

# VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2013 SESSION

## CHAPTER 534

*An Act to amend and reenact §§ 32.1-252, 32.1-270, 32.1-272, 32.1-273, and 32.1-276 of the Code of Virginia, relating to allowing the Department of Motor Vehicles to access vital records and issue certified copies.*

[S 1039]

Approved March 18, 2013

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That §§ 32.1-252, 32.1-270, 32.1-272, 32.1-273, and 32.1-276 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

**§ 32.1-252. State Registrar; duties; delegations.**

A. The State Registrar, under the supervision of the Commissioner, shall:

1. Administer the provisions of this chapter and the regulations of the Board in a manner that will ensure the uniform and efficient administration of the system of vital records.

2. Direct and supervise the system of vital records and be custodian of its records.

3. Direct, supervise and control the activities of all persons when pertaining to the operation of the system of vital records.

4., 5. [Repealed.]

6. Conduct training programs to promote uniformity of policy and procedures throughout the Commonwealth in matters pertaining to the system of vital records.

7. Inspect vital records which have been sealed as provided by law whenever such inspection will facilitate the administration of this chapter without violating the confidentiality of such records.

8. Perform such other duties as may be required by law.

9. Develop, furnish and distribute, in accordance with the regulations of the Board, forms as required by this chapter and such other means for transmission of data as may be necessary for the purpose of complete and accurate reporting and registration.

10. Develop and provide a means for obtaining a social security number in conjunction with the issuance of a birth certificate.

11. Develop, furnish and distribute a surrogate consent and report form as described in § 20-162.

B. The State Registrar may delegate functions and duties vested in him to designated assistants and to county, city and special registrars as he deems necessary or expedient.

*C. The Department of Motor Vehicles, when issuing a certified copy of a vital record, shall be subject to the State Registrar's rules, regulations, and audit requirements, including the provisions of this chapter.*

**§ 32.1-270. State Registrar may reproduce records; disposition of documents from which permanent reproductions made.**

To preserve original documents, the State Registrar is authorized to prepare typewritten, photographic, electronic, or other reproductions of original vital records in his custody. Such reproductions when certified by him shall be accepted as the original records.

The documents from which permanent reproductions have been made and verified may be disposed of as provided by regulation.

*Any vital record issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles shall be on security paper provided by the State Registrar and shall be considered a certified vital record and accepted as the original record.*

**§ 32.1-272. Certified copies of vital records; other copies.**

A. In accordance with § 32.1-271 and the regulations adopted pursuant thereto, the State Registrar or a district health department shall, upon receipt of a written request, issue a certified copy of any vital record in the custody of the State Registrar or of a part thereof.

*The Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles shall be authorized to issue a certified copy of a birth, death, marriage, or divorce vital record, or a part thereof, in the custody of the State Registrar.*

Such vital records in the State Registrar's custody may be in the form of originals, photoprocessed reproductions or data filed by electronic means.

Each copy issued shall show the date of registration. Any copy issued from a record marked "delayed" or "amended," except a record amended pursuant to subsection F of this section or subsection D of § 32.1-269, shall be similarly marked and show the effective date.

Certified copies may be issued by county and city registrars only while the original record is in their possession, except that at the option of the county or city registrar true and complete copies of death certificates may be retained and certified copies of such records may be issued by the county or city registrar.

B. A certified copy of a vital record or any part thereof issued in accordance with subsection A shall be considered for all purposes the same as the original and shall be prima facie evidence of the facts therein stated, provided that the evidentiary value of a vital record filed more than one year after the event or a vital record which has been amended shall be determined by the judicial or administrative body or official before whom the certificate is offered as evidence.

C. The federal agency responsible for national vital statistics may be furnished such copies or other data from the system of vital records as it may require for national statistics if such federal agency shares in the cost of collecting, processing and transmitting such data. Such data may be used for research and medical investigations of public health importance. No other use of such data shall be made by the federal agency unless authorized by the State Registrar.

D. Other federal, state and local, public or private agencies or persons in the conduct of their official duties may, upon request and payment of a reasonable fee, be furnished copies or other data from the system of vital records for statistical or administrative purposes upon such terms or conditions as may be prescribed by the Board. Such copies or other data shall not be used for purposes other than those for which they were requested unless so authorized by the State Registrar.

In promulgating regulations relating to the terms or conditions for public or private agencies or persons obtaining copies of death certificates in the conduct of their official duties, the Board shall include within its definition of "legal representative" (i) any attorney licensed to practice law in Virginia, upon presentation of his bar number and evidence of need to obtain such copy; and (ii) any funeral director or funeral service licensee licensed to practice by the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers, upon presentation of evidence to so practice and evidence of being in charge of final disposition of the registrant's dead human remains or cremains or evidence of need to obtain such copy.

E. No person shall prepare or issue any certificate which purports to be an original or certified copy of a vital record except as authorized in this chapter or regulations adopted hereunder.

F. Certified copies of birth records filed before July 1, 1960, containing statements of racial designation on the reverse thereof shall be issued without such statement as a part of the certification; nor for this purpose solely shall such certification be marked "amended."

Any American Indian or Native American whose certified copy of a birth record filed before July 1, 1960, contains a racial designation that is incorrect may obtain, without paying a fee, one certified copy of his birth record from which such incorrect racial designation has been removed. Such certification shall not be marked "amended" solely for this reason.

