

Obtaining Vital Records

The Federal Government does not maintain files or indexes of these records, but an official certificate of every birth, death, marriage, and divorce should be on file in the locality where the event occurred. These records are filed permanently in a state vital statistics office or in a city, county, or other local office. To obtain a certified copy of the document, you will need to write or go to the vital statistics office in the state or area where the event occurred. Some records can be requested online.

You can visit the Consumer Resource Center on the web at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm>. There, you will find an alphabetical directory of State and territory information and addresses. To use the directory, determine the state or area where the event occurred and then select the first letter in the state name from the alphabet. Addresses and fees are given for each event in the state or area concerned. Follow the provided instructions for each document to ensure an accurate response to your request.

To ensure that you receive an accurate record for your request and that your request is filled expeditiously, always include your name, relationship to the person whose record is requested, and the purpose of the request. Additionally, include the following information in your request:

When writing for **birth or death records**:

1. Full name of person whose record is requested.
2. Sex.
3. Parents' names, including maiden name of mother.
4. Month, day, and year of birth or death.
5. Place of birth or death (including the name of hospital, if known).

When writing for **marriage** records:

1. Full names of bride and groom.
2. Month, day, and year of marriage.
3. Place of marriage (city or town, county, and State).

When writing for **divorce** records:

1. Full names of husband and wife.
2. Date of divorce or annulment.
3. Place of divorce or annulment.
4. Type of final decree.

Vital Records Requests is distributed by the Northern Law Center-SHAPE, located in Building 318 on SHAPE. Our office hours are 0900 to 1700 Monday through Friday. You may call us for an appointment at DSN 423-4868/civilian (32) 65/44 48 68. Visit us on the Internet at <http://www.usagbenelux.eur.army.mil/sites/installation/legal.asp> for helpful information on other legal topics.