

# BIRTH CERTIFICATES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Information source: Illinois Department of Public Health website.

**CONTACT:** Illinois Department of Public Health  
Division of Vital Records  
925 East Ridgely Ave.  
Springfield, IL 62702-2737

**Office Hours:** 10 am - 3 pm  
**Phone:** 217-782-6553  
**Website:** [www.idph.state.il/vitalrecords](http://www.idph.state.il/vitalrecords)  
**Email:** [dph.vitalrec@illinois.gov](mailto:dph.vitalrec@illinois.gov)

## How do I correct an error on my birth certificate?

Major corrections in the record will require documentary proof to ensure the integrity of the certificate. More than one document may be required in some instances. Examples of available documents that substantiate facts are: baptismal or confirmation records;

- ▶ cradle roll certificates ▶ first grade school records ▶ applicant's marriage record ▶ military records
- ▶ Social Security records ▶ child's birth record ▶ parents' marriage record ▶ parents' birth record(s);
- ▶ immunization or clinic records ▶ insurance policies ▶ parents' naturalization certificate ▶ census records.

Download the [Application for Correction form](#) online or you can send a written request to the Division of Vital Records. Include the name at birth, date of birth and place of birth. Then indicate what items need to be corrected.

Please note: Current processing time on mailed requests for **ANY CORRECTIONS OR CHANGES** to birth records, that contain the appropriate fee is between 25 to 30 weeks from the date the request is received.

## I've legally changed my name. How do I get my birth certificate corrected?

If your name has been legally changed, then you will need to send a certified copy of the final court order, a copy of the birth record or provide us with your name at birth along with the date and place of birth and a check or money order payable to the "Illinois Department of Public Health" **Please note: Current processing time on mailed requests for ANY CORRECTIONS OR CHANGES to birth records, that contain the appropriate fee is between 25 to 30 weeks from the date the request is received.** The mailing address is noted at the top of this document.

If you do not have a certified copy of the final order from the court, you can obtain one from the circuit clerk of the county where the change was granted. (PLEASE NOTE: the record will be corrected by interlineation.)

## Why are the corrections on my birth certificate done by drawing a line through the errors with the new information typed above? Can I get a clean copy of the corrected birth certificate?

The Vital Records Act requires us to correct all vital records by drawing a line through the incomplete or incorrect information. This is called "interlineation." The correct information is then inserted above or adjacent to the item corrected. The purpose of this process is to clearly identify changes in the record to preserve the integrity of the certificate.

A certification of your birth record (a computer summary of your birth information) does not contain interlineation. It only shows the correct information and the date the record was amended. One certification of your birth record is provided as part of the correction process.

## Is my child's last name automatically changed when I add the father to the birth record?

No, the child's surname is not automatically changed. If the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity forms are used, there is a space on the form to change the child's name. If the legitimation forms are used, again there is a space on the form to change the name. If the parents get an administrative or judicial paternity order, the parents will need a separate written request signed by both parents asking that the child's name be changed. The parents only have one year from the date paternity was established by the Courts or administratively. If the parents get a court order that indicates a name change, then the parents do not need to also sign a written request for the name change. The parent's written request or court order must show how the child's name is to appear on the new birth record.

### How do you change the child's name on the birth certificate?

Last name changes to reflect the father's surname may be done through the legitimation or paternity process. The legitimation form used to add a biological father who has married the mother after the birth of the child contains a space to indicate a desire to change the child's surname.

There is also a space to indicate a desire to change the child's surname on the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity form, when paternity is established in this manner. If paternity is established by either an administrative order or a court order,

you will need a separate written request signed by both parents asking that the child's name be changed within one year from the date paternity was established through the Courts or administratively. The statement must show how the child's name is to appear on the new birth record and must be submitted to the Illinois Department of Public Health, Division of Vital Records with the administrative order or a certified copy of the court order.

Name changes due to errors must be done through the corrections process. The following question addresses name changes due to court order.

### How do I get the father's name on (or off) the birth record?

Because of the different factors involved, please contact us by e-mail at [dph.vitalrec@illinois.gov](mailto:dph.vitalrec@illinois.gov) or in writing to Illinois Department of Public Health, see mailing address at the top of this document. Note the specifics of your situation.

### How do I get a copy of the voluntary acknowledgment of paternity form that I filled out?

A certified copy of the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity form can be obtained by calling 800-447-4278 for a certified copy. There is no charge for the copy.

### What is a legitimation?

A legitimation is when the biological parents marry after the birth of a child and they wish to add the father's name to a birth record. This requires the parents to send the Illinois Department of Public Health, Division of Vital Records a completed legitimation form (obtained from Vital Records); a certified copy of their marriage record (which is obtainable from the county clerks' office in the county where the marriage occurred; and a check or money order.

**Please note: Current processing time on mailed requests for ANY CORRECTIONS OR CHANGES to birth and death records, including adoptions, legitimations and paternitys, that contain the appropriate fee is between 25 to 30 weeks from the date the request is received.**

### How do I get a copy of the legitimation forms I have already filled out?

This requires a court order as these forms are impounded.