

HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE

TITLE 3. VITAL STATISTICS

CHAPTER 191. ADMINISTRATION OF VITAL STATISTICS RECORDS

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 191.001. DEFINITIONS. In this title:

(1) "Department" means the Department of State Health Services.

(2) "Executive commissioner" means the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission.

(3) "Vital statistics unit" means the vital statistics unit established in the Department of State Health Services.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.0527, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.0011. REFERENCE IN OTHER LAW. A reference in other law to the bureau of vital statistics of the department or of the former Texas Department of Health means the vital statistics unit established in the department.

Added by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.0528, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.002. POWERS AND DUTIES OF DEPARTMENT. (a) The department shall administer the registration of vital statistics.

(b) The department shall:

(1) establish a vital statistics unit in the department with suitable offices that are properly equipped for the preservation of its official records;

(2) establish a statewide system of vital statistics;

(3) provide instructions and prescribe forms for collecting, recording, transcribing, compiling, and preserving vital statistics;

(4) require the enforcement of this title and rules adopted under this title;

(5) prepare, print, and supply to local registrars forms for registering, recording, and preserving returns or otherwise carrying out the purposes of this title; and

(6) propose legislation necessary for the purposes of this title.

(c) The department may use birth records and provide those records on request to other state agencies for programs notifying mothers of young children about children's health needs.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. [219](#)), Sec. 3.0529, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.003. POWERS AND DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE COMMISSIONER AND DEPARTMENT. (a) The executive commissioner shall adopt necessary rules for collecting, recording, transcribing, compiling, and preserving vital statistics.

(a-1) The department shall:

(1) supervise the vital statistics unit; and

(2) appoint the director of the vital statistics unit.

(b) In an emergency, the executive commissioner may suspend any part of this title that hinders the uniform and efficient registration of vital events and may substitute emergency rules designed to expedite that registration under disaster conditions.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. [219](#)), Sec. 3.0530, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.0031. CERTIFIED COPIES BY MAIL. The state registrar or a local registrar may not issue a certified copy of a record under this chapter to a person who has applied for the record by mail unless the person has provided notarized proof of identity in accordance with rules adopted by the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission. The rules may require the issuer of the certified copy to verify the notarization using the records of the secretary of state under Section [406.012](#),

Government Code.

Added by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 837 (S.B. 200), Sec. 5.01, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 191.004. STATE REGISTRAR. (a) The director of the vital statistics unit is the state registrar of vital statistics. The director must be a competent vital statistician.

(b) The state registrar shall prepare and issue detailed instructions necessary for the uniform observance of this title and the maintenance of a perfect system of registration.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.0531, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.0045. FEES. (a) The department may collect fees for providing services to the public and performing other activities in connection with maintenance of the vital statistics system, including:

(1) performing searches of birth, death, fetal death, marriage, divorce, annulment, and other records;

(2) preparing and issuing copies and certified copies of birth, death, fetal death, marriage, divorce, annulment, and other records; and

(3) filing a record, amendment, or affidavit under this title.

(b) The executive commissioner by rule may prescribe a schedule of fees for vital statistics services. The aggregate of the amounts of the fees may not exceed the cost of administering the vital statistics system.

(c) The department shall refund to an applicant any fee received for services that the department cannot perform. If the money has been deposited to the credit of the vital statistics account in the general revenue fund, the comptroller shall issue a warrant against the fund for refund of the payment on presentation of a claim signed by the state registrar.

(d) A local registrar or county clerk who issues a certified

copy of a birth or death certificate shall collect the same fees as collected by the department, including the additional fee required under Subsection (e), except as provided by Subsections (g) and (h).

(e) In addition to fees charged by the department under Subsection (b), the department shall collect an additional \$2 fee for each of the following:

(1) issuing a certified copy of a certificate of birth;

(2) issuing a wallet-sized certification of birth; and

(3) conducting a search for a certificate of birth.

