



# Affidavit to Amend a Death Record



Upon request, this document will be made available in Braille, large print, and audiocassette or computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write:

California Office of Vital Records  
M.S. 5103  
P.O. Box 997410  
Sacramento, CA 95899-7410  
Telephone: (916) 445-2684  
California Relay: 711/1-800-735-2929  
[www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)

# Amending a Death Certificate

---

**What information can be changed with an amendment?**

Amendments are used to correct **errors** on the death certificate.

**The VS 24 can be used to:**

- Correct spelling errors.
- Add information not known at the time of death.
- Add an “AKA” (“also known as”) to decedent’s name.
- Correct most items on the certificate, except those noted below.

**The VS 24 cannot be used to:**

- Change the informant that is listed on the original death certificate.
  - Correct the date, time, place, or cause of death (this information can only be changed by a physician or coroner).
- 

**What is the fee to amend a death certificate?**

---

**Within One Year of the Death:**

- There is no fee to amend a record within one year of the date of the death (***but you do not get a copy of the amended record***).
  - If you want a Certified Copy of the amended record, there is a \$12 fee for each copy.
- 

**If the Death Occurred More Than One Year Ago:**

- There is a \$20 fee, which includes one Certified Copy of the amended record.
  - Additional copies are \$12.
- 

(Continued)

## What is the fee to amend a death certificate?

(Continued)

**Please Note**



Fees should be paid by check or money order payable to **Office of Vital Records**. International money orders for out-of-country requests should be payable in U.S. dollars.

***If you are not paying a fee to process the amendment (it is within the first year and you are not paying to get a Certified Copy of the amended record), you will not receive any contact from our office – we will just amend the record and close the file. For these non-fee amendments, we do not send a notification of receipt or a Certified Copy of the amended record.***

Once we complete the amendment (the processing time is listed at the end of this pamphlet), we will send a copy of the amended record to the local registrar so they can update their records.

## What do I submit to amend a death certificate?

- You will need to complete the Affidavit to Amend a Record, VS 24.
- Although this item ***is not required***, it would help our staff if you could include a photocopy of the current death certificate (this helps us identify the exact record to be amended).
- If you are requesting a Certified Copy of the amended record, you ***must*** include a notarized Sworn Statement (see next section for more information).
- Mail the following items to our office using the address on the front of this pamphlet:
  - Completed VS 24
  - Appropriate fee
  - ***Notarized*** Sworn Statement (if copy of amended record is being issued)
  - Photocopy of current death certificate (if you have it)
- If any of the required items are not included, your request will be returned to you for correction.

---

**Why do I need a Sworn Statement?**

Effective July 1, 2003, a new law changed the way we issue birth and death certificates. To help protect against identity theft, the law requires that only an **authorized person** (as defined by law) may receive a Certified Copy of a birth or death record. In order to receive the Certified Copy, you must sign (and notarize) the Sworn Statement declaring under penalty of perjury that you are authorized by law to receive the Certified Copy.

Only one notarized Sworn Statement is required for multiple amendments submitted at the same time. But the Sworn Statement must include the name of each person whose record is being amended and your relationship to that person.

You **do not have to complete** the attached Application for Certified Copy of Death Record, but please read the first page for the definition of “authorized person” before completing the Sworn Statement.

---

**Where can I get the VS 24?**

Because the amendment document becomes part of the official record, it must be an **original** form (our office uses a special bond paper). **Photocopies are not acceptable.** One application form is included if you receive this pamphlet by mail. If you need additional copies of the VS 24 form, or are accessing this pamphlet on our website:

- Order forms electronically at [www.dhs.ca.gov/hisp/chs/OVR/OVRFormsReq.asp](http://www.dhs.ca.gov/hisp/chs/OVR/OVRFormsReq.asp). Because of the volume of phone calls we receive, the Internet is usually a faster process for our customers than calling our Customer Service Unit.
  - Call our Customer Service Unit at (916) 445-2684.
  - You can also get the form from the County Recorder or County Health Department in any California county.
- 

**How do I complete the VS 24?**

A sample of what a completed form should look like is attached:

**PART I:**

- Complete the information **exactly** as it appears on the current death certificate.

