



TEXAS VITAL STATISTICS NEWS

Texas Vital Statistics, Texas Department of State Health Services

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Online Ordering of Birth & Death Certificates Now Available

Texas birth and death certificates, as well as birth, death, marriage and divorce verifications, can now be ordered online from the State Office. Previously, certificates could only be requested by mail, fax, or by visiting Texas Vital Statistics in Austin or the local registrar office where the event occurred.

Texas Vital Statistics received frequent inquiries about the availability of an online ordering option, and customers made it clear that this was needed. By creating this option via the Internet, secure ordering of vital documents is only a few mouse clicks away for customers.

These records may be ordered online at the official eGovernment Website for the State of Texas: www.texasonline.com. Visitors to the Texas Vital Statistics site at www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs are greeted by the TexasOnline logo and an invitation to order records online. The process is easy, and one that customers have embraced. Since inception of this option, over 15,500 records have been ordered.

Ordering vital records online is

Local Registrar Reminder

The end of a calendar year brings special requirements for local registrars. Please make sure you have done the following:

1. Verify with source providers that all 2005 events have been filed.
2. Remember to continue numbering 2005 records with the 2005 number series.
3. Mail all 2005 records to the State Office as soon as possible.

easy but there are some restrictions. Records cannot be downloaded or printed. Online ordering of a birth certificate for a birth that occurred in the last 75 years is limited to the individual for whom the record is requested and to the mother and father of that individual. Ordering of a death certificate for deaths that occurred within the last 25 years is limited to the surviving spouse, parent of the deceased and funeral director of record.

Fees for certificates and verifications are the same as charged by the state office for walk-in and mail-in requests, and are paid with credit cards.

It's great to have yet another way to serve the people of Texas!

Social Security & the Marriage Certificate

County clerks have reported that some female customers are having problems in using the marriage certificate to change their surname with the Social Security Administration (SSA). According to the SSA, if the marriage certificate does not have biographical data, then additional documents are required. Acceptable identity documents would show the person's name AND provide:

1. **biographical information** in addition to the person's name that can be compared with the data on the application (e.g., date of birth, age or parents' names) and/or
2. **physical information** that can be compared with the application (e.g., physical description or photograph).

To learn more about SSA requirements, check out their public website at www.ssa.gov/ssnumber.

TER-Death Update

The launch of the Texas Electronic Registrar (TER)-Death system is progressing. Initial pilot areas have been trained, and real-world testing and improvement of the TER-Death system for complete registration is proceeding methodically. It is critically important for the success of electronic death registration in Texas that the system be easy to use and as bug-free as possible for all potential users. The plan is to open TER-Death to all users in April, 2006.

At the same time that the pilot sites are testing the system, select local registrars statewide are using TER-Death to verify Social Security numbers and to create local indexes of 2006 deaths.

As we proceed towards full implementation, watch our website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/edeath for up-to-date information on schedules for TER-Death trainings in different sites around the state.

In this issue . . .

TER-Death Update.....	p. 1
Online Ordering of Birth & Death Certificates Now Available.....	p. 1
Social Security & the Marriage Certificate.....	p. 1
Local Registrar Reminder.....	p. 1
Changes in Death Registration...	p. 2
OAG/Vs Training Schedule.....	p. 2
TER-Death Training.....	p. 2
Current AOP Form Required....	p. 2
Excellence in Vital Registration Honored at Conference.....	p. 3
ImmTrac & OAG Awards.....	p. 4
Regional Conferences.....	p. 4

This issue is being sent to all Texas licensed funeral homes & includes a funeral director request to participate in TER-Death. Sign up today!

Changes in Death Registration

Since implementation of the new Certificate of Death in January, 2006, there have been numerous inquiries about the new document and how to handle the distinctions between the prior document and the current Certificate of Death (VS-112 REV 1/2006).

To understand the changes made to the Certificate of Death, you must first understand that the changes are made in accordance with the U.S. standard model death certificate advocated by the National Center for Health Statistics of the Center for Disease Control. The changes are based on federal guidelines.

One item that is causing confusion is item #29, "License Number." This item requires the Texas medical license number of the physician certifying the death. Since justices of the peace do not have medical license numbers, a certifying JP should leave this item blank. Similarly, active duty physicians in the military on bases and at Veterans Hospitals may not have Texas medical license numbers. These particular physicians should leave item #29 blank.

Another source of confusion with the new death record is not related to an addition but rather to an

omission. The new Certificate of Death does not have "Date of Disposition" as an item. In revising the Certificate of Death, it became apparent that "Date of Disposition" is not required by statute nor is it on the U.S. standard model death certificate. "Date of Disposition" was a common item of error on the old death certificate, with it preceding the date of death in many cases. This resulted in death certificates being rejected or requiring amendment. Even though it is an adjustment, it is felt that there are advantages to excluding this on the new form.

