

CHAPTER 95
VITAL RECORDS: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION
[Prior to 12/12/12, see [641] Ch 96, 98.1, Chs 103, 104]

641—95.1(144) Definitions. For the purpose of 641—Chapters 95 to 100, the following definitions shall apply:

“*Administrative costs*” means costs for the registration, collection, preservation, modification and certification of records, including but not limited to costs related to copying, regular mailing, searching, staffing, and maintenance of systems.

“*Advanced registered nurse practitioner*” or “*ARNP*” means an individual licensed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 152.

“*Age of majority*” means the chronological moment when a child legally assumes majority control over the child’s own person and actions and decisions, thereby terminating the legal control and legal responsibilities of the child’s parents over and for the child. The period of minority extends to the age of 18 years, but every minor attains majority by marriage.

“*Amendment*” means a change made by the state registrar upon request from an entitled person as described in 641—95.8(144) to an obvious error, omission, or transposition of letters in a word of common knowledge one year or more after the event.

“*Birth center*” means a facility or institution, which is not an ambulatory surgical center or a hospital or in a hospital, in which births are planned to occur following a normal, uncomplicated, low-risk pregnancy.

“*Birthing institution*” means a private or public hospital licensed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 135B that has a licensed obstetric unit or is licensed to provide obstetric services.

“*Burial-transit permit*” means a permit which is required to assume custody of a dead body or fetus pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.32.

“*Certificate*” means the written or electronic legal document containing the facts of an event; also used interchangeably with the term “record.”

“*Certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth*,” pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.31A, means a noncertified copy issued based upon a properly filed fetal death certificate to record the birth of a stillborn fetus.

“*Certified copy*” means an official copy of a registered vital record that is authenticated by the state registrar or county registrar. A certified copy contains a statement certifying the facts are true and accurate as recorded, is printed on security paper, and has authentication seals and signatures. A certified copy excludes all entries indicated as confidential or for statistical information.

“*Commemorative certificate*,” pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.45A, means a commemorative abstract of an Iowa birth or marriage record that has been properly filed.

“*Competent and disinterested person*” means an individual of legal age who is acquainted with both applicants who plan to marry.

“*Confidential information*” means data or information that is on a vital record, is not considered public information, and is restricted as to its release pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 144 or other provision of federal or state law.

“*Correction*” means a change made by the state registrar upon observation, upon query, or upon request from an entitled person as described in 641—95.8(144) to an obvious error, omission, or transposition of letters in a word of common knowledge within one year and prior to the first anniversary of the event.

“*County registrar*” means the county recorder with the authority to record vital records and issue certified copies. The county registrar operates under the state vital records laws and rules and the guidance of the state registrar pursuant to Iowa Code sections 144.5 and 144.9. Pursuant to Iowa Code section 331.601(4), if the office of the county recorder has been abolished, “county registrar” means the office to which the duties are assigned by the county board of supervisors.

“*County resident copy*” means a properly filed, clearly marked working copy of a decedent’s death certificate which is sent to and recorded by the county registrar of the county of the decedent’s residence in the event the death occurred outside the county of the decedent’s residence.

“*Court of competent jurisdiction*” means the appropriate court for the type of action. When used to refer to inspection of an original certificate of birth based upon an adoption, “court of competent jurisdiction” means the court in which the adoption was ordered.

“*Cremated remains*” means all the remains of the cremated human body recovered after the completion of the cremation process, including pulverization which leaves only bone fragments reduced to unidentifiable dimensions, and may include the residue of any foreign matter including casket material, bridgework, or eyeglasses that were cremated with the human remains.

“*Cremation*” means the technical process, using heat and flame, that reduces human remains to bone fragments, with the reduction taking place through heat and evaporation. Cremation shall include the processing, and may include the pulverization, of the bone fragments.

“*Custody*” means guardianship or control of vital records, including both physical possession, referred to as physical custody, and legal responsibility, referred to as legal custody, unless one or the other is specified. The state registrar shall not transfer legal custody of vital records to another agency for purposes of granting public access until all the records have been purged of all confidential information.

“*Day*” means calendar day.

“*Dead human body*” means a lifeless human body or parts or bones of a body, if, from the state of the body, parts, or bones, it may reasonably be concluded that death recently occurred.

“*Death*” means the condition as defined in Iowa Code section 702.8.

“*Declaration of paternity registry*” means a registry for a putative father to declare paternity pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.12A. The declaration does not constitute an affidavit of paternity filed pursuant to Iowa Code section 252A.3A.

“*Delayed birth record*” means the registration of a live birth event occurring in Iowa one or more years after the date of birth which is clearly marked as delayed and shall show on its face the date of the delayed registration.

“*Delayed death record*” means the registration of a death event occurring in Iowa one or more years after the date of death which is clearly marked as delayed and shall show on its face the date of the delayed registration.

“*Delayed marriage record*” means the registration of a marriage event occurring in Iowa one or more years after the event which is clearly marked as delayed and shall show on its face the date of the delayed registration.

“*Department*” means the Iowa department of public health.