(f) Repealed by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 263, Sec. 5(1), eff. May 30, 2005.

(g) A local registrar or county clerk that on March 31, 1995, was collecting a fee for the issuance of a certified copy of a birth certificate that exceeded the fee collected by the department for the same type of certificate may continue to do so but shall not raise this fee until the fee collected by the department exceeds the fee collected by the local registrar or county clerk. A local registrar or county clerk to which this subsection applies shall collect the additional fee as required under Subsection (e).

(h) In addition to other fees collected under this section, a local registrar or county clerk may collect a fee not to exceed \$1 for:

(1) preserving vital statistics records maintained by the registrar or county clerk, including birth, death, fetal death, marriage, divorce, and annulment records;

(2) training registrar or county clerk employees regarding vital statistics records; and

(3) ensuring the safety and security of vital statistics records.

(i) A fee under this section shall be collected by the registrar or county clerk on the issuance of a vital statistics record, including a record issued through a Remote Birth Access site.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 14, Sec. 52, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 651, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1,

1991; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 9.62, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 305, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 975, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 263 (H.B. [2962](#)), Sec. 5(1), eff. May 30, 2005.

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 400 (S.B. [1524](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1022 (H.B. [2717](#)), Sec. 3, eff. June 17, 2011.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. [219](#)), Sec. 3.0532, eff. April 2, 2015.

The following section was amended by the 89th Legislature. Pending publication of the current statutes, see H.B. [4466](#), 89th Legislature, Regular Session, for amendments affecting the following section.

Sec. 191.0046. FEE EXEMPTIONS. (a) On the request of a child's parent or guardian, the state registrar shall issue without fee a certificate necessary for admission to school or to secure employment. The certificate shall be limited to a statement of the child's date of birth.

(b) The state registrar shall issue without fee a certified copy of a record not otherwise prohibited by law to a veteran or to the veteran's widow, orphan, or other dependent if the copy is for use in settling a claim against the government.

(c) On court order, the state registrar may issue without fee a certified copy of a birth record in cases related to child labor or the public schools.

(d) The state registrar on request shall issue without a fee a copy of a birth or death record that is not certified to a child fatality review team or the child fatality review team committee established under Subchapter [F](#), Chapter [264](#), Family Code.

(e) It is the intent of the legislature to not impose a cost for obtaining certified records for the purpose of obtaining an election identification certificate issued pursuant to Chapter [521A](#), Transportation Code. Notwithstanding any other law, the

state registrar, a local registrar, or a county clerk shall not charge a fee to an applicant that is associated with searching for or providing a record, including a certified copy of a birth record, if the applicant states that the applicant is requesting the record for the purpose of obtaining an election identification certificate under Section [521A.001](#), Transportation Code.

(f) Notwithstanding Subsection (e), a local registrar or a county clerk who issues a birth record that is required for the purpose of obtaining an election identification certificate issued pursuant to Chapter [521A](#), Transportation Code, and is otherwise entitled by law to retain all or a portion of a fee for that birth record, is entitled to payment of the amount from the department. Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept.1, 1989. Renumbered from Sec. 191.054 and amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 14, Sec. 52, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 11 (S.B. [239](#)), Sec. 1, eff. May 3, 2005.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 130 (S.B. [983](#)), Sec. 1, eff. May 27, 2015.

Sec. 191.0047. BIRTH INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES. (a) The department shall implement an efficient and effective method to verify birth information or provide a certified copy of a birth record necessary to provide services for the benefit of a minor being served by the Department of Family and Protective Services.

(b) The department shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Family and Protective Services to implement this section. Subject to Subsection (c), the terms of the memorandum of understanding must include methods for reimbursing the department in an amount that is not more than the actual costs the department incurs in verifying the birth information or providing the birth record to the Department of Family and Protective Services.