**Note:** If you need a copy of the current death certificate to complete this section, you can get a copy by completing the Application for Certified Copy of Death Certificate (attached) and submitting the application (and \$12 fee) to our office. Our average processing time for death certificates is 12 weeks. But you can get a copy much faster from the County Recorder in the county where the death took place.

(Continued)

---

**How do I complete the VS 24?**

(Continued)

---

**PART II:**

- **Item 10:** Enter the item number from the current death certificate that needs to be corrected. List only one item per line.
- **Item 11:** Enter the *incorrect* information **as it appears** on the current death certificate.
- **Item 12:** Enter the *correct* information **as it should appear** on the death certificate.
- **Item 13:** Briefly state the reason for the correction.

**Who may sign supporting affidavits?**

- 
- Two persons having knowledge of the facts must complete the supporting affidavits. See next section for additional information. The signed affidavits must be included on the bottom of the VS 24 – and not as a separate document.
  - ***Two signatures are required.***

**Are there situations where specific persons must sign the affidavits?**

Yes.

- **When correcting marital status (item 12), or when adding or changing a surviving spouse (items 28-30):** Both the informant who is listed on the death certificate and the surviving spouse must sign the affidavit.

If either the informant or the surviving spouse refuses to sign the affidavit, we can correct the marital information if you provide a **certified** copy of a court order establishing the decedent's marital status at the time of his or her death. The court order should be mailed to our office with the affidavit signed by two persons with knowledge of the facts.

- **When correcting items 26 or 27 (name, relationship, or mailing address of the informant):** The original informant must sign the affidavit.
- **When changing item 26 (informant name/relationship) from “under investigation” status to include an informant:** The certifying physician, coroner, or medical examiner must sign the affidavit.
- **When correcting the date, time, place, or cause of death:** Only the physician, coroner, or medical examiner can amend these items.

What makes a VS 24 form “acceptable”?

---

## Important Information

Death certificates are legal documents that must hold up in any court, unchallenged as to their accuracy and reliability.

Because the amendment you submit becomes an actual part of this legal document, it must adhere to strict guidelines:

- Every item on the amendment must be completed.
- The amendment form must be an original, not a photocopy.
- Because the amendment form becomes part of the official record, every word and letter must be extremely clear and legible. ***Using a typewriter to complete the form ensures that the information is interpreted clearly.***
- If you are not able to type the amendment, it is extremely important that you take the extra time to print ***very clearly and legibly***. Documents that are not legible will be returned to you to complete again.
- ***Only black ink is acceptable.***
- ***There cannot be any erasures, whiteout, or alterations.***

How will I know if my request has been accepted?

---

Once your request has been received and evaluated, we will send you either:

- A postcard letting you know your request has been accepted, and reminding you of our processing time. (You will only receive this postcard if you have paid a fee for the amendment, which means you will be getting a Certified Copy of the amended record).
- If your request is not accepted (e.g., due to insufficient fee, insufficient information, etc.), we will return your request to you with a letter explaining what needs to be corrected.

Please allow about 6 weeks to receive the acknowledgement postcard. Rejected requests can take up to 10 weeks to be returned.

---

---

**How long will it take to process the amendment?**

Our processing time for death amendments is:

- Approximately 12 months.

The processing time can change based on our workload.

---

**Once I file the amendment, what happens to the original record?**

- The original record remains unchanged, and the amendment becomes page 2 of the death certificate - making it a two-page document (per Health and Safety Code Sections 102140 and 103255).
  - Anyone receiving a copy after the amendment is applied will receive a copy of both documents.
- 

**What if I still have questions?**

If you have read this pamphlet thoroughly and still have questions that were not answered in this pamphlet, please call (916) 557-6073 and leave your name, telephone number, and question. One of our Amended Records staff will return your call within 48 hours.