Another change in the death registration process is of special interest to funeral directors and their staff. According to information received from the Social Security Administration (SSA), funeral directors using the TER-Death system will no longer need to submit to SSA a separate SSA-721 as Social Security verification is built into TER-Death and will streamline this process. SSA does ask that funeral directors using TER-Death distribute the last two pages of the SSA-721 to families to inform them about benefits and the application process. Those funeral homes not on TER-Death will continue to submit the SSA-721 on each death.

TER-Death Training Opportunities

In preparation for expanded use of TER-Death throughout Texas, VS staff will be conducting training to prepare new users. As trainings are scheduled, they will be posted on our website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field. The following trainings are on the calendar, and more will be added.

March 21 DSHS Auditorium, Austin 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Open to all users. Contact Susan.Rodriguez@dshs.state.tx.us to sign up & for directions.

April 11 Justice Court Judges Association training, San Angelo. For justices of the peace. Contact kjozwiak@ag.tamu.edu for more information.

April 19 Waco Funeral Directors Continuing Education Conference, Waco Convention Center. Contact Gladys Hand, Waco-McLennan County Public Health District at gladysh@ci.waco.tx.us for more information.

June 9/12/14/16 VS Regional Conferences in South Padre Island, Tyler, Victoria and Lubbock. See our website for more information.

OAG & VS Joint Training Schedule

The Paternity Opportunity Program of the Office of the Attorney General and the Vital Statistics Field Services staff will again be providing joint training for birth registrars, midwives and local registrars across Texas. AOP annual certification may be completed in this class.

The schedule below for this free training lists places, dates and times (8:30 a.m. - noon: a.m.; 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.: p.m.). See our website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field for more details about training sites.

Austin	4/18/06	a.m./p.m.
Bryan	4/25/06	a.m./p.m.
Houston	4/26/06	a.m./p.m.
Houston	4/27/06	a.m. only
Waco	4/27/06	p.m. only
Amarillo	5/2/06	a.m./p.m.
Lubbock	5/3/06	a.m./p.m.
Longview	5/4/06	a.m./p.m.
Laredo	5/9/06	p.m. only
Beaumont	5/11/06	a.m./p.m.
San Antonio	5/15/06	a.m./p.m.
Dallas	5/17/06	a.m./p.m.
Victoria	5/17/06	a.m./p.m.
Denton	5/18/06	a.m. only
San Angelo	5/23/06	a.m./p.m.
Abilene	5/24/06	a.m. only
Wichita Falls	6/6/06	p.m. only
Brownsville	6/6/06	a.m./p.m.
Mission	6/8/06	a.m./p.m.
El Paso	6/13/06	a.m./p.m.
Midland	6/22/06	a.m./p.m.
Fort Worth	6/23/06	a.m./p.m.
Corpus Christi	7/13/06	a.m./p.m.

Current Manual AOP Form Required

Effective immediately, all manual Acknowledgments of Paternity (AOPs) MUST be completed on the VS 159.1M (revised 9/2005). As instructed by OAG Attorney, Kathy Shafer, Texas Vital Statistics will no longer accept older versions of the AOP in the AOP Registry. The only exception will be if the older form was signed PRIOR TO 2/28/06. Please destroy any older forms and use only the newest version.

Excellence in Vital Registration Honored at Conference

The 51st Annual Texas Vital Statistics Conference, the largest ever with 785 in attendance, featured the annual awards program. At the Awards Luncheon on December 5, 2005, awards were given out by the Office of the Attorney General, the DSHS Immunization Branch, and by Texas Vital Statistics. The dedication, cooperation and hard work necessary to receive these awards are applauded and gratefully appreciated. Please join us in honoring these award recipients: they exemplify best practices in registration and service to the people of Texas.

VS Five-Star Award for Local Registration

Exemplary

Andrews County Clerk
Rusk County Clerk
Taylor County Clerk

Recognized

Abilene-Taylor County Public Health Department
City of Amarillo
City of Austin
City of Baytown
City of Brownsville
City of Bryan
City of Harlingen
City of Hillsboro
City of Laredo
City of Lubbock
City of McAllen
City of Mission
City of Mineral Wells
Deaf Smith County Clerk
Guadalupe County Clerk
Hamilton County Clerk
Hood County Clerk
Kerr County Clerk
Medina County Clerk
Midland County Clerk
Milam County Clerk
Mitchell County Clerk
Polk County Clerk
Runnels County Clerk
Tom Green County Clerk
Waco-McClennan County Public Health Department
Ward County Clerk
Williamson County Clerk

