

STILLBIRTH REGISTRATION

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Filing Requirement

A Certificate of Stillbirth must be filed by the mortician or person acting as such for each stillbirth (spontaneous fetal death) occurring or stillborn fetus found within this state. The certificate is to be filed with the Local Registrar of the district (county) in which the stillbirth occurred or in which the stillborn fetus was found within 5 days after the date of delivery.

“Stillbirth” means a spontaneous fetal death of twenty (20) completed weeks gestation or more, based on a clinical estimate of gestation, or a weight of three hundred fifty (350) grams (twelve and thirty-five hundredths (12.35) ounces) or more. [[Idaho Code §39-241\(20\)](#)]

A stillbirth certificate is required to be filed for each stillborn fetus delivered at 20 completed weeks gestation or more, (according to the clinical estimate of fetal development as determined by the physician) or who weigh 350 grams or 12.35 ounces or more. (Please note: If the delivery is after 20 weeks, but gestation terminated prior to 20 weeks and the fetus weight is less than 350 grams or 12.35 ounces, a stillbirth certificate should not be filed.) *If, however, the fetal death was the result of an induced abortion, irrespective of gestation or weight, it must be reported on an Induced Termination of Pregnancy (abortion) report form, not a Certificate of Stillbirth.*

The current version (at the time of delivery) of the [Idaho Certificate of Stillbirth](#) is to be completed and filed.

A stillbirth certificate will not be accepted for filing if the fetal death does not meet the minimum stillbirth requirements of 350 grams or 12.35 ounces or more or 20 weeks completed gestation or more. Also, when the fetus shows any evidence of life after the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother, irrespective of gestational age, a Certificate of Live Birth and a Certificate of Death must be filed, not a stillbirth certificate.

Once the Local Registrar has accepted a certificate for filing, the original stillbirth certificate along with the paternity affidavit, when applicable, is to be forwarded by the Local Registrar immediately* to **Vital Statistics** in the supplied postage-paid envelopes. A copy of the certificate shall be retained by the Local Registrar for 3 years. (* Local issuance sites may hold the stillbirth certificates up to 5 working days.)

When a stillbirth occurs in an institution (hospital or freestanding birthing center), a Certificate of Stillbirth must be prepared by the person in charge of the institution or a designated representative and that person must obtain a completed Acknowledgment of Paternity Affidavit, if applicable. When a stillbirth occurs outside of an institution, the mortician or person acting as such must prepare the stillbirth certificate and must obtain a completed Acknowledgment of Paternity Affidavit, if applicable. The person responsible for preparing the certificate shall obtain the signature of the physician, physician assistant, advanced practice professional nurse or coroner who shall complete the medical data, and forward or return the certificate to the mortician for completion of the disposition information. *(The mortician or person acting as such may work with the institution to prepare the Certificate of Stillbirth when the delivery*

occurred at an institution.)

The 24-Hour Report of Stillbirth (pink; part 3) must be detached from the multi-part stillbirth certificate after completion of the required items and forwarded to the Local Registrar of the county where delivery occurred, within 24 hours after the mortician takes possession of the fetus.

The 24-Hour Report of Stillbirth is a notification to the Local Registrar that a stillbirth has occurred. This report should be placed in a tickler file and used as a follow back tool to ensure that a Certificate of Stillbirth is received for each reported stillbirth.

It is the responsibility of the Local Registrar to obtain a certificate for every stillbirth that has occurred or stillborn fetus found in his or her registration district (county). The death notices and articles printed in the local newspaper are a good source of this information. If a stillbirth certificate has not been filed after 2 weeks from the date of delivery or finding, the status of the certificate and all follow up steps that have been taken should be reported to **Vital Statistics**.

The Local Registrar should know the hospital medical records personnel and funeral facility staff in their county and assist them with problems they may encounter in obtaining signatures on the medical portion of the stillbirth certificates. Physicians, physician assistants, advanced practice professional nurses and coroners should be encouraged to sign stillbirth certificates promptly. Follow up is sometimes necessary to obtain those signatures. Habitual and/or extreme tardiness should be reported to **Vital Statistics**.

B. Purpose

Proof of facts about the delivery of a stillborn fetus are important for:

- Genealogy
- Cause of stillbirth information
- Insurance Claims

Statistical uses such as:

- Public health planning
- Research

C. Unreported Stillbirths

If a Local Registrar should learn of a stillbirth that has not been reported, he or she should immediately contact the hospital or mortician. (Some research may need to be done to determine which mortician to contact and also if the fetal death meets the minimum stillbirth requirements.) Any problems encountered in obtaining a complete certificate should be referred to the State Registrar.