(c) The department may not collect a fee or other amount for verification of birth information or provision of a certified copy

of the birth record under Subsection (a) for a child in the managing conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services if parental rights to the child have been terminated and the child is eligible for adoption.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1406 (S.B. 758), Sec. 23, eff. September 1, 2007.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 758 (S.B. 703), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.0533, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.0048. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION TO TEXAS HOME VISITING PROGRAM. (a) A person requesting a copy or certified copy of a birth, marriage, or divorce record may make a voluntary contribution of \$5 to promote healthy early childhood by supporting the Texas Home Visiting Program administered by the Office of Early Childhood Coordination of the Health and Human Services Commission.

(b) On each paper or electronic application form for a copy or certified copy of a birth, marriage, or divorce record, the department shall include a printed box for the applicant to check indicating that the applicant wishes to make a voluntary contribution of \$5 to promote healthy early childhood by supporting the Texas Home Visiting Program administered by the Office of Early Childhood Coordination of the Health and Human Services Commission.

(c) Notwithstanding Section 191.0045, a local registrar or county clerk may collect the additional voluntary contribution under this section.

(d) Notwithstanding Section 191.005, the local registrar or county clerk who collects the voluntary contribution under this section shall send the voluntary contribution to the comptroller, who shall deposit the voluntary contribution in the Texas Home Visiting Program trust fund under Section 523.0306, Government Code.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 820 (S.B. 1836), Sec. 3, eff. June 14, 2013.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. [219](#)), Sec. 3.0534, eff. April 2, 2015.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 2.42, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 191.0049. BIRTH RECORD ISSUED TO FOSTER CHILD OR YOUTH OR HOMELESS CHILD OR YOUTH. On request of a child or youth described by this section, the state registrar, a local registrar, or a county clerk shall issue, without fee or parental consent, a certified copy of the child's or youth's birth record to:

(1) a homeless child or youth as defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 11434a;

(2) a child in the managing conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services; and

(3) a young adult who:

(A) is at least 18 years of age, but younger than 21 years of age; and

(B) resides in a foster care placement, the cost of which is paid by the Department of Family and Protective Services.

Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1024 (H.B. [123](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 191.00491. BIRTH RECORD ISSUED TO VICTIMS AND CHILDREN OF VICTIMS OF DATING OR FAMILY VIOLENCE. On request of an individual described by this section, the state registrar, a local registrar, or a county clerk shall issue, without payment of a fee, a certified copy of the individual's birth record to:

(1) a victim of dating violence as defined by Section [71.0021](#), Family Code;

(2) a victim of family violence as defined by Section [51.002](#), Human Resources Code; or

(3) a child of a victim described by Subdivision (1) or (2).

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 374 (S.B. [798](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2021.

Sec. 191.005. VITAL STATISTICS ACCOUNT. (a) The vital statistics account is an account in the general revenue fund in the state treasury.

(b) The legislature shall make appropriations to the department from the vital statistics account to be used to defray expenses incurred in the administration and enforcement of the system of vital statistics.

(c) All fees collected by the department under this chapter shall be deposited to the credit of the vital statistics account.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 14, Sec. 53, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. [219](#)), Sec. 3.0535, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.006. RECORDS OF PERSONS IN HOSPITALS AND INSTITUTIONS. (a) This section applies to each public or private hospital, almshouse, or other institution to which persons are committed by process of law or voluntarily enter for treatment of disease or for confinement.

(b) When a person is admitted to the institution, the superintendent, manager, or other person in charge of the institution shall record, in the manner directed by the state registrar, the admitted person's personal and statistical data required by certificate forms under this title. If the person is admitted for the treatment of disease, the physician in charge shall specify for the record the nature of the disease and where, in the physician's opinion, the disease was contracted.

