



80th Texas Legislature Impact on Vital Statistics

Here is a summary of some important legislation impacting vital statistics that passed during the 80th Texas Legislative Session.

House Bill 1739 mandates electronic death registration for funeral homes and medical certifiers, and takes effect on September 1, 2007. The bill requires that funeral homes file death certificates electronically as specified by the State Registrar. Likewise, medical certifiers on a death certificate are required to submit the medical certification and attest to its validity using an electronic process (currently Texas Electronic Registrar) approved by the State Registrar.

The implementation period for the mandatory use of Texas Electronic Registrar (TER) Death is staggered.

- ★ Any funeral home that has renewed its establishment license online as of September 1, 2007, is required to begin using TER-Death by September 1, 2007.
- ★ Any physician who has renewed their license online as of September 1, 2007, is required to begin using TER-Death by September 1, 2007.
- ★ Any funeral home or physician that does not renew their license online, or has not done so as of September 1, 2007, is required to begin using TER-Death no later than September 1, 2008.
- ★ Justices of the Peace have no licensing requirement, and therefore must begin certifying deaths using TER-Death by September 1, 2007.
- ★ Mortuary or embalming services that file death certificates do not have an establishment license, and therefore must begin using TER-Death by September 1, 2007.

FORMULA FOR SUCCESS:
(Electronic Registration + Exemplary Teamwork)²
= Quality Public Health Data

Register for the 2007
Annual Texas Vital Statistics Conference
December 9-11, 2007
Renaissance Austin Hotel, Austin, Texas
(See inside for details)

House Bill 755 relates to disciplinary action taken against a person required to file a death certificate within the statutory 10-day deadline and takes effect on September 1, 2007. The bill prevents disciplinary action from being taken against a person by the Texas Funeral Service Commission for failing to timely file a death certificate if the person supplies written documentation that the person has made a good faith effort to file the certificate within the time required and that failure to timely file was a result of circumstances beyond the person's control.

House Bill 1260 exempts certain military personnel from certain state and local governmental fees, and takes effect on September 1, 2007. The bill exempts military personnel who are being deployed to service in a hostile fire zone from certain state and local government fees in order to ease the burden created by this short preparation period. This includes fees for obtaining a copy of a birth certificate, a recorded marriage license, a divorce decree, a child support order, guardianship documents, and property taxes,

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fees for issuing a marriage license or duplicate marriage license and fees for transferring title to real or personal property.

House Bill 2685 relates to certain requirements for issuance of a marriage license, including an optional premarital education course and takes effect September 1, 2008. The bill increases the marriage license fee from \$30 to \$60. However, that fee would be waived for couples that present a certificate of completion of an eight-hour premarital course with specific instruction in conflict management, communication skills and the key components of a successful marriage. This course will be provided by instructors approved by the Health and Human Services Commission.

Senate Bill 432 relates to the consent to and annulment of certain marriages and takes effect September 1, 2007. The bill deletes Section 2.102 of the Texas Family Code, “judicially designated managing conservator or guardian” and replaces it with “court-ordered right to consent to marriage”. The bill also repeals the provision of the Family Code that refers to obtaining an annulment of a court-ordered marriage. In addition, the bill clarifies that a court-ordered marriage of a person younger than 16 years of age is not void.

TER-Death Update

As of September 24, 2007**:

- * 671 Funeral Homes are enrolled in TER with 97% actively using the system
- * 399 Physicians are enrolled in TER with 45% actively using the system
- * 279 Justices of the Peace are enrolled in TER with 53% actively using the system
- * 13 Medical Examiner offices are enrolled in TER with 92% actively using the system
- * 234 Local Registration offices are enrolled and using TER
- ** includes completely electronic and drop-to-paper death registrations

For 2007, our users:

- * have registered 2,184 completely electronic death certificates, and
- * have filed an additional 15,918 drop-to-paper death certificates from TER as either a Funeral Home or Medical Certifier

2007 Vital Statistics Regional Conferences

In August 2007, the Vital Statistics Unit at the Texas Department of State Health Services, along with the Texas Public Health Association, hosted the Vital Statistics Regional Conferences. More than 380 state-wide vital statistics partners attended the four, one-day conferences held in Wichita Falls (August 6th), College Station (August 8th), Corpus Christi (August 10th) and Kerrville (August 13th).



Thanks for attending and making the regional conferences a tremendous success!

