

144.43 Vital records closed to inspection — exceptions.

1. To protect the integrity of vital statistics records, to ensure their proper use, and to ensure the efficient and proper administration of the vital statistics system kept by the state registrar, access to vital statistics records kept by the state registrar shall be limited to the state registrar and the state registrar's employees, and then only for administrative purposes.

2. It shall be unlawful for the state registrar to permit inspection of, or to disclose information contained in vital statistics records, or to copy or permit to be copied all or part of any such record except as authorized by rule.

3. *a.* The following vital statistics records in the custody of a county registrar may be inspected and copied as of right under [chapter 22](#):

- (1) A record of birth.
- (2) A record of marriage.
- (3) A record of divorce, dissolution of marriage, or annulment of marriage.
- (4) A record of death if that death was not a fetal death.

b. The following vital statistics records in the custody of the state archivist may be inspected and copied as of right under [chapter 22](#):

(1) A record of birth if the record is at least seventy-five years old or upon proof of entitlement to the record.

(2) A record of marriage if the record is at least seventy-five years old or upon proof of entitlement to the record.

(3) A record of divorce, dissolution of marriage, or annulment of marriage if the record is at least seventy-five years old or upon proof of entitlement to the record.

(4) A record of death or fetal death, if the record is at least fifty years old or upon proof of entitlement to the record.

4. A public record shall not be withheld from the public because it is combined with data processing software. The state registrar shall not implement any electronic data processing system for the storage, manipulation, or retrieval of vital records that would impair a county registrar's ability to permit the examination of a public record and the copying of a public record, as established by rule. If it is necessary to separate a public record from data processing software in order to permit the examination of the public record, the county registrar shall periodically generate a written log available for public inspection which contains the public record.

[C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, §144.45; C71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, S81, §144.43; [81 Acts, ch 64, §10](#); [82 Acts, ch 1100, §2](#)]

[88 Acts, ch 1158, §43](#); [90 Acts, ch 1025, §1](#); [94 Acts, ch 1171, §5](#); [97 Acts, ch 159, §21](#); [2009 Acts, ch 41, §194](#); [2015 Acts, ch 30, §59](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1125, §2](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §257](#)

Referred to in [§144.18, 233.2](#)

Subsection 3, paragraph b amended