(c) The personal information required under Subsection (b) shall be obtained:

(1) from the person admitted to the institution, if practicable; or

(2) from the person's relatives or friends or from other persons acquainted with the facts, in as complete a manner as possible, if the information cannot be obtained from the person admitted to the institution.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 191.007. REGULATION BY CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES. The governing body of a Type A general-law municipality may:

- (1) regulate the registration of marriages; and
- (2) direct the return and maintenance of bills of mortality.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 191.008. SORTING COLLECTED DATA. (a) The department shall compile the information relating to births, deaths, and fetal deaths collected under this chapter and organize the results, to the extent possible, according to the following geographic areas:

- (1) the Texas-Mexico border region;
- (2) each public health region;
- (3) rural areas;
- (4) urban areas;
- (5) each county; and
- (6) the state.

(b) The department may release the information relating to births, deaths, and fetal deaths in accordance with the way it is compiled under this section.

Added by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 1034 (H.B. [1126](#)), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2005.

Sec. 191.009. USE OF DIACRITICAL MARKS. (a) In this section, "diacritical mark" means a mark used in Latin script to change the sound of the letter to which it is added or used to distinguish the meaning of the word in which the letter appears. The term includes accents, tildes, graves, umlauts, and cedillas.

(b) The state registrar shall ensure that a vital statistics record issued under this title properly records any diacritical mark used in a person's name.

Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1041 (H.B. [1823](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 191.010. DEATH INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY. (a) The department shall implement an efficient and

effective method to verify death information to assist the Department of Public Safety with maintaining records of holders of driver's licenses and personal identification certificates in this state.

(b) The department shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Public Safety to implement this section. The memorandum of understanding must include a mechanism for the department to provide to the Department of Public Safety death information that includes unique identifiers, including social security numbers, necessary to accurately match death records with driver's license and personal identification certificate records.

Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 737 (S.B. 1205), Sec. 1, eff. June 12, 2017.

Redesignated from Health and Safety Code, Section 191.009 by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 467 (H.B. 4170), Sec. 21.001(36), eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 191.011. DEATH INFORMATION PROVIDED TO SECRETARY OF STATE. (a) The department shall implement an efficient and effective method to provide death information to the secretary of state to assist in maintaining the statewide computerized voter registration list under Section 18.061, Election Code.

(b) The method implemented under Subsection (a) must provide at least the following information on each deceased person for whom a death certificate is filed with a local registrar in this state:

- (1) the county of residence of the deceased;
- (2) the date of birth of the deceased; and
- (3) the full name of the deceased.

(c) The department shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with the secretary of state to implement this section. The memorandum of understanding must include a mechanism for the department to provide the secretary of state with death information that includes unique identifiers necessary to accurately match death records with names included on the voter registration list.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1074 (S.B. [545](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2023.

SUBCHAPTER B. RECORDS OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND FETAL DEATHS

Sec. 191.021. REGISTRATION DISTRICTS. (a) The state is divided into registration districts for the purposes of registering births, deaths, and fetal deaths. The registration districts are:

- (1) each justice of the peace precinct; and
- (2) each municipality with a population of 2,500 or more.

(b) To facilitate registration, the department may combine or divide registration districts.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. [219](#)), Sec. 3.0536, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.022. LOCAL REGISTRARS. (a) The justice of the peace is the local registrar of births and deaths in a justice of the peace precinct. However, the duty of registering births and deaths may be transferred to the county clerk if the justice of the peace and the county clerk agree in writing and the agreement is ratified by the commissioners court.

(b) The municipal clerk or secretary is the local registrar of births and deaths in a municipality with a population of 2,500 or more.

(c) Each local registrar shall appoint a deputy registrar so that a registrar will be available at all times for the registration of births and deaths.

(d) The local registrar shall sign each report made to the department.

(e) If a local registrar fails or refuses to register each birth and death in the district or neglects duties under this title, the county judge or the mayor, as appropriate, shall appoint a new local registrar and shall send the name and mailing address of the appointee to the state registrar.