VS Five-Star Award for Hospitals, Birthing Centers and Midwives

Bayshore Medical Center
Central Texas Medical Center
Christus St. Michael Health Systems
Christus Santa Rosa Hospital
Corpus Christi Medical Center - Doctors Regional
Corpus Christi Medical Center - Bay Area
Del Sol Medical Center
Dimmit County Memorial Hospital
East Texas Medical Center-Taylor
Graham Regional Medical Center
Harris Methodist Erath County
Harris Methodist HEB
King's Daughters Hospital
Kingwood Medical Center
Las Colinas Medical Center
Mainland Medical Center
McKenna Memorial Hospital
Medical Arts Hospital
Medical Center Hospital
Medical Center of Arlington
Memorial Hermann Katy Hospital
Memorial Hermann Northwest
Memorial Hermann The Woodlands
Methodist Willowbrook Hospital
Metropolitan Methodist Hospital
Mission Hospital
Moore County Hospital District
Nacogdoches Memorial Hospital
Nix Health Care Systems
Nocona General Hospital
Palestine Regional Medical Center
Permian Regional Medical Center
Presbyterian Hospital of Greenville
Presbyterian Hospital of Plano
San Jacinto Methodist Hospital
Tomball Regional Hospital
United Regional Health Care System
University Medical Center
Uvalde Memorial Hospital
Woodland Heights Medical Center
Yoakum County Hospital

VS Five-Star Award for Funeral Homes & Mortuary Services

Baker Funeral Home, Fort Worth
Blessing Funeral Home, Mansfield
Brookehill Funeral Home, San Antonio
Callaway-Jones Funeral Home, Bryan
Calvillo Funeral Home, Lubbock
Carnes Funeral Home, Texas City
Cook-Walden Chapel of the Hills Funeral Home, Austin
Crawford-Crim-Bryan Funeral Home, Henderson
Dixon Funeral Home, Brazoria
Donnelly's Colonial Funeral Home, Irving
El Paso Mortuary, El Paso
Forest Ridge Funeral Home, Hurst
Garza Memorial Funeral Home, Brownsville
Hampton Valley Mortuary, Fabens
James Crowder Funeral Home, La Marque
Joe Jackson Heights Funeral Chapels, Laredo
Jones and Washington Mortuary, Bryan
Kerrville Funeral Home, Kerrville
Kreidler Funeral Home, McAllen
Lucas & Thompson Funeral Directors, Keller
Lucas Funeral Home, Hurst
Marrs-Jones-Newby, Bastrop
Memorial Funeral Home, San Juan
Oaklawn Funeral Home, Edna
Palms Funeral Home, Angleton
Providence Funeral Home, Taylor
Rest Haven Funeral Home, Rockwall
Rest Haven Funeral Home, Lubbock
Schmidt Funeral Home, Katy
Weed-Corley-Fish Funeral Home, Austin
Wilke-Clay-Fish Funeral Home, Austin
Winscott Road Funeral Home, Benbrook

**See more
award winners
on page 4!**

ImmTrac & OAG Awards

The Immunization Branch of the Texas Department of State Health Services awarded the ImmTrac Award for Excellence to 43 hospitals and birthing centers that achieved outstanding performance in implementation of the ImmTrac newborn consent process. At the Awards Luncheon at the Annual Conference, the following hospitals were recognized in two categories based on rate of compliance:

Exemplary Performance (97%)

Brownsville Surgical Hospital, LLC
Del Sol Medical Center
King's Daughters Hospital
Memorial Hermann The Woodlands Methodist Hospital
Nix Health Care System
Permian Regional Medical Center
St. Joseph Regional Health Center
Tomball Regional Hospital
United Regional Health Care System

Recognized Performance (95%)

Abilene Regional Medical Center
Baylor Medical Center
Eastland Memorial Hospital
Guadalupe Valley Hospital
Metropolitan Methodist Hospital
Moore County Hospital District
Pecos County Memorial Hospital
Rice Medical Center
Wadley Regional Medical Center
Yoakum Community Hospital

The Office of the Attorney General Paternity Opportunity Program awarded the 2005 Paternity Awards to 55 outstanding Texas hospitals. At the Awards Luncheon, plaques were awarded to the following exemplary hospitals in three categories:

Large Hospitals:

UTMB Austin Women's Hospital
Southwest General Hospital
Parkland Health & Hospital System
San Jacinto Methodist Hospital

Mid-Sized Hospitals:

Medical Center of Lewisville
Denton Regional Medical Center
North Austin Medical Center
Palestine Regional Medical Center

Small Hospitals:

Permian Regional Medical Center
Las Colinas Medical Center
Medina Community Hospital

Mark your calendar for the 2006 VS Regional Conferences!

June 9th on S. Padre Island
June 12th in Tyler
June 14th in Victoria
June 16th in Lubbock

Watch our website and our
next newsletter issue for
registration information.

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