If you have questions on the **status** of your request, please call our Customer Service Unit at (916) 445-2684 – **but only after the processing time has passed.**

---

# AFFIDAVIT TO AMEND A RECORD

NO ERASURES, WHITEOUTS, PHOTOCOPIES,  
OR ALTERATIONS

STATE FILE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL REGISTRATION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

BIRTH   
  DEATH   
  FETAL DEATH

**TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY IN BLACK INK ONLY – THIS AMENDMENT BECOMES AN ACTUAL PART OF THE OFFICIAL RECORD**

## PART I INFORMATION TO LOCATE RECORD

INFORMATION AS IT APPEARS ON ORIGINAL RECORD	1A. NAME—FIRST	1B. MIDDLE	1C. LAST	
	2. SEX	3. DATE OF EVENT—MM/DD/CCYY	4. CITY OF EVENT	5. COUNTY OF EVENT
	6. FULL NAME OF FATHER/PARENT AS STATED ON ORIGINAL RECORD		7. FULL NAME OF MOTHER/PARENT AS STATED ON ORIGINAL RECORD	
	SAMPLE			

## PART II STATEMENT OF CORRECTIONS TO BIRTH, DEATH, OR FETAL DEATH RECORD

	8. ITEM NUMBER TO BE CORRECTED	9. INCORRECT INFORMATION THAT APPEARS ON ORIGINAL RECORD	10. CORRECTED INFORMATION AS IT SHOULD APPEAR
LIST ONE ITEM PER LINE			

REASON FOR CORRECTION	11.

**We, the undersigned, hereby certify under penalty of perjury that we have personal knowledge of the above facts and that the information given above is true and correct.**

AFFIDAVITS AND SIGNATURES  <b>TWO PERSONS MUST SIGN THIS FORM TO CORRECT A BIRTH, DEATH, OR FETAL DEATH RECORD</b>	12A. SIGNATURE OF FIRST PERSON ▶ <i>John Doe</i>	12B. PRINTED NAME	12C. TITLE/RELATIONSHIP TO PERSON IN PART I
	12D. ADDRESS (STREET and NUMBER, CITY, STATE, ZIP)	12E. DATE SIGNED—MM/DD/CCYY	
	13A. SIGNATURE OF SECOND PERSON ▶ <i>John M. Doe</i>	13B. PRINTED NAME	13C. TITLE/RELATIONSHIP TO PERSON IN PART I
	13D. ADDRESS (STREET and NUMBER, CITY, STATE, ZIP)	13E. DATE SIGNED—MM/DD/CCYY	

STATE/LOCAL REGISTRAR USE ONLY	14. OFFICE OF VITAL RECORDS OR LOCAL REGISTRAR ▶	15. DATE ACCEPTED FOR REGISTRATION
--------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

# APPLICATION TO AMEND A RECORD

TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY IN BLACK INK ONLY  
NO ERASURES, WHITEOUTS, PHOTOCOPIES, OR ALTERATIONS

If an *acceptable* application to amend the record is registered within one year of the date of the event, there is no processing fee; however, there is a fee required for a certified copy.

Enclosed is the fee of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for a certified copy of the newly amended record.

If an *acceptable* application to amend the record is registered one year or more after the date of the event, there is a fee for filing the affidavit, which includes one certified copy. There is a fee for each additional certified copy. Please contact your Local Registrar, County Recorder, or the State Registrar for the current fees, or visit our website at [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov).

Enclosed is the fee of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for filing the affidavit and one certified copy of the newly amended record.

Enclosed is the fee of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for an additional certified copy(ies) of the newly amended record.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number ( )

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, ZIP Code

## GENERAL INFORMATION

1. The original certificate cannot be altered.
2. ***This amendment becomes a part of the original record, so please type or print clearly in black ink only.***
3. Please submit original amendment form only. Photocopies of the amendment form will be rejected.
4. Your certified copy will include a copy of the original certificate with a copy of the amendment.
5. ***The certified copy of the certificate and the attached amendment must remain together for the certified copy to be valid.***

## READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING THE FORM

1. ***This form becomes a part of the original record – type or print clearly in black ink only.***
2. No erasures, whiteouts, photocopies, or alterations allowed.
3. Enter the Local Registration Number in the space provided in the upper right-hand corner of the form.
4. Complete Part I, Items 1 – 7, with the information as it appears on the original certificate.
5. Enter the certificate item number(s) to be corrected, either from the original or subsequent amendment, in Part II—Item 8. List one item per line.
6. Enter the incorrect information that appears on the original certificate in the line(s) provided below Item 9.
7. In Item 10, enter the correct information as it should appear for each item listed in Item 9.
8. Enter the reason for the correction in Item 11.
9. Read the affidavit statement. Two persons who are certifying to the statement of corrections must sign the form.
10. Do not write in Items 14 or 15. This space is reserved for State or Local Registrar use only.
11. Make check or money order payable to the Office of Vital Records. When the paperwork is properly completed and signed by two parties, return this form, together with the required fee(s), to:

California Department of Public Health  
Office of Vital Records  
MS 5103  
P.O. Box 997410  
Sacramento, CA 95899-7410

**APPLICATION FOR CERTIFIED COPY OF DEATH RECORD****DO NOT Complete This Application Before Reading the Instructions on Page 2**

In an attempt to stop the illegal use of vital records, and as part of statewide efforts to reduce identity theft, a new law (effective July 1, 2003) changed the way certified copies of death certificates are issued. **Certified Copies** to establish the identity of a registrant can be issued only to authorized individuals, as indicated below. All others will be issued **Certified Informational Copies** that **are not** valid to establish identity.

Fee: **\$12 per copy** (payable to the Office of Vital Records).

Please indicate the type of certified copy you are requesting:

<input type="checkbox"/> I would like a <b>Certified Copy</b> . This copy will establish the identity of the registrant. (To receive a Certified Copy you <b>MUST INDICATE YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE REGISTRANT</b> by selecting from the list below <b>AND COMPLETE THE ATTACHED SWORN STATEMENT</b> declaring that you are eligible to receive the Certified Copy. The Sworn Statement <b>MUST BE NOTARIZED</b> if the application is submitted by mail <b>unless you are a law enforcement or local or state governmental agency.</b> )	<input type="checkbox"/> I would like a <b>Certified Informational Copy</b> . This document will be printed with a legend on the face of the document that states, <b>"INFORMATIONAL, NOT A VALID DOCUMENT TO ESTABLISH IDENTITY"</b> .  (A Sworn Statement does not need to be provided.)
---	--

**NOTE: Both documents are certified copies of the original document on file with our office. With the exception of the legend, the documents contain the exact same information.**

To receive a **Certified Copy** I am:

- A parent or legal guardian of the registrant (person listed on the certificate).
- A party entitled to receive the record as a result of a court order.
- A member of a law enforcement agency or a representative of another governmental agency, as provided by law, who is conducting official business. (*Companies representing a government agency must provide authorization from the government agency.*)
- A child, grandparent, grandchild, brother or sister, spouse, or domestic partner of the registrant.
- An attorney representing the registrant or the registrant's estate, or any person or agency empowered by statute or appointed by a court to act on behalf of the registrant or the registrant's estate. (*If you are requesting a Certified Copy under a power of attorney, please include a copy of the power of attorney with this application form.*)
- Any agent or employee of a funeral establishment who acts within the course and scope of his or her employment and who orders certified copies of a death certificate on behalf of an individual specified in paragraphs (1) to (5), inclusive, of subdivision (a) of Section 7100 of the Health and Safety Code.