(f) A local registrar who collects a fee for a certified copy of a birth certificate shall deduct 20 cents of that fee to apply to the registrar's administrative costs and remit \$1.80 of that fee to the comptroller.

(g) Each local registrar shall annually submit a self-assessment report to the state registrar. The department shall prescribe the information that must be included in the report to allow a thorough desk audit of a local registrar.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 305, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 263 (H.B. 2962), Sec. 1, eff. May 30, 2005.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.0537, eff. April 2, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 837 (S.B. 200), Sec. 5.02, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 191.023. CONSOLIDATION OF COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL MAINTENANCE OF BIRTH AND DEATH RECORDS. (a) The duties imposed by law relating to the maintenance of birth and death records of a municipality with a population of 2,500 or more may be transferred to the county in which the municipality is located, as provided by this section.

(b) If the commissioners court adopts a resolution to transfer the duties and the governing body of the municipality subsequently adopts a concurring resolution, the county and municipality shall agree on a timetable for the transfer and shall execute the transfer in an orderly fashion.

(c) Before a commissioners court may adopt a resolution under Subsection (b), the official to whom the duties would be transferred must attest in writing that the official has sufficient resources and finances to assume those duties.

(d) If the governing body of a municipality does not adopt a concurring resolution before the 91st day after the date on which a county adopts a resolution under Subsection (b), a petition by the qualified voters of the municipality may serve as the equivalent of

a concurring resolution under Subsection (b). The petition must succinctly describe the intention to consolidate county and municipal maintenance of birth and death records and must be signed by a number of qualified voters equal to at least 20 percent of the number of qualified voters voting in the most recent mayoral election.

(e) A consolidation under this section affects only the county and the municipality to which the resolutions apply. This section does not affect the apportionment of registration districts under Section [191.021](#).

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 191.024. REPORTS OF INFORMATION. (a) On the state registrar's demand, a person, including a local registrar, physician, midwife, or funeral director, who has information relating to a birth, death, or fetal death shall supply the information to the state registrar in person, by mail, or through the local registrar. The person shall supply the information on a form provided by the department or on the original certificate.

(b) An organization or individual who has a record of births or deaths that may be useful to establish the genealogy of a resident of this state may file the record or a duly authenticated transcript of the record with the state registrar.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 302 (H.B. [2061](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 17, 2011.

Sec. 191.025. RECORD BOOKS AND CERTIFICATES. (a) Forms for the registration of births, deaths, and fetal deaths must be approved by the department.

(b) A municipality shall supply its local registrar, and each county shall supply the county clerk, with permanent record books for recording the births, deaths, and fetal deaths occurring in their respective jurisdictions. The record books must be in forms approved by the state registrar.

(c) A local registrar shall supply forms of certificates to

persons who need them. The executive commissioner shall establish and promulgate rules for strict accountability of birth certificates to prevent birth certificate fraud.

(d) Information required on a certificate must be written legibly in durable blue or black ink or may be filed and registered by photographic, electronic, or other means as prescribed by the state registrar.

(e) A certificate must contain each item of information required on the certificate or a satisfactory reason for omitting the item.

(f) The department shall require that the form for the registration of deaths must include the question, "Was the decedent a peace officer or an honorably retired peace officer in this state?".

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., 1st C.S., ch. 15, Sec. 5.14, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 17, Sec. 1, eff. April 25, 1997; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 476, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 744 (H.B. [2769](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. [219](#)), Sec. 3.0538, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.026. LOCAL RECORDS. (a) The local registrar shall secure a complete record of each birth, death, and fetal death that occurs in the local registrar's jurisdiction.

(b) The local registrar shall consecutively number birth and death certificates in separate series, beginning with the number "1" for the first birth and the first death in each calendar year. The local registrar shall sign each certificate to attest to the date the certificate is filed in the local registrar's office.