“*Disinterment permit*” means a permit which allows the removal of a dead human body or fetus from its original place of burial, entombment or interment for the purpose of autopsy or reburial.

“*Electronic access*” means authority given by the state registrar to a county registrar to access electronic vital records through the electronic statewide vital records system for purposes of retrieving information. The state registrar shall provide guidelines for electronic access and the retrieval of information from the electronic statewide vital records system.

“*Electronic statewide vital records system*” means the combined vital records system for registration of birth records, registration of death records, issuance of certified copies of vital records by the state registrar and county registrar, and fee accounting.

“*Emancipated minor*” means a person younger than 18 years of age who has obtained the age of majority by court order.

“*Fetal death*” means a death prior to the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of human conception, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy which is not an induced termination of pregnancy. The death is indicated by the fact that, after such expulsion or extraction, the fetus does not breathe or show any other evidence of life such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord or definite movement of voluntary muscles. In determining a fetal death, heartbeats

shall be distinguished from transient cardiac contractions, and respirations shall be distinguished from fleeting respiratory efforts or gasps.

“Filing” means the presentation of a certificate, report, or other record of a live birth, death, fetal death, adoption, marriage, dissolution, or annulment for registration pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 144.

“Final disposition” means the burial, interment, cremation, removal from the state, or other disposition of a dead body or fetus.

“Foundling” means a living infant of unknown parentage whose place of birth is where the infant is found and whose date of birth shall be determined by approximation.

“Funeral director” means a person licensed in Iowa to practice mortuary science pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 156.

“Gestational surrogate arrangement” or *“surrogate mother arrangement,”* as defined in Iowa Code section 710.11, means an arrangement whereby a female agrees to be artificially inseminated with the sperm of a donor, to bear a child, and to relinquish all rights regarding that child to the donor or donor couple.

“Health care provider” means an individual licensed under Iowa Code chapter 148, 148C, 148D, or 152 or any individual who provides medical services under the authorization of the licensee.

“Induced termination of pregnancy” means the use of any means to terminate the pregnancy of a woman known to be pregnant with the intent other than to produce a live birth or to remove a dead fetus as defined in Iowa Code section 144.29A(8).

“Institution” means a facility as defined in Iowa Code section 144.1(10), including “hospital” as defined in Iowa Code section 135B.1(3) but not including “birth center” as defined in Iowa Code section 135.61(2).

“Institutional health facility” means a hospital as defined in Iowa Code section 135B.1, including a facility providing medical or health services that is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week and that is a hospital emergency room or a health care facility as defined in Iowa Code section 135C.1.

“Jurisdiction” means the state or county to which legal authority for the system of vital statistics has been granted by statute.

“Last name” means surname.

“Lineal consanguinity” means the existence of a line of descent in which one person is descended in a direct lineal relationship to another: as between the registrant and the registrant’s parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, and so upward, in the direct ascending line; or between the registrant and the registrant’s child, grandchild, great-grandchild and so downward in the direct descending line; or any siblings of the registrant.

“Live birth” means the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of human conception, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy, which after such expulsion or extraction, breathes or shows any other evidence of life, such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of voluntary muscles, whether or not the umbilical cord has been cut or the placenta is attached. In determining a live birth, heartbeats shall be distinguished from transient cardiac contractions, and respirations shall be distinguished from fleeting respiratory efforts or gasps.

“Marriage license valid date” means the day on which the marriage license becomes valid and on or after which the parties are authorized to marry. When the marriage license valid date is computed, the date of application shall be excluded. The marriage license shall become valid after the expiration of three calendar days after the date of application, unless earlier validated by a court of competent jurisdiction.

“Medical certification” means a statement which attests that the medical information reported on the certificate of death or fetal death is accurate to the best of the medical certifier’s knowledge.

“Medical certifier” means an Iowa-licensed physician, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or medical examiner who attests that the death event has taken place and who determines the cause and manner of death.

“Medical examiner” means the medical legal officer who makes the determination of the cause of death in nonroutine deaths such as non-natural, sudden, or unattended deaths or other deaths which affect the public interest.

“Modification” means any change made to a record that has been accepted and registered, such as a correction, an amendment, a change after adoption or paternity determination, or any other change.

“Mutual consent voluntary adoption registry” means a registry which authorizes adult adopted children, adult siblings, and the biological parents of adult adoptees to register to obtain identifying birth information.

“Natural cause of death” means a death due to a disease or the aging process and not due to external causes.

“Newborn safe haven registration” means the registration of the birth of a living infant of unknown parentage who has been abandoned or left at some unknown time after birth in a location other than the place of delivery.

“Non-birthing institution” means a private or public hospital licensed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 135B that does not have a licensed obstetric unit or is not licensed to provide obstetric services but may provide obstetric services on an emergency basis.

“Non-institution birth” means a live birth that occurs outside of an institution and not en route to an institution.

“Non-natural cause of death,” pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.28(1)“a,” means the death is a direct or indirect result of physical, chemical, thermal, or electrical trauma, or drug or alcohol intoxication or other poisoning.