APPLICANT INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)				Today's Date: _____		
Agency Name (if appropriate)		Agency Case No. (if appropriate)		Purpose of Request		
Printed Name and Signature of Applicant				Number of Copies		Amount Enclosed
Mailing Address – Number, Street				Name of Person Receiving Copies, if Different From Applicant		
City		State / Province	ZIP Code	Mailing Address for Copies, If Different From Applicant		
Daytime Telephone (include area code) (    )			Country	City	State	ZIP Code
DECEDENT INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)						
Name of Decedent – Last		First		Middle		Sex
City of Death (must be in California)		County of Death		Date of Birth – MM/DD/CCYY		State of Birth
Date of Death – MM/DD/CCYY (Or Period of Years to be Searched)				Social Security Number		
Birth Name – Mother/Parent			Birth Name of Spouse/Domestic Partner of Decedent (Last, First, Middle)			

**DEATH**

Page 1 of 3

**INFORMATION:** Death records have been maintained in the Office of the State Registrar of Vital Records since July 1, 1905.

*The “Birth” name required on Vital Records (see Items 1C, 6C, 7C, 9C, and 12C) is the name given at birth, or a name received through adoption, court-ordered name change, or Naturalization. AKA’s (Also Known As) and assumed names cannot be entered as the legal “Birth” name.*

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. As of July 1, 2003, **ONLY** individuals who are authorized by Health and Safety Code Section 103526 can obtain a Certified Copy of a Death Record. (Page 1 identifies the individuals who are authorized to make the request.) All others may receive a Certified Informational Copy which will be marked, “Informational, Not a Valid Document to Establish Identity.”
2. Complete a separate application for each death record requested.
3. Complete the **Applicant Information** section on Page 1 and provide your signature where indicated. In the **Decedent Information** section, provide all the information you have available to identify the death record. If the information you furnish is incomplete or inaccurate, we may not be able to locate the record.
4. **SWORN STATEMENT:**
  - The authorized individual requesting the certified copy must sign the attached Sworn Statement, declaring under penalty of perjury that they are eligible to receive the certified copy of the death record, and identify their relationship to the registrant (person listed on the certificate) – the relationship must be one of those identified on Page 1).
  - If the application is being submitted by mail, the Sworn Statement **must be** notarized by a Notary Public. (To find a Notary Public, see your local yellow pages or call your banking institution.) **Law enforcement and local and state governmental agencies are exempt from the notary requirement.**
  - You do not have to provide a Sworn Statement if you are requesting a Certified Informational Copy of the death record.
5. Submit \$12 for **each** copy requested. If no death record is found, the \$12 fee will be retained for searching the record (as required by law) and a Certificate of No Public Record will be issued to the applicant. Indicate the number of copies you want and include the correct fee(s) in the form of a personal check or postal or bank money order (International Money Order for out-of-country requests) made payable to the **Office of Vital Records**. Mail this application with the fee(s) to the Office of Vital Records at the address below.
6. **Returning Completed Certificates:** Completed certificates are returned using the U.S. Postal Service.

Office of Vital Records - MS 5103  
P.O. Box 997410  
Sacramento, CA 95899-7410  
(916) 445-2684

### SWORN STATEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California,  
 (Applicant's Printed Name)

that I am an authorized person, as defined in California Health and Safety Code Section 103526 (c), and am eligible to receive a certified copy of the birth or death record of the following individual(s):

Name of Person Listed on Certificate	Applicant's Relationship to Person Listed on Certificate (Must Be a Relationship Listed on Page 1 of Application)

*(The remaining information must be completed in the presence of a Notary Public or Office of Vital Records staff.)*

Subscribed to this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (Day) (Month) (City) (State)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Applicant's Signature)

***Note: If submitting your order by mail, you must have your Sworn Statement notarized using the Certificate of Acknowledgment below. The Certificate of Acknowledgment must be completed by a Notary Public. (Law enforcement and local and state governmental agencies are exempt from the notary requirement.)***

### CERTIFICATE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

State of California )

County of \_\_\_\_\_)

On \_\_\_\_\_ before me, \_\_\_\_\_, personally appeared \_\_\_\_\_,  
 (here insert name and title of the officer)

who proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the person(s) whose name(s) is/are subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed the same in his/her/their authorized capacity(ies), and that by his/her/their signature(s) on the instrument the person(s), or the entity upon behalf of which the person(s) acted, executed the instrument. I certify under PENALTY OF PERJURY under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing paragraph is true and correct.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.  
 (SEAL)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 SIGNATURE