(c) The local registrar shall copy in the record book required under Section [191.025](#) each certificate that the local registrar registers, unless the local registrar keeps duplicates under Subsection (d) or makes photographic duplications as authorized by Chapter [201](#), Local Government Code, or the provisions

of Chapter 204, Local Government Code, derived from former Chapter 181, Local Government Code. Except as provided by Subsection (e), the copies shall be permanently preserved in the local registrar's office as the local record, in the manner directed by the state registrar.

(d) The local registrar may permanently bind duplicate reports of births and deaths, if the duplicates are required by local ordinance, and index them in the manner that the state registrar indexes records under Section 191.032.

(e) The local registrar may, after the first anniversary of the date of registration of a birth, death, or fetal death, destroy the permanent record of the birth, death, or fetal death maintained by the local registrar if:

(1) the local registrar has access to electronic records of births, deaths, and fetal deaths maintained by the vital statistics unit; and

(2) before destroying the records, the local registrar certifies to the state registrar that each record maintained by the local office that is to be destroyed has been verified against the records contained in the unit's database and that each record is included in the database or otherwise accounted for.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1997, 74th Leg., ch. 17, Sec. 2, eff. April 25, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.0539, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.027. REVIEW OF CERTIFICATE BY LOCAL REGISTRAR.

(a) The local registrar shall carefully examine each birth or death certificate when presented for registration to determine if it is completed as required by this title and by the state registrar's instructions.

(b) If a death certificate is incomplete or unsatisfactory, the local registrar shall call attention to the defects in the return.

(c) If a birth certificate is incomplete, the local registrar shall immediately notify the informant and require the

informant to supply the missing information if it can be obtained.
Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 191.028. AMENDMENT OF CERTIFICATE. (a) A record of a birth, death, or fetal death accepted by a local registrar for registration may not be changed except as provided by Subsection (b).

(b) An amending certificate may be filed to complete or correct a record that is incomplete or proved by satisfactory evidence to be inaccurate. The amendment must be in a form prescribed by the department. The amendment shall be attached to and become a part of the legal record of the birth, death, or fetal death if the amendment is accepted for filing, except as provided by Section 192.011(b).

(c) Not later than the 30th business day after the date the department receives an amending certificate, the department shall notify the individual of whether the amendment has been accepted for filing.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 14, Sec. 54, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 758 (S.B. 703), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 191.029. CERTIFICATES OR REPORT SENT TO STATE REGISTRAR. On the 10th day of each month, the local registrar shall send to the state registrar:

(1) the original certificates that the local registrar registered during the preceding month; or

(2) a report of no births or deaths on a card provided for that purpose if no births or deaths occurred during the preceding month.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 191.031. REVIEW OF CERTIFICATES BY STATE REGISTRAR. (a) The state registrar shall carefully examine the certificates received monthly from the local registrars.

(b) The state registrar shall require additional information to make the record complete and satisfactory if necessary.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 191.032. STATE RECORDS. (a) The state registrar shall arrange, bind, and permanently preserve birth, death, and fetal death certificates in a systematic manner.

(b) The executive commissioner shall adopt rules necessary to implement this section.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.0540, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.033. ADDENDA. (a) The state registrar may attach to the original record an addendum that sets out any information received by the state registrar that may contradict the information in a birth, death, or fetal death record required to be maintained in the vital statistics unit.

(b) If the state registrar attaches an addendum to an original record, the state registrar shall instruct the local registration official in whose jurisdiction the birth, death, or fetal death occurred to attach an identical addendum to any duplicate of the record in the official's custody.

(c) In this section, "local registration official" means a county clerk or a person authorized by this title to maintain a duplicate system of records for each birth, death, or fetal death that occurs in the person's jurisdiction.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.0541, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.034. NOTATION OF DEATH ON BIRTH CERTIFICATE. (a) On receipt of the death certificate of a person whose birth is

registered in this state, the state registrar shall conspicuously note the person's date of death on the person's birth certificate.