“Notification of record search” means the document issued to the applicant when the record requested cannot be located through a search of registered records. The document contains a certification statement, is printed on security paper, and has authentication seals and signatures.

“Officiant” means (1) a judge of the Iowa supreme court, court of appeals, or district court, including a district associate judge, an associate juvenile judge, or a judicial magistrate, and including a senior judge as defined in Iowa Code section 602.9202(3), or (2) a person ordained or designated as a leader of the person’s religious faith.

“Physician” means an individual licensed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 148.

“Physician assistant” means an individual licensed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 148C.

“Presumptive death” means a death event presumed to have occurred in Iowa where no human body is found and a court of competent jurisdiction has determined the death has occurred.

“Putative father” means a man who is alleged to be or who claims to be the biological father of a child born to a woman to whom the man is not married at the time of the conception or birth of the child or at any time during the period between the conception and birth of the child.

“Record of death” means the compilation of those entries of a death, whether electronic or paper, which are contained in indexed systems which record the death event occurring in Iowa. “Record of death” shall include the certificate of death.

“Record of fetal death” means the compilation of those entries of a fetal death, whether electronic or paper, which are contained in indexed systems which record a fetal death event occurring in Iowa. “Record of fetal death” shall include the certificate of fetal death.

“Record of foreign born adoption” means the compilation of those entries of a live birth event for a child born in a foreign country and adopted by an Iowa resident. “Record of foreign born adoption” shall include the certificate of foreign birth and shall not constitute U.S. citizenship.

“Record of live birth” means the compilation of those entries of a live birth event, whether electronic or paper, which are contained in indexed systems which record a live birth event occurring in Iowa. “Record of live birth” shall include the certificate of live birth.

“Record of marriage” means the compilation of those entries of a marriage event, whether electronic or paper, which are contained in indexed systems which record a marriage event occurring in Iowa. “Record of marriage” shall include the certificate of marriage.

“Registrant” means the person named on the certificate as the person who was born, died, or was married.

“Registration” means the process by which vital statistics records are completed, filed, and incorporated by the state registrar in the official records.

“Report of dissolution or annulment” means the statistical report of dissolution or annulment, whether electronic or paper, excluding all entries indicated as confidential or for statistical information only.

“Report of termination of pregnancy” means the aggregated compilation of the information received by the department on terminations of pregnancies for each information item listed, with the exception of the report tracking number, the health care provider code, and any set of information for which the number is so small that the confidentiality of any person to whom the information relates may be compromised.

“Research” means the systematic investigation designed primarily to develop or contribute to scientific, medical, public health or psychosocial disciplines and generalized knowledge and not for private gain.

“Sealed” means the removal from inspection of any copy of an original certificate in the custody of the county registrar and the state registrar.

“Security paper” means standardized paper for issuing certified copies of vital record events that meets, at a minimum, national requirements for security features embedded within the paper to deter tampering, counterfeiting, photocopying, or imaging in order to help prevent fraudulent use of the certified copy and prevent identity theft.

“Single parent birth” means any record of live birth for which there is a reference or statement on the certificate or entry which directly indicates “no” regarding “born in wedlock” or “married”; or any record of live birth for which there is reference or statement on the certificate or entry that either parent is “unknown” or “anonymous”; or any certificate or entry which reflects the omission or absence of the name of the father of the child.

“Spontaneous termination of pregnancy” means the occurrence of an unintended termination of pregnancy at any time during the period from conception to 20 weeks’ gestation and is not a spontaneous termination of pregnancy at any time during the period from 20 weeks or greater which is reported to the department as a fetal death under Iowa Code section 144.29.

“Standard birth registration” means a vital record of a live birth event that occurred in Iowa which was submitted and accepted for registration within one year of the event.

“State registrar” means the director of the department or the director’s designee.

“Stillbirth” means an unintended fetal death occurring after a gestation period of 20 completed weeks or more or an unintended fetal death of a fetus with a weight of 350 or more grams.

“System of vital statistics” or *“system”* means the registration, collection, preservation, amendment, and certification of vital statistics records, and activities and records related thereto including the data processing, analysis, and publication of statistical data derived from such records.

“Uncertified copy” means an unofficial copy of a registered vital record which is not printed on security paper and which does not contain any authentication by the issuing jurisdiction. Uncertified copies shall contain an overstamp such as: “Not for Legal Purposes,” “Administrative Use Only,” “Deceased,” “For Genealogical Purposes Only,” “Working Copy,” or any other overstamp as authorized by the state registrar.

“Vital records” means certificates or reports of birth, death, fetal death, marriage, dissolution, annulment, and related data.

“Vital statistics” means data derived from reports, certificates, and records of live birth, death, fetal death, induced termination of pregnancy, marriage, dissolution of marriage or annulment, and data related thereto.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter; ARC 2275C, IAB 12/9/15, effective 1/13/16; ARC 5199C, IAB 10/7/20, effective 11/11/20]

641—95.2(144) Vital records and statistics. There is established a division in the department which shall install, maintain, and operate the system of vital statistics throughout the state. No official system for the registration of births, deaths, fetal deaths, adoptions, marriages, dissolutions, and annulments shall be maintained in the state or any of its political subdivisions other than the one provided for in

Iowa Code chapter 144, including, but not limited to, a system maintained by any agency or private entity.