D. Hospital Acting as Mortician

If a hospital is handling or assuming responsibility for the disposal of the stillborn fetus, the hospital authority (administrator, chief medical officer, pathologist or designee) becomes the "person acting as mortician" and the hospital or its agent is, therefore, responsible for completing (including the disposition area) and filing the certificate with the Local Registrar. (The medical data should be supplied by the physician, physician assistant or advanced practice professional nurse in attendance. The hospital

administrator, chief medical officer, pathologist or designee must sign the certificate as the “person” “acting as mortician.”)

E. Stillbirths Occurring in a Moving Conveyance

Stillbirths occurring in a moving conveyance are to be registered in the district (county) where the stillborn fetus was first removed from the conveyance.

F. Late and Delayed Stillbirth Registration

The Local Registrar may accept for registration a Certificate of Stillbirth within 1 year of the date of the delivery. Stillbirths must be filed on the current version (at the time of death) of the certificate. Any certificate received 1 year or more after the date of delivery must be forwarded directly to **Vital Statistics** without being signed by the Local Registrar.

All stillbirths registered 1 year or more after the date of delivery or finding of the stillborn fetus, are to be registered with the State Registrar as delayed filings. All inquiries and correspondence regarding registration of stillbirths 1 year or more after the date of delivery must be referred to **Vital Statistics**.

The procedure followed by **Vital Statistics** in handling delayed stillbirth registration is found in the [Idaho Code §39-278](#) and in the departmental rules ([IDAPA 16.02.08.800](#)).

G. Correction of Stillbirth Certificates

Persons wishing to correct stillbirth certificates that have been registered with **Vital Statistics** should be referred to **Vital Statistics at (208) 334-5990**. (Issues on paternity should be referred to the Paternity Specialist at **Vital Statistics at (208) 334-5990**.)

Note: Care should be taken when completing any [correction affidavit](#).

The correction affidavit is available online at <http://www.vitalrecords.dhw.idaho.gov>.

AN ITEM CAN BE CORRECTED ONLY ONE TIME

Once an item has been amended, it cannot be amended again except upon receipt of a court order from an Idaho Court. The procedure followed by Vital Statistics in handling court ordered amendments is found in the [Idaho Code §39-278](#) .

---- The requirements for correcting a stillbirth certificate are as follows:

(Please note: The following does not apply in all cases, depending on circumstances and/or any previous actions taken.)

Less than one year from the date of the event

An incorrect item on a [Certificate of Stillbirth](#) may be corrected/amended with a completed, notarized [correction affidavit](#). The affidavit must:

1. Identify the certificate to be corrected,
2. Include the incorrect information as it is listed on the certificate,
3. State the correct information as it should appear,
4. The correction affidavit must be signed by one or both parents, the individual responsible for filing the certificate, the funeral director who signed the

stillbirth certificate, or the certifier (depending on the item[s] to be corrected and the circumstances), and their signature must be notarized.

- Corrections to the demographic section (top) can be signed by any listed above except the certifier.
- All corrections to the medical section and date of delivery must be signed by the certifier.

Documentation to support the requested amendment or correction may be required.

More than one year from the date of the event:

A completed correction affidavit (as noted above in the instructions for less than one year) is required, along with one or more documents that support the requested amendment.

H. Cremation and Transportation of Stillborn Fetuses out of the State

An "Authorization for Final Disposition" (*yellow; part 2*) must be detached from the multi-part stillbirth certificate and must accompany *the stillborn fetus* to final disposition.

The mortician or person acting as such who first assumes possession of a stillborn fetus must obtain an authorization for final disposition prior to final disposition or removal of *the stillborn fetus* from Idaho.

The certifying coroner must sign the authorization for the disposition, if the death was caused by other than natural causes (i.e., homicide, accident), the manner of death is pending investigation, or if the stillbirth was certified by the coroner with any other cause/manner.

If the stillbirth was from natural causes and was not a coroner's case, the certifying physician, physician assistant or advanced practice professional nurse must sign the authorization for the disposition.

Note: If the fetus is to be cremated within or outside of this state, the coroner must give additional authorization. The coroner must sign the cremation authorization. If the hospital disposes of the fetus the coroner does not need to sign the authorization unless the coroner is responsible for signing the Certificate of Stillbirth.

A permit for disposal is not required for a dead fetus of less than twenty (20) weeks gestation *and* less than three hundred fifty (350) grams or twelve and thirty-five hundredths (12.35) ounces where disposal of the fetal remains is made within the institution where the delivery of the dead fetus occurred.

