

**I ordered a certificate from your office within the past 90 days but haven't received it. What should I do?**

If your order was processed within the past 3 months, contact us at 253-798-6418 and press zero when the recording starts. We will do an investigation to confirm the order was processed and see if it was returned to us or lost in the mail; if lost, we will replace it if you have called within 90 days of the issue date.

**I ordered a certificate from your office over 90 days ago but haven't received it. What should I do?**

Contact us at 253-798-6418, press zero when the recording starts and ask that we investigate to see what happened to your order. Once we confirm we processed it, we will do a further investigation to see if the order was returned to us due to lack of an address; if found, we will re-ship. If your order was lost in the mail and you've waited more than the 90 days allowance, you will need to re-order the certificate.

**If you want a certificate for a death that took place before July 1, 1907**, please contact the research office of the Washington State Archives: <https://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/>

**How do I request a certificate for a marriage that took place in Pierce County?** Marriages can be obtained from the Pierce County Auditor's office at 253-798-7435; their mailing address is Pierce County Auditor, 2401 S 35<sup>th</sup> St, Room 200, Tacoma, WA 98402  
Here is their website: <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/index.aspx?nid=93>

**How do I request a certificate/decree for a divorce that took place in Pierce County?** Divorce decrees may be obtained from the court where the divorce was granted; here in Pierce County that would be at the Superior Court, 930 Tacoma Ave S, Room 110, Tacoma, WA 98402 or you may call 253-798-6455. Here is their website:  
[http://www.courts.wa.gov/court\\_dir/orgs/286.html](http://www.courts.wa.gov/court_dir/orgs/286.html)

**There is a mistake on the certificate I ordered, but I provided the correct information on the order form. How did this happen?**

We do not create a certificate from the information provided on the order form; we use your request form information to find the correct record in the state database. The record information comes from the hospital or other facility where the event occurred. The actual certificate you receive is a copy of the information we already have in our files.

**How can I correct a mistake on a record?**

Birth to one year, please contact the hospital where the birth occurred.  
Death: please contact your funeral director to submit the affidavit for correction.

**How to correct older, filed records, please visit the Center for Health Statistics webpage at:**  
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/BirthDeathMarriageandDivorce/CertificateCorrection>

### **Where do I go to get information on ordering records from from another state?**

We issue certificates for all Washington Births and deaths only. For events that occurred in another state, you will need to contact the state where the event occurred. The following website gives a listing of each state and territory in the United States.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w/index.htm>

### **Questions about ordering birth certificates**

To submit requests for birth certificates, you must provide the required five pieces of birth information, as mandated by state law, WAC 246-490-055. We must have an exact match for the information compared between the request form and the birth record in order to issue the certificate:

- 1) Full Birth Name of Child
- 2) Full Maiden (or Birth) Name of Mother (Mother's name before marriage)
- 3) Full Birth Name of Father
- 4) Full Date of Birth
- 5) City the child was born in

If you are adopted, and need your legal birth certificate, we require the full adopted name of the child, adoptive mother's full maiden name, and adoptive father's full name along with the date and place of birth for the child.

For information about adoption or how to order a copy of your original birth certificate, please visit:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/BirthDeathMarriageandDivorce/Adoptions>

### **I completed a birth filing form at the time of my child's birth. When will I received the copy of my child's birth certificate?**

The birth filing form is used to register the birth with the Department of Health. If you want a certified copy of a birth certificate for your child, you need to submit an application and pay the applicable fees.

### **The hospital gave me a certificate when we left. Is that considered an official birth certificate?**

No. Only certified copies of birth certificates are considered official. The certificate will be multi-colored certificate paper with "Certificate of Live Birth" at the top, the embossed head of Washington on the front, bottom center and a certification stamp on the back.

### **Where do I go to order heirloom certificates?**

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/BirthDeathMarriageandDivorce/OrderCertificates/HeirloomBirthCertificates>



## Apostilles

### **Where do I obtain an apostille?**

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/corps/apostilles/HowtoobtainanApostilleorCertification.aspx>

### **What is an apostille?**

An "apostille" is a certificate that authenticates the origin of a public document, such as a birth, marriage, or death certificate. The apostille certificate verifies to a foreign government that the birth, death, marriage or divorce certificate is an official document from Washington State. You can find [more information about apostilles on the Secretary of State's website](#).

### **How to Correct a Record**

All records are registered as received; Local Health Jurisdictions such as the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department can issue certificates once they have been filed by the hospital where the birth occurred or, for a death certificate, by the funeral home the family chose to handle the event. If the child was born within the past year, you can contact the hospital to see if they are able to submit the affidavit for you; for a death that occurred within the past year, contact the funeral home that submitted the record on behalf of the family. For older records, please contact the Center for Health Statistics; here is their website where you can view pertinent information:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/BirthDeathMarriageandDivorce/CertificateCorrection>

### **Court-Ordered Name Change**

Anyone can obtain a court-ordered name change order from their current state of residence. Once they have the court-issued court order, they would need to submit it to the Center for

Health Statistics here in Washington to amend any record that occurred in this state. Parents who have had a legal name change and are changing their name on a birth certificate for a child who was born in Washington State must also submit the court-issued court order to the Center for Health Statistics. Here is their website with pertinent information:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/BirthDeathMarriageandDivorce/CourtOrderedNameChange>

### **How do I get an updated certificate due to a change being made?**

- 1) Return the certified certificate to the office you purchased it from **or** the Center for Health Statistics within one year of the issue date for a free exchange. The date issued is on the top right side of the certificate.

### **How do I find out about changing the gender on a birth record?**

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/BirthDeathMarriageandDivorce/GenderChange>

### **Where do I obtain a copy of the toxicology reports used to complete a death record?**

Pierce County Medical Examiner's Office. Here is their webpage:

<http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/Index.aspx?NID=113>

### **How fast can I obtain certified death certificates?**

If the death record is filed in the morning before 10am, it is available to be issued on by 12 noon. Death records must be signed by three different agencies responsible for three different sections of the death record.

- a) Funeral homes obtain personal information on the decedent from friends or family, completes the "demographic" section of the death record and signs his/her portion
- b) Medical Certifier reviews the death and medical files on the decedent and places the cause of death on the record, then signs the medical portion
- c) Deputy Registrar reviews the record for completeness on the demographic portion, reviews the cause of death listed by the medical certifier and ascertains if the death record should be reviewed by the medical examiner. Once these sections have been reviewed, she then signs off on the death record and files it with the Center for Health Statistics.