95.2(1) No person shall prepare or issue any certificate which purports to be an original certified copy or a copy of a certificate of birth, death, fetal death, adoption, marriage, dissolution, or annulment except as provided for in Iowa Code chapter 144 and authorized by the state registrar.

95.2(2) The state registrar and the county registrar shall not maintain or issue copies of any vital record of an event occurring outside the state registrar's or county registrar's jurisdiction except as provided for in Iowa Code chapter 144 and authorized by the state registrar.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter; ARC 2933C, IAB 2/1/17, effective 3/8/17; see Delay note at end of chapter]

641—95.3(144) Forms—property of department. All forms, certificates and reports pertaining to the registration of vital events are the property of the department and shall be surrendered to the state registrar upon demand. Official designated forms used for the express purpose of creating a vital record event shall not be accessible to the general public unless authorized by rule.

95.3(1) The forms supplied or approved for reporting vital events shall be used for official purposes as provided for by law, rules and instructions of the state registrar.

95.3(2) No forms, except those furnished or approved by the state registrar, shall be used in the reporting of vital events or the making of copies of vital records.

95.3(3) Security paper used to report vital events shall be maintained in a secure location accessible only to the state and county registrars and their employees for administrative purposes.

95.3(4) Security paper shall be used to issue certified copies of Iowa vital records and shall be maintained in a secure location accessible only to the state and county registrars and their employees for administrative purposes.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter; ARC 4398C, IAB 4/10/19, effective 5/15/19]

641—95.4(144) Information by others.

95.4(1) Any person having knowledge of the facts shall furnish information that the person possesses regarding any birth, death, fetal death, adoption, marriage, dissolution, or annulment, upon demand of the state registrar.

95.4(2) Every person in charge of an institution, or the person's designee, shall maintain a record of personal particulars and data concerning each person admitted or confined to the institution pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.47. This record shall include information required by the standard certificate of birth, death, and fetal death forms issued under the direction of the state registrar. The record shall be made at the time of admission based on the information provided by such person, but when information cannot be obtained from the person, it shall be obtained from the most knowledgeable relative or person acquainted with the facts. The name and address of the person providing the information shall be a part of the record.

95.4(3) Records maintained under this rule shall be retained for a period of not less than ten years and shall be made available for inspection by the state registrar upon demand.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter]

641—95.5(144) Handling of vital records.

95.5(1) State equipment and state vital records shall not be handled or accessed except by the state registrar, the state registrar's employees, or other authorized personnel for administrative purposes.

95.5(2) The county registrar shall provide assistance to the public in accessing vital records designated as public records in the custody of the county registrar.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter]

641—95.6(144) Fees.

95.6(1) *Fees for services provided by state registrar or county registrar.* The following fees shall be charged and remitted for the various services provided by the state registrar or the county registrar.

a. The state registrar or county registrar, as applicable, shall charge a fee of \$20 for a certified copy of a vital record. If, following a search, no record is found and no certified copy is printed, the \$20 fee may be retained. On and after July 1, 2019, this fee will revert to \$15.

b. The state registrar shall charge a fee of \$20 to prepare an adoption certificate, to amend a certificate, to amend a certificate of live birth to reflect a legal change of name, to prepare a delayed certificate, to process other administrative or legal actions, or for preparation of copies of supporting documents on file in the state registrar's office. On and after July 1, 2019, this fee will revert to \$15. No fee shall be charged for establishment of paternity.

c. The state registrar shall charge a fee of \$25 to file a completed application for the mutual consent voluntary adoption registry.

d. The state registrar shall charge a fee of \$5 to update applicant information maintained in the mutual consent voluntary adoption registry and the declaration of paternity registry.

e. The state registrar shall charge a fee of \$20 to amend an abstract or other legal documentation in support of the preparation of a new certificate. On and after July 1, 2019, this fee will revert to \$15.

f. The state registrar shall charge a fee of \$35 to issue a commemorative copy of a certificate of birth or a certificate of marriage pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.45A. Fees collected shall be deposited in the emergency medical services fund established in Iowa Code section 135.25.

g. The state registrar shall charge a fee of \$20 for the purpose of issuing an uncertified copy of a certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.31A. On and after July 1, 2019, this fee will revert to \$15.

95.6(2) *Overpayments.* Any overpayment of \$5 or less received by the state registrar for the copying of vital records or for the preparation or amending of a certificate shall not be refunded and shall be retained by the department.

95.6(3) *Certified copy of modified vital record.* When an individual is in possession of a previously issued certified copy of a vital record and the original record is subsequently modified, the individual may request and receive a certified copy of the modified record without charge if the certified copy prior to modification is relinquished to the registrar's office that issued the certified copy, unless otherwise directed by the state registrar.