I. Transportation of Stillborn Fetuses into the State

A stillborn fetus transported into a registration district for disposal from out-of-state must be accompanied by a transit permit issued according to the laws and rules of the place where the stillbirth occurred.

The out-of-state transit permit will be accepted by the sexton of the cemetery or by the crematory official as authorization for burial or other disposal in Idaho.

II. REVIEW AND SCREENING

A. General Guidelines

The Certificate of Stillbirth must be legibly completed with permanent non-fading black ink using a typewriter with good ribbon and type surface or by very neatly hand printing. Certificates completed in other colored ink or pencils are not acceptable. Except that dark blue ink handwritten in the medical section is acceptable.

Signatures appearing on the stillbirth certificate must be personally signed in black or dark blue ink; other colored ink, pencil, rubber stamps, or facsimile signatures are not acceptable.

The current version (at the time of delivery) of the [Idaho Certificate of Stillbirth](#) is to be completed and filed. A certificate that is prepared on an improper form, is a photo or carbon copy, or is defaced will be rejected.

All items must be completed or the reason for their omission explained. Entries such as "unknown," "not available," or a dash "-" may be given when appropriate.

A certificate that is incomplete, contains improper or inconsistent data, lined-through information, excessive white out, messy alterations, or erasures in not acceptable.

A physician, physician assistant or advanced practice professional nurse can certify only those stillbirths that are from natural causes. The coroner must certify all stillbirths that are from other than natural causes and those stillbirths that a physician was not present at during the delivery.

If the mother was married at birth, conception, or any time between [see item #25], the husband must be listed as the father.

If the mother was not married at birth, conception, or any time between [see item #25], the natural father's information can be listed only when a properly completed original Acknowledgment of Paternity Affidavit or certified copy of a court determination of paternity is filed with the stillbirth certificate; otherwise, the father's information must be blank.

A sample [Acknowledgment of Paternity Affidavit](#) form is available online at <http://www.vitalrecords.dhw.idaho.gov>.

Upon receipt of a stillbirth certificate, the Local Registrar must screen the form thoroughly. The certificate should be accepted for filing only if it is complete and appears accurate. If the certificate is acceptable, the Local Registrar will assign and enter their local registrar number in the upper right corner on the "Local Reg. No." line, sign and enter the date signed on the certificate in the appropriate item spaces. The Local Registrar should not sign or date a certificate unless it is acceptable for filing.

The Local Registrar should immediately* forward the stillbirth certificate to **Vital Statistics** for permanent filing. (* The certificate may be mailed or hand carried to the designated local issuance site when local issuance copies are requested. Local issuance sites may hold the stillbirth certificate up to, but not more than, 5 working days.)

When a stillbirth certificate is being sent from one county to another for Local Issuance copies, the Local Deputy State Registrar should be notified. This notification made by phone or FAX should include the name of the deceased, the county of delivery, the date sent to the local issuance site, whether it is being mailed or hand carried, and if

hand carried, the name of the funeral facility.

No corrections or additions to the legal (front) portion of the certificate are to be made by the Local Registrar. Except that the Local Registrar may make additions to the statistical (back) portion of the certificate if the additions are few and the information is obtained from the appropriate person. In most cases, however, it is preferable that the certificate be returned to the mortician, certifier, or hospital for correction. Make sure all returned certificates are re-filed within a reasonable time.

Chronic sloppiness should be tactfully discussed with the source, with emphasis being placed on the fact that it is a permanent, legal document.

If a Local Registrar receives a stillbirth certificate and/or 24-Hour Report for a stillbirth that occurred in another county, the certificate and/or the 24-Hour Report should immediately be forwarded to the appropriate Local Registrar.

Note: If the certificate is not acceptable for filing, a file copy should be made and the original certificate returned to the hospital or certifier for completion. The hospital or certifier should also be given the name and address of the appropriate Local Registrar with which to file the completed certificate. The Local Registrar for that county should be sent a file copy and notified of the action.) A record of this action should also be kept by the initial Local Registrar.

A current listing of [Local Registrars](http://www.vitalrecords.dhw.idaho.gov) is available online at <http://www.vitalrecords.dhw.idaho.gov>

Do not attach sticky notes to certificates on top of the typed information; the ink may lift off when the note is removed.

B. Helpful Resources

The instructions for completion of every item on the Certificate of Live Birth can be found in the additional reference guide titled [How to Complete a Stillbirth Certificate](#).

Please contact **Vital Statistics'** registration or field staff with any problems, question or concern regarding completion of the stillbirth certificate.