vessel or aircraft docked or landed at a foreign port, requests for copies of the records may be placed with the U.S. Department of State (see above).
- If the first port of entry was in the United States, the requestor should contact the registration authority in the city where the vessel or aircraft docked or landed.
- If the vessel was of U.S. registry, the requestor should contact the local authorities at the port of entry and/or search the vessel logs at the U.S. Coast Guard facility at the vessel's final port of call for that voyage.

Records of Birth and Death in the Panama Canal Zone for U.S. Citizens and Foreign Nationals

From 1904 until 1979, during which the Panama Canal Zone was maintained as a United States territory, the Canal Zone Government registered all civil acts of birth and death that occurred within its boundaries. In 1999 all Canal-Zone birth and death records were transferred to Passport Services in the U.S. Department of State. Certified copies of these documents may be obtained by contacting that agency.

For birth and records, the requestor should either visit: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/while-abroad/birth-abroad/panama-canal-birth-or-death.html, or contact the U.S. Department of State by phone or mail (see above).

Certificate of Citizenship Issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

A person born abroad who acquired U.S. citizenship at birth but is over the age of 18 (and therefore not eligible for a CRBA) may wish to apply for a Certificate of Citizenship through the USCIS. This process will entail completing Form N-600. For additional information, the requestor should either call the USCIS toll-free at 800-375-5283, or visit their web site at: https://www.uscis.gov/forms/n-600-application-certificate-citizenship-frequently-asked-questions.

Records Maintained by Foreign Countries

Most foreign countries will provide certificates of births and deaths that occurred within their boundaries upon request. To obtain these records, the requestor should contact the nearest consulate in the U.S. of the country in which the birth or death occurred. Contact information for foreign consulates can be found on the internet, or in the *U.S. Department of State Publication 7846, Foreign Consular Offices in the United States*, which is available in most libraries. In the case for U.S. citizens, if the consulate is not able to assist in obtaining the desired records, the requestor may write to the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC 20520-4212.

Apostilles Branch of the Office of the Secretary of State

The fee for an apostille or a certificate of authentication is $5.00 per certificate. A check or money order for the correct amount should be made payable to the Kentucky State Treasurer.

For more information regarding apostilles, please contact the Apostilles Branch of the Office of the Secretary of State, either:

By phone at (502) 564-3490; or
By fax to (502) 564-5687; or
By mailing your inquiry to:

Office of the Secretary of State Apostilles Branch
700 Capital Avenue, Suite 156
Frankfort, KY 40601

The Office of the Secretary of State is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm EST.

Secretary of State Apostilles website:
https://sos.ky.gov/bus/Pages/Apostilles-and-Authentications.aspx.

Departamento de la Secretaria del Estado para las Apostillas

Los honorarios para una apostilla o un certificado de autenticación son de $5.00 por certificado. Se debe hacer un cheque bancario o un giro monetario (money order) por la cantidad correcta mencionada, con pago dirigido a Kentucky State Treasurer.

Para más información referente a las apostilla, por favor comuníquese con el Departamento de la Secretaría del Estado para las Apostillas.

Por teléfono al (502) 564-3490
Por fax al (502) 564-5687
Si tiene preguntas envíelas por correo a:

Office of the Secretary of State Apostilles Branch
700 Capital Avenue, Suite 156
Frankfort, KY 40601

Las oficinas de la Secretaría del Estado están abiertas de lunes a viernes, de 8:00 am a 4:30 pm, horario del este.

El sitio de internet de la Secretaría del Estado para las Apostillas es:
https://sos.ky.gov/bus/Pages/Apostilles-and-Authentications.aspx.

Useful Internet Addresses (Including Genealogical Links)

https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/vsb/Pages/default.aspx - Kentucky Vital Statistics Home Page.

http://kentucky.gov/Pages/home.aspx - Commonwealth of Kentucky Home Page.

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm - Directory for Vital Statistics offices in U.S. States and Territories (published by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention).

https://kdla.ky.gov/researchers/Pages/faq.aspx - Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives (Frequently Asked Questions page).

http://history.ky.gov/ - Kentucky Historical Society.

https://www.vitalchek.com/ - To order Kentucky certificates on the Internet.

https://legislature.ky.gov/Pages/index.aspx - Kentucky Legislature Home Page.

https://familysearch.org/ - Family History Centers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Call 800-346-6044 to find the nearest center.

genealogycenter.org/ - Genealogy Department, Allen County Public Library, one of the largest Genealogy Departments in the U.S.

http://www.archives.gov/index.html - The National Archives and Records Administration (a depository for federal records such as census, immigration, and military files).

https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy - The National Archives and Records Administration's specific link for genealogists.

http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/ - National Genealogical Society.