95.6(4) *Search of county registrar's records—fee for uncertified copy.* A person who is requesting an uncertified copy of a record in the custody of the county registrar shall conduct the search of the county files to locate the record. If a copy is requested, the county registrar may charge a fee of no more than \$5 for an uncertified copy of the county record. The fee shall be retained by the county.

95.6(5) *Distribution of fees.*

a. All fees collected by the county registrar and the state registrar shall be distributed as follows:

(1) For fees collected by a county registrar, with the exception of the fee in subrule 95.6(4), the county registrar shall retain \$4 of each \$20 fee collected by that office. On and after July 1, 2019, this \$20 fee will revert to \$15. Fees collected shall be divided as follows:

1. For a birth certificate or a marriage certificate, the state registrar shall receive \$13, and \$3 shall be deposited in the general fund of the state, except for the fee collected pursuant to paragraph 95.6(1) "f." On and after July 1, 2019, the amount received by the state registrar will revert to \$8.

2. For a death certificate, the state registrar shall receive \$11, the office of the state medical examiner shall receive \$3, and \$2 shall be deposited in the general fund of the state. On and after July 1, 2019, the amount received by the state registrar will revert to \$6.

(2) For fees collected by the state registrar, the state registrar shall retain all fees, with the exception of the fees in paragraph 95.6(1) "a," of which the state registrar shall retain \$14 of each \$20 fee collected for the issuance of certified copies. On and after July 1, 2019, the fee collected will revert to \$15 and the amount retained by the state registrar will revert to \$9. The \$6 balance of certified copy fees collected by the state registrar shall be divided as follows:

1. For a birth certificate or a marriage certificate, \$6 shall be deposited in the general fund of the state.

2. For a death certificate, the office of the state medical examiner shall receive \$3, and \$3 shall be deposited in the general fund of the state.

b. All fees retained by the state registrar shall be added to the vital records fund established by the department pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.46A.

c. All fees received by the office of the state medical examiner shall be added to the operating budget established for the operation of that office.

95.6(6) *Fee for search to verify vital statistics record.* A fee shall be charged by the state registrar for each search conducted for the purpose of providing verification of vital statistics data to an agency authorized to receive such data under subrule 95.12(2).

a. The amount of the fee shall be determined in an agreement with the department and shall be dependent on the nature and scope of the project and the resources required to obtain the data requested.

b. The state registrar shall retain the full amount of all fees collected under this subrule in the vital records fund established pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.46A.

95.6(7) *Fee for researcher access to vital statistics data.* A fee shall be charged to each researcher who is provided access to vital statistics data in accordance with Iowa Code section 144.44 and the required agreement executed with the department. The amount of the fee shall be based on the nature and scope of the research project and resources required to obtain the data requested.

a. The state registrar shall allocate the fees for copies of birth, marriage, and death certificates provided to researchers pursuant to the distribution of fees set forth in subrule 95.6(5).

b. The state registrar shall retain in the vital records fund established pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.46A the full amount of fees collected from researchers for searching files or records to create a data file.

95.6(8) *Service member who died while on active duty—waiver of fee.* The certified copy fee for a birth certificate or a death certificate of a service member, as defined in Iowa Code section 29A.90, who died while on active duty shall be waived for a period of one year from the date of death. Application for the certified copy shall be made by an entitled family member as described in 641—95.8(144) of the deceased service member or the entitled family member's legal representative. Documentation shall be submitted at the time of application to substantiate the date of death and active duty status.

95.6(9) *Retention of applications and reports.* An application for a certified copy of a vital record in Iowa shall be retained by the county registrar for a minimum of six months from date of issuance of the certified copy. All financial reports for vital records fees shall be retained by the county registrar for a minimum of three calendar years.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter; ARC 1074C, IAB 10/2/13, effective 1/1/14; see Delay note at end of chapter; ARC 1402C, IAB 4/2/14, effective 5/7/14; ARC 2275C, IAB 12/9/15, effective 1/13/16; ARC 4398C, IAB 4/10/19, effective 5/15/19]

641—95.7(144) General public access of vital records in the custody of the county registrar. A vital record may be in the custody of the county registrar if the event occurred in that county and the record is not excluded by statute or definition for purposes of confidentiality.

95.7(1) There shall be public access and the right to inspect all vital records in the custody of the county registrar after the vital records are purged of confidential information pursuant to rule 641—95.11(144). The county registrar shall allow the general public access to the electronic statewide vital records system to search as a public user as a right under Iowa Code chapter 22 for events which occurred in that county.

95.7(2) Information inspected and copied shall not be used to establish an official system for the registration of vital statistics except as authorized by Iowa Code chapter 144.

95.7(3) County registrars may issue uncertified copies of vital records held in the registrars' physical custody or accessible through the electronic statewide vital records system, except those records excluded by statute. Uncertified copies issued by the county registrar shall be issued on plain white paper and clearly stamped "not for legal purposes." Security paper provided by the state registrar shall not be used to produce uncertified copies.

95.7(4) For records available in the electronic statewide vital records system, the state registrar shall send to the county registrars a list of all records that have been modified. County registrars shall, as directed by the state registrar, remove all forms of any vital record in their physical custody from the county vital records system if the vital record appears on the list of modified records.

