

New Jersey Office of Vital Statistics COVID-19 Response FAQ

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: Is the State Office Closed?

A: At this time the New Jersey State Office of Vital Statistics is still open though daily operations have changed. Our Front Street customer center has been closed until further notice. Additionally, the main office in the Department of Health building is working on a rotating employee schedule to minimize person to person contact. Any customers in need of a certified copy of their vital record should be directed to our main-in and online services. Online requests can be made through NJ.gov/Health/Vital.

Q: I tried calling the State's office number and received a recording. What do I do?

A: To prioritize the influx of mail-in and online orders during this emergency the phone system has been temporarily shut down. Customers can reach our office through email: Records@doh.nj.gov. If an urgent local municipal issue, please email us at Records@doh.nj.gov

Q: I am trying to call someone on their direct line, but no one answers. What should I do?

A: Please follow the instructions below for specific units.

Q: Where can I find information on the spread of COVID-19 in NJ?

A: https://nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_dashboard.shtml

Q: Can expired Driver's licenses and passports be accepted as identification for record issuance?

A: Yes, but only those that expired in March and April 2020 or for as long as the government offices are closed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Q: Are customers still able to get the Apostille seal on records?

A: Yes, you can direct the customer to the Treasury as usual. Follow the link for additional information: <https://www.nj.gov/treasury/revenue/apostilles.shtml>

BIRTH QUESTIONS

Q: What if parents cannot sign the Attestation or COP?

A: If the birthing hospital calls and states that the parents cannot sign the attestation of designation or COP because they are being isolated, please have them reach out to us.

For an unmarried couple, the father was unable to sign off on the COP and attestation because visitors are no longer allowed on the maternity floor. In this scenario, the hospital is only going to enter the mother on the record. The father cannot be entered on the record without a signed COP. The COP will need to be completed later with the registrar and the record will be amended.

For a married couple, neither parent can sign the attestation because they were exposed to COVID-19. A blank signature will be entered on the attestation. A note in the comment section of VIP must be included indicating that the hospital was unable to obtain signatures from the parents. If that comment is included in VIP, the record can be accepted without the signatures on the attestation. Upon discharge, a signed copy of the attestation will be mailed to the state OVSr.

Q: I forgot my VIP password or am having problems with VIP. Who can I contact?

A: Please email Cassandra.Wernock@doh.nj.gov and cc Yamileth.Merchak@doh.nj.gov and they will reach out to you.

Q: There was a home birth in my municipality, should I advise the parent(s) to go to the hospital?

A: Unless the baby was taken to the hospital on the day it was born, the hospital will not be able to create a birth certificate in VIP. The information for the birth certificate should be entered by the CMR or OVSr.

Along with proof of pregnancy, the parent(s) will need to provide medical documentation that the baby was seen by a medical professional within a few days from birth. Hospital documentation is acceptable, but the documentation from a pediatrician, visiting nurse, midwife, or other medical professional may also be used

Q: My office is currently closed to the public. How should I proceed with entering home birth information into VIP?

A: If your office is not open to the public, but is still operational, the information can still be entered in VIP. The parent(s) can submit all documentation and identification via email. Please ensure that documents are legible and that all images are clear.

In the event a COP or DOP form is needed, some essential agencies like UPS are still providing notary services. Parents may sign and notarize the COP or DOP forms and mail them to your office.

The Attestation of Birth does not to be notarized. Once signed by the parents, the form may be emailed back or mailed to your office.

Q: When processing a home birth do I need to see the baby or parents in person?

A: The baby never has to be presented to enter the information in VIP. Pictures of the baby, ultrasounds, and footprints are not required and never accepted as documentation of the pregnancy.

While it may be easier to complete the process with the parents in the office, they do not have to be present.

DOMESTIC STATUS QUESTIONS

Q: Who should I contact for marriage, civil unions, and domestic partnerships?

A: For any domestic status questions, please email Carmela.Vargas@doh.nj.gov and cc Yamileth.Merchak@doh.nj.gov

Q: If a deputized municipality takes a marriage license who gets the fee?

A: The \$28 fee would go to the municipality of residency not the deputized municipality.

Q: Can a couple have their wedding ceremony over telephone or video conference?

A: No, New Jersey State law states that wedding ceremonies must be done in person. No exceptions will be made during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q: If our office is closed to the public are we still required to process marriage applications?

A: No, if your office is closed and you have not deputized another town or have made other arrangements within your township you are not required to take marriage applications until your office reopens. Be sure to post clear documentation both online and in office to make the public aware of your closure and what it means for them.

DEATH QUESTIONS

Q: I have locked myself out of EDRS? I have an issue with a death certificate, who do I contact?

A: Please email EDRSSupport@doh.nj.gov and someone will answer your questions.

Q: A funeral director is insisting to come to my office to pick up a burial permit or certified copies. What should I tell them?

A: If your facility is still open, you may arrange to have them come at a specific time and/or location to encourage social distancing. You should provide funeral directors with an emergency number for your office so that they may reach out to someone.

If your office is closed, please have them direct their questions by email to EDRSSupport@doh.nj.gov

Q: What are the new protocols for filing a death certificate for a COVID-19 death?

A: Please refer to the guidance and notifications provided on the Welcome screen when you log into EDRS. Any questions you may have about filings can be addressed to EDRSSupport@doh.nj.gov

Q: Who is required to fill out the infectious disease form?

A: The Local Health Officer for your municipality.

RECORD MODIFICATION QUESTIONS

Q: Are you still processing amendments/corrections?

A: At this time, our office is on a rotation schedule, but work is still being processed. You might not be able to get in contact with your specialist. If you have a question about an amendment you submitted, please email Tiffany.Drennon@doh.nj.gov