G. With the increased fees to be charged for vital records and the additional deposits to the Vital Statistics Automation Fund, the Board of Health shall establish, within the district health departments, a statewide system for decentralizing certification of vital records, when such records are prepared or issued from data in the custody of the State Registrar and the Board of Health. *Such system shall include the Department of Motor Vehicles pursuant to the authorization in subsection A.*

**§ 32.1-273. Fees for certified copies, searches of files, etc.; disposition.**

A. The Board shall prescribe the fee, not to exceed ~~eight dollars~~ \$12, for a certified copy of a vital record or for a search of the files or records when no copy is made and may establish a reasonable fee schedule related to its cost for information or other data provided for research, statistical or administrative purposes. Whenever any veteran or his survivor requires a certified copy of a vital record to obtain service-connected benefits, one copy of such record shall be provided directly to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs upon their request and one copy shall be provided to the veteran or his surviving spouse, upon request. No charge shall be imposed upon a veteran or his survivor for a copy related to obtaining service-connected benefits.

B. Fees collected under this section by the State Registrar shall be transmitted to the Comptroller for deposit. ~~Four~~ Two dollars of each fee collected by the State Registrar shall be deposited by the Comptroller into the Vital Statistics Automation Fund established pursuant to § 32.1-273.1 for so long as shall be authorized. ~~Four~~ Ten dollars of each fee shall be credited to a special fund to be appropriated by the General Assembly, as it deems necessary, for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this chapter. When the Vital Statistics Automation System is completed, no further deposits into the fund shall be made and all fees collected under this section not credited to the special fund created by this subsection shall be deposited into the general fund of the state treasury.

C. *The Department of Motor Vehicles shall collect a fee of \$12 for each certified copy of a vital record that it issues and shall transmit all such fees to the State Registrar on a monthly basis to ensure that the State Registrar recovers all costs associated with the issuance of certified copies of vital records at Department of Motor Vehicles facilities. In addition, for each certified copy of a vital record that it issues, the Department of Motor Vehicles shall collect a processing fee of \$2 as provided in § 46.2-205.2.*

D. Fees collected under this section by county and city registrars shall be deposited in the general fund of the county or city except that counties or cities operating health departments pursuant to the provisions of § 32.1-31 shall forward all such fees to the Department for deposit in the cooperative local health services fund.

~~D.~~ E. Fees assessed against local departments of social services for furnished copies of vital records

as needed to administer public assistance and social services programs, as defined in § 63.2-100, shall be payable on a quarterly basis.

**§ 32.1-276. Penalty imposed for violations.**

Any person who commits any of the following acts is guilty of a Class 4 felony:

1. Who willfully and knowingly makes any false statement in a report, record, or certificate required to be filed under this chapter, or in an application for an amendment, certification or verification of any such report, record or certificate, or who willfully and knowingly supplies false information intending that such information be used in the preparation of any such report, record, or certificate, or amendment thereof; or

2. Who without lawful authority and with the intent to deceive, makes, counterfeits, alters, amends, or mutilates any report, record, or certificate required to be filed under this chapter or a certified copy of such report, record, or certificate; or

3. [Repealed.]

4. Who willfully and knowingly obtains, possesses, uses, sells, furnishes or attempts to obtain, possess, use, sell, or furnish to another, for any purpose of deception, any certificate, record or report required by this chapter or certified copy thereof made, counterfeited, altered, amended, or mutilated or which is false in whole or part or which relates to the birth of another person whether living or deceased without lawful authority; or

5. [Repealed.]

6. Who is an employee of the State Registrar ~~or~~ of the Department of Health, *or the Department of Motor Vehicles* while engaged in activities pertaining to the operation of the system of vital records who, without lawful authority, willfully and knowingly furnishes or possesses any certificate, report, record, or certification thereof, with the knowledge or intention that it be used for the purposes of deception; or

7. Who, without lawful authority, possesses any certificate, record, or report required by this chapter or a copy or certification of such certificate, record, or report knowing same to have been stolen or otherwise unlawfully obtained.

**2. That the provisions of the first enactment of this act shall become effective on March 1, 2014, and beginning March 1, 2014, shall authorize the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue certified copies of birth records from 1912 onward that are held in electronic form by the State Registrar and beginning January 1, 2015, shall further authorize the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue certified copies of all other birth records, and all death, marriage, and divorce records in the custody of the State Registrar.**

**3. That the Commissioner of the Department of Health or his designee and the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles or his designee shall enter into a memorandum of understanding to successfully develop and implement a program that shall allow the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue certified copies of vital records that are in electronic form, including a comprehensive plan with defined responsibilities for each agency. The memorandum of understanding shall also include provisions to ensure that the integrity and security of the system of vital records is maintained, and shall specify audit requirements, inventory and security paper usage monitoring requirements, and training requirements including the proper methods for issuing certified copies of vital records, assessing the eligibility of a requester to obtain a certified copy of a vital record, and verifying the identification of the requester.**

**4. That any line of credit extended by the State Comptroller to the Department of Health to implement the provisions of this act shall be repaid from the processing fees collected pursuant to subsection C of § 32.1-273 as amended by this act. Such repayments shall continue until such time as the line of credit has been fully repaid.**