95.7(5) For records not available in the electronic statewide vital records system, the state registrar shall send a copy of any modified vital record to the county of event and, if the record is a death record, to the county of residence.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter; ARC 2275C, IAB 12/9/15, effective 1/13/16; ARC 2933C, IAB 2/1/17, effective 3/8/17; see Delay note at end of chapter]

641—95.8(144) Direct tangible interest in and entitlement to a vital record. Certified copies of vital records may be issued by the state registrar or county registrar upon written application, payment of the required fee pursuant to paragraph 95.6(1) “a,” and demonstration of a verifiable, direct tangible interest and entitlement.

95.8(1) The following persons shall be considered to have a direct tangible interest and entitlement and are authorized to obtain a certified copy of a vital record:

a. The registrant, if the registrant is of legal age, has reached the age of majority, or is an emancipated minor.

b. A member of the registrant’s immediate legal family, including:

- (1) Current spouse or surviving spouse;
- (2) Children;
- (3) Mother or father if listed on the registrant’s birth certificate;
- (4) Sibling, if sibling has reached the age of majority;
- (5) Maternal grandparents, or paternal grandparents if the father is listed on the birth certificate; or
- (6) Step-parent or step-child if:
 1. Legal parent and step-parent are currently married at the time of application; or
 2. Step-parent is the surviving spouse of the legal parent and not remarried.

c. The documented legal representative of the registrant or the registrant’s immediate legal family, including:

- (1) An attorney;
- (2) A court-appointed guardian;
- (3) A foster parent;
- (4) A funeral director, for up to one year following the decedent’s date of death; or
- (5) A legal executor.

d. Other persons who demonstrate a direct tangible interest and entitlement when it is shown that the certified copy is needed to determine or protect a personal or property interest and the interest is for the benefit of the registrant.

95.8(2) The following persons shall not be deemed to have direct tangible interest and entitlement or be authorized to secure vital records:

a. Biological parents of adopted persons in the absence of a court order from the court of competent jurisdiction;

b. Biological family members of adopted persons;

c. Adopted persons requesting biological family records; or

d. Commercial firms or agencies requesting lists of vital record events, or lists of names, or lists of addresses, or that are not legal representatives requesting records on behalf of entitled individuals.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter; ARC 4398C, IAB 4/10/19, effective 5/15/19]

641—95.9(144) Search and issuance of a certified copy of a vital record. The search and issuance of a certified copy of a vital record shall be requested from the state registrar or county registrar.

95.9(1) Only entitled applicants as described in rule 641—95.8(144) may submit requests for certified copies of vital records.

95.9(2) A person requesting a search and issuance of a certified copy of a vital record shall provide in writing the following:

a. The name of the person or persons whose vital record is to be searched;

b. The purpose of such request;

c. The relationship to the registrant of the person making the request; and

d. The notarized signature and the address of the person making the request.

95.9(3) In addition to a completed written application, the applicant shall provide:

- a.* A current, legible government-issued photo identification of the applicant making the request or other identification documents acceptable to the state registrar; and
- b.* Payment of the required fee before the search is conducted.

95.9(4) The state registrar and county registrar shall have the authority to require additional supporting documents to prove direct tangible interest and entitlement pursuant to rule 641—95.8(144).

95.9(5) If, after the search is conducted, no record is on file and the state registrar or county registrar issues a “notification of record search” on certified paper, the fee for the search may be retained pursuant to paragraph 95.6(1) “*a.*”

95.9(6) If a certified copy of a vital record is issued and sent to the applicant using a mail service and the applicant does not receive the certified copy, the state registrar or the county registrar may replace the certified copy without an additional fee using an Affidavit of Non-Receipt. The applicant must contact the issuing registrar within 90 days of the date of request. A minimum of 30 days must have elapsed from the time the certified copy was mailed. The applicant shall read the instructions, complete the Affidavit of Non-Receipt and have the applicant’s signature notarized. The original Affidavit of Non-Receipt and a photocopy of the applicant’s driver’s license must be reviewed by the issuing registrar before the certified copy can be replaced for no additional fee. The state registrar or county registrar may refuse any Affidavit of Non-Receipt when the state registrar or county registrar determines proof of receipt, fraud or misrepresentation. The state registrar shall give to the registrant a notice in writing of the state registrar’s reason and intention to refuse the Affidavit of Non-Receipt.

95.9(7) If printed from the electronic statewide vital records system by a county registrar, the certified copy of a vital record shall be stamped by the issuing county registrar to reflect the county in which the certified copy was issued.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter; ARC 2275C, IAB 12/9/15, effective 1/13/16]

641—95.10(144) Search and issuance for genealogy or family history. The search and issuance of a vital record for genealogy may be requested from the state registrar or county registrar upon written application and payment of the required fee pursuant to paragraph 95.6(1) “*a.*”

95.10(1) The state registrar or county registrar may issue certified copies of a vital record for genealogy or family history to an applicant who can satisfactorily demonstrate a line of direct lineal consanguinity and to aunts, uncles, and cousins not past twice removed.