(b) The state registrar shall notify the county clerk of the county in which the person was born and the local registrar of the registration district in which the person was born of the person's death. On receipt of the notification of death, the county clerk or local registrar shall conspicuously note the person's date of death on the person's birth certificate.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1067 (H.B. [3253](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2013.

Sec. 191.036. SPANISH SURNAME INFORMATION. (a) The purpose of this section is to:

(1) enable this state to participate in a study being conducted by a group of southwestern states to obtain information about the birth rates and mortality patterns of persons with Spanish surnames; and

(2) implement recommendations made by the National Center for Health Statistics for improved methods of maintaining vital statistics.

(b) In the next official revision of the prescribed forms for birth and fetal death certificates, the department shall include the following questions and instructions:

- (1) Is the father of Spanish origin?
- (2) If yes, specify Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, etc.
- (3) Is the mother of Spanish origin?
- (4) If yes, specify Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, etc.

(c) In the next official revision of the prescribed forms for death certificates, the department shall include the following questions and instructions:

- (1) Was the decedent of Spanish origin?
- (2) If yes, specify Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, etc.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

SUBCHAPTER C. COPIES OF RECORDS

Sec. 191.051. CERTIFIED COPIES. (a) Subject to department rules controlling the accessibility of vital records, the state registrar shall supply to a properly qualified applicant, on request, a certified copy of a record, or part of a record, of a birth, death, or fetal death registered under this title.

(b) A certified copy issued under this subsection may be issued only in the form approved by the department.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.0542, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.052. CERTIFIED COPY AS EVIDENCE. A copy of a birth, death, or fetal death record registered under this title that is certified by the state registrar is prima facie evidence of the facts stated in the record.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 191.056. COPIES COLLECTED BY NATIONAL AGENCY. (a) The national agency in charge of the collection of vital statistics may obtain, without expense to the state, transcripts of vital records without payment of the fees prescribed by this chapter.

(b) The department may contract with the national agency to have copies of vital records that are filed with the vital statistics unit transcribed for that agency.

(c) The state registrar may act as special agent for the national agency to accept the use of the franking privilege and forms furnished by the national agency.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.0543, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 191.057. RECORDS WITH ADDENDA. (a) In this section:

(1) "Copy" means a reproduction of a record made by any

means.

(2) "Local registration official" means a county clerk or a person authorized by this title to maintain a duplicate system of records for each birth, death, or fetal death that occurs in the person's jurisdiction.

(b) If the vital statistics unit or any local registration official receives an application for a certified copy of a birth, death, or fetal death record to which an addendum has been attached under Section 191.033, the application shall be sent immediately to the state registrar. After examining the application, the original record, and the addendum, the state registrar may refuse to issue a certified copy of the record or part of the record to the applicant.

(c) If the state registrar refuses to issue the certified copy:

(1) the state registrar shall notify the applicant of the refusal and the reason for the refusal not later than the 10th day after the date on which the state registrar receives the application; and

(2) the department shall give the applicant an opportunity for a hearing.

(d) After the hearing, the state registrar shall notify the local officials who have duplicates of the questioned record of the department's final decision. The department may order the officials to issue or refuse to issue certified copies of the record.

(e) A duty imposed on or a power granted to the state registrar under this section may be performed or exercised by a designee of the state registrar.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.0544, eff. April 2, 2015.

SUBCHAPTER D. ACCESS TO RECORDS

Sec. 191.071. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIRED. (a) A

person may not access vital records maintained by the department under this chapter and may not access the department's vital records electronic registration system unless the department, or another person acting on behalf of the department, has conducted a fingerprint-based criminal background check, using state and federal databases, on the person in accordance with department policy and the person's record is satisfactory as determined under department policy.

(b) The department may adopt a policy waiving the requirement of a fingerprint-based background check for a person who previously submitted to a fingerprint-based background check as a condition of licensure by a state agency.

Added by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 837 (S.B. [200](#)), Sec. 5.03, eff. September 1, 2015.