



California Department of Public Health Logo

# Acknowledgement of Paternity/Parentage

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*Add Parents Name to Birth Certificate*

Revised January 2017

**Center for Health Statistics and Informatics – Vital Records**

Upon request, this document will be made available in Braille, large print, and audiocassette or computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write:

California Department of Public Health  
Vital Records - M.S. 5103  
P.O. Box 997410  
Sacramento, CA 95899-7410  
Telephone: (916) 445-2684  
California Relay: 711/1-800-735-2929

Website address [www.CDPH.CA.GOV](http://www.CDPH.CA.GOV)

# Acknowledgement of Paternity/Parentage

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## What is an Acknowledgement of Paternity/Parentage?

This is a legal process whereby the parents “acknowledge” (establish) parentage with their child.

This process should only be used if you want to **add** a parent’s name to the child’s birth certificate if they were **not included** on the original birth certificate.

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## I listed a parent’s name on my child’s birth certificate when it was originally prepared. Now I want to change or remove that parent’s name. How can I do that?

If you want to **change or remove** a parent’s name listed on your child’s original birth certificate, that must be done through the court system. This is referred to as an “adjudication” – the court will decide (adjudicate) the existence or nonexistence of the parent and child relationship.

California Department of Public Health – Vital Records (CDPH-VR) cannot change or remove a parent’s name on a registered certificate without the court order of adjudication.

If you want to **change or remove** a parent’s name, please request **CDPH-VR’s pamphlet entitled “Adjudication of Facts of Parentage.”** That pamphlet will provide you with all of the information you need for that process.

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## I did not list both parent’s names on my child’s birth certificate when it was originally prepared. Can I add a second parent’s name now?

Yes. This pamphlet will guide you through the process.

You will need to complete an Application to Amend a Birth Record – Acknowledgement of Paternity/Parentage (VS 22 form).

***This form must be signed by both parents.*** If a parent is unavailable, refuses to sign the Acknowledgement of Paternity/Parentage form, or is deceased, you will need to go to court, and the court will decide (adjudicate) the existence or nonexistence of the parent and child relationship. If you need to go to court, please request CDPH-VR’s pamphlet entitled “Adjudication of Facts of Parentage.”

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## What is the fee for an Acknowledgement of Paternity/Parentage?

\$23 – which includes one Certified Copy of the new birth certificate.

Additional copies are \$25 each.

Fees should be paid by check or money order payable to **CDPH Vital Records**. International money orders for out-of-country requests should be payable in U.S. dollars.

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## What do I submit to add a parent's name (when they were not previously listed)?

You will need to complete an Acknowledgement of Paternity/Parentage, VS\_22 form. Please see page 4 for information on obtaining a form.

If any of the required items are not included, your request will be returned to you for correction.

For possible future transactions with the Social Security Administration or the Department of Motor Vehicles, you should **keep copies** of all documents that you submit to the CDPH-VR office. Once your child's new birth certificate is prepared, all supporting documents are sealed by the CDPH-VR office and are not available to the public.

### ***If the Person Was Born January 1, 1995, or Later and Parents Are Married:***

- VS 22 form (including back side)
- \$23 fee
- You **must** also include a photocopy of your marriage certificate.
- You **must** also include a notarized Sworn Statement (see next section for more information).
- Although this item **is not required**, it would help CDPH-VR's staff if you could include a photocopy of the current birth certificate if you have it (this helps CDPH-VR identify the exact record to be amended).

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**What do I submit to add a parent's name (when they were not previously listed)?  
(Continued)**

***If the Person Was Born January 1, 1995, or Later and Parents are in State Registered Domestic Partnership (SRDP):***

- VS 22 form (including back side)
- \$23 fee
- You ***must*** also include a photocopy of your SRDP Declaration.
- You ***must*** also include a notarized Sworn Statement (see next section for