95.10(2) All certified copies issued for genealogy or family history shall be clearly marked “for genealogical purposes only.”

95.10(3) No certified copy shall be issued for genealogy or family history if the registrant is known to be living.

95.10(4) If, after the search is conducted, no record is on file, the state registrar or county registrar shall issue a “notification of record search” on certified paper, and the fee for the search shall be retained pursuant to paragraph 95.6(1) “*a.*”

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter; ARC 2933C, IAB 2/1/17, effective 3/8/17; see Delay note at end of chapter]

641—95.11(144) Registrars’ responsibility for maintenance of confidentiality.

95.11(1) The state registrar and county registrar shall maintain the confidentiality of the following material, records, and information:

- a.* Entries indicated as confidential or statistical in nature on the face of the record or otherwise confidential by law;
- b.* Any record which is ordered sealed by the state registrar or pursuant to a court order.

95.11(2) The county registrar shall take all necessary steps to ensure that confidential information reflected on vital records has been redacted from general public access. If confidential information is included with accessible information, only accessible information shall be made available to the general public for examination.

95.11(3) The county registrar shall employ at a minimum all of the following methods to ensure confidentiality:

- a. Permanently cover or remove, by appropriate means, confidential information;
- b. Promptly process the notice to seal a record as directed by the state registrar; and
- c. Seal and not reproduce confidential information when copies of vital records are made.

95.11(4) The county registrar may charge reasonable administrative costs to reflect the expenses for efforts required to allow general public access, examination and the assurance of confidentiality of this material and information pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code chapter 22.

- a. The administrative cost is to be paid by persons who request the services provided by the county registrar, including supervising, copying or providing a suitable place for such work.
- b. The county registrar shall retain all administrative costs collected to allow general public access, examination, and the assurance of confidentiality of the vital record and information pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code chapter 22.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter; ARC 2275C, IAB 12/9/15, effective 1/13/16]

641—95.12(144) Disclosure of data.

95.12(1) The state registrar may disclose data from the system of vital statistics to federal, state, county or municipal agencies of government that request such data in the conduct of their official duties, subject to conditions the state registrar may impose to ensure that the use of the data is limited to official purposes.

- a. The aforementioned agencies shall not provide the certified copy or a copy of the vital record, or release information contained therein, to the person named on the certificate, a member of the person's legal family, or the person's legal representative.
- b. Certified copies issued to the aforementioned agencies shall be appropriately stamped, for example, "administrative purposes only" or "for veteran affairs purposes only."

95.12(2) Confidential verifications of the facts contained in vital records may be furnished by the state registrar to any federal, state, county or municipal government agency or other entity in the conduct of the agency's or entity's official duties, subject to conditions the state registrar may impose to ensure that the verification is limited to official purposes. Confidential verification of the facts contained in vital records may be furnished by a county registrar to another county office, within the county jurisdiction, in the conduct of the county's official duties, subject to conditions the state and county registrar may impose to ensure that the verification is limited to official purposes.

- a. Such confidential verifications shall be on forms prescribed and furnished by the state registrar or on forms furnished by the requesting agency or entity and acceptable to the state registrar, or the state registrar may authorize the verification in other ways.

- b. The aforementioned agencies and entities shall not provide the original or a copy of the verified certificate, or release information contained therein, to the person named on the certificate, a member of the person's legal family, or the person's legal representative.

95.12(3) The state registrar may permit the use of data from vital statistics for research purposes subject to conditions the state registrar may impose to ensure the use of the data is limited to such research purposes. No data shall be furnished from vital statistics for research purposes until the state registrar has prepared in writing the conditions under which the data may be used and has received an agreement signed by a responsible agent of the research organization agreeing to meet and conform to such conditions.

95.12(4) The state registrar may transmit to the county registrar data needed to produce certified copies of vital records pursuant to rule 641—95.8(144).

95.12(5) The state registrar may transmit to the statewide immunization registry information from birth certificates for the sole purpose of identifying those children in need of immunizations. The state registrar may impose conditions to ensure that the use of the information is limited to official purposes.

95.12(6) The state medical examiner or the county medical examiner may request an uncertified copy of a death certificate before the death certificate is accepted and filed at the county registrar's office.

- a. The copy shall be clearly stamped "administrative purposes only."

b. The death certificate shall be for the sole use of the state medical examiner or county medical examiner and shall not be used as a legal document, be distributed, be copied or be maintained other than to be made a part of the investigatory file.

c. If the state medical examiner or any county medical examiner determines the death does not warrant further investigation, the state medical examiner or county medical examiner shall destroy the uncertified copy of the death certificate.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter; ARC 2275C, IAB 12/9/15, effective 1/13/16]

641—95.13(144) Preparation of certified copies. Certified copies of vital records may be prepared and issued by the state registrar or the county registrar pursuant to rules 641—95.3(144) and 641—95.9(144).

95.13(1) Certified copies of vital records may be made by mechanical, electronic, or other reproductive processes, except for confidential information. Certified copies shall be issued using security paper that is prescribed by the state registrar.