Albert Rivera,
Area Representative,
Vital Statistics Unit,
conducting a presentation on electronic death registration in College Station

Scanning for the Future

Scanning can enhance the ability of local registration and county clerk offices to maintain, access, and issue vital statistics records. Below are some keys to scanning vital statistics records identified by Elbia Hernandez, Vital Records Coordinator, City of Arlington, and Nikki Sigler, Security Coordinator, Vital Statistics Unit.

1. **Prepare the records for scanning.** Additional preparation may be needed, depending on the quality of the original documents.
2. **Scan the records.** Image each vital statistics record that has been prepared for scanning.
3. **Conduct quality assurance.** Validate the vital statistics records scanned with the original records on file, including amendments and other supplemental filings.
4. **Issue certified copies of the records.** Each vital statistics record that has been scanned should be indexed and accessible to issue a certified copy. The scanning system should track the number of certified copies issued of each record (maximum 10).

“At the City of Arlington, the scanning process originally took a year to do both the scanning and indexing of the records. It allows us to provide effective and efficient customer service”.

Elbia Hernandez, Vital Records Coordinator, City of Arlington

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53rd Annual Texas Vital Statistics Conference
December 9 - 11, 2007
 Renaissance Austin Hotel, Austin, TX

Make plans today to attend the Annual Conference co-sponsored by Texas Vital Statistics and the Texas Public Health Association. The conference will focus on national trends and issues that will impact vital registration and issuance in Texas. Join us for the latest information on best practices!

Vital Statistics Annual Conference Registration Form

Please print or type.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Office: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Please mark the category that describes your vital statistics role:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Registrar | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital/birthing center staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Funeral Director |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Registrar staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Midwife | <input type="checkbox"/> Funeral Home staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Clerk | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice of the Peace | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Dept. staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Clerk staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice of the Peace staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Examiner | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Examiner staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Pre-registration for the annual conference: \$125. Pre-registration deadline: November 28, 2007. Registration after pre-registration deadline: \$140.

Enclosed is payment of \$_____ for _____ number of registrations.

To register: Enclose the registration form along with check, purchase order or money order payable to the Texas Public Health Association (TPHA) and mail to TPHA/Vital Statistics Conference, P.O. Box 201540, Austin, TX 78720-1540. Registration cost prior to November 28th is \$125, after November 28th a \$140 fee will apply to all registrations whether mailed or faxed as well as to on-site registration. Lunch can only be guaranteed for registrations with payments received by November 28th. Please submit proper documentation with registration form when registering with a purchase order; TPHA Tax ID Number is 74-6058233. Credit card payment option is available online at www.texaspha.org; click on co-sponsored events. The registration fee is non-refundable. Returned check fee is \$20, payable by money order. By faxing or mailing this form you are agreeing to pay the registration fee as outlined above within 30 days of the conference.

Questions about conference registration? Contact Terri Pali by phone at (512) 336-2520, by fax at (512) 336-0533 or by e-mail at txpha@aol.com.

Questions about conference curriculum? Check out www.conferences.texasvsu.org

Paternity

Question: What should you do if a mother indicates that she wants to add a father to her child's birth certificate after the record has been filed?

Answer: The requirements to file a new birth certificate based on parentage include:
* an 'Application for a New Birth Certificate Based on Parentage' (Form VS 166); and
* one of three establishing documents: a certified copy of a court document if parentage has been established through a court action; an Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP) (Form VS-159.1); or a certified copy of the biological parents' marriage license if there is no father listed on the birth certificate.

An AOP form must be executed by an entity that has been certified by the Office of the Attorney General Paternity Opportunity Program. A customer can locate the nearest AOP-certified entity by calling 866-255-2006. The customer may also receive general information regarding paternity as well as speak with a customer service representative.

To file a new birth certificate based on parentage, a customer must submit a completed 'Application for a New Birth Certificate Based on Parentage', an acceptable second document establishing the change (one of three listed above) and appropriate filing fee to the State Vital Statistics Unit. The cost for filing a new birth certificate based on parentage is \$25 and each certified copy is \$22. If the 'Application for a New Birth Certificate Based on Parentage' and supporting documentation have been approved, a new birth certificate based on parentage will become the registrant's original birth certificate. Processing time is determined by the acceptability and verification of the documentation submitted.

The 'Application for a New Birth Certificate Based on Parentage' can be obtained at www.texasvsu.org.

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