95.13(2) When a certified copy is issued, each certification shall contain a statement certifying that the facts are the true facts recorded in the issuing office, the date issued, the name of the issuing office, the registrar's signature or an authorized copy thereof, and the seal of the issuing office.

95.13(3) No person shall prepare or issue any certificate which purports to be an original, certified copy, or copy of a certificate of birth, death, fetal death, or marriage.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter]

641—95.14(144) Cancellation of fraudulent records.

95.14(1) When the state registrar determines that a certificate was registered through fraud or misrepresentation, the state registrar shall give to the registrant a notice in writing of the state registrar's intention to cancel said certificate.

95.14(2) The notice of cancellation shall give the registrant an opportunity to appear and show cause why the certificate shall not be canceled.

a. The notice may be served on the registrant, or, in the case of a minor or incompetent person, on the parent or guardian, by the forwarding of the notice by certified mail to the last-known address on file in the office of the state registrar.

b. The certificate shall not be available for certification unless the registrant, parent or guardian within 30 days after the date of mailing the notice shows cause satisfactory to the state registrar why the certificate shall not be canceled.

95.14(3) Upon presentation to the state registrar of a court order stating a marriage certificate was registered through fraud or misrepresentation, the state registrar shall remove said record from the vital statistics system. The state registrar shall order the county registrar to remove any record related to the marriage.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter]

641—95.15(144) Unlawful acts.

95.15(1) Serious misdemeanors. Any person who reports information required under Iowa Code chapter 144 and who commits any of the following acts is guilty of a serious misdemeanor:

a. Willfully and knowingly makes any false statement in a report, record, or certificate required to be filed or in an application for an amendment or willfully and knowingly supplies false information intending that such information be used in the preparation or amendment of any such report, record, or certificate.

b. Without lawful authority and with the intent to deceive, makes, alters, amends, or mutilates any report, record, or certificate required to be filed or a certified copy of such report, record, or certificate.

c. Willfully and knowingly uses or attempts to use or furnish to another for use for any purpose of deception any certificate, record, or report or certified copy thereof.

d. Willfully and knowingly alters, amends, or mutilates any copy, certified copy, record or report.

e. Willfully, with the intent to deceive, uses or attempts to use any certificate of birth or certified copy of a record of birth knowing that such certificate or certified copy was issued based upon a record which is false in whole or in part or which relates to the birth of another person.

f. Willfully and knowingly furnishes a certificate of birth or certified copy of a record of birth with the intention that it be used by a person other than the person to whose birth the record relates.

g. Disinterring a body in violation of Iowa Code section 144.34.

h. Knowingly violates a provision of Iowa Code section 144.29A.

95.15(2) *Simple misdemeanors.* Any person committing any of the following acts is guilty of a simple misdemeanor:

a. Knowingly transports or accepts for transportation, interment, or other disposition a dead body without an accompanying permit as provided in Iowa Code sections 144.32, 144.33, and 144.34.

b. Refuses to provide information required by Iowa Code chapter 144.

c. Willfully violates any of the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 144 or refuses to perform any of the duties imposed upon the person.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter]

641—95.16(144) Enforcement assistance.

95.16(1) The department shall report cases of alleged violations to the proper county attorney, with a statement of the facts and circumstances, for such action as is appropriate.

95.16(2) Upon request of the department, the attorney general shall assist in the enforcement of the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 144.

[ARC 0483C, IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13; see Delay note at end of chapter]

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 144.

[Filed ARC 0483C (Notice ARC 0376C, IAB 10/3/12), IAB 12/12/12, effective 1/16/13]¹

[Filed ARC 1074C (Notice ARC 0926C, IAB 8/7/13), IAB 10/2/13, effective 1/1/14]²

[Filed ARC 1402C (Notice ARC 1294C, IAB 1/22/14), IAB 4/2/14, effective 5/7/14]

[Filed ARC 2275C (Notice ARC 2155C, IAB 9/30/15), IAB 12/9/15, effective 1/13/16]

[Filed ARC 2933C (Notice ARC 2821C, IAB 11/23/16), IAB 2/1/17, effective 3/8/17]³

[Filed ARC 4398C (Notice ARC 4127C, IAB 11/21/18), IAB 4/10/19, effective 5/15/19]

[Filed ARC 5199C (Notice ARC 5087C, IAB 7/15/20), IAB 10/7/20, effective 11/11/20]

¹ January 16, 2013, effective date of the rescission of Chapter 95 and the adoption of new Chapter 95 [ARC 0483C] delayed until adjournment of the 2013 General Assembly by the Administrative Rules Review Committee at its meeting held January 8, 2013; delay lifted at the meeting held March 8, 2013.

² January 1, 2014, effective date of 95.6(2) [ARC 1074C, Item 2] delayed 70 days by the Administrative Rules Review Committee at its meeting held October 8, 2013.

³ March 8, 2017, effective date of 95.2, 95.7 and 95.10 [ARC 2933C] delayed 70 days by the Administrative Rules Review Committee at its meeting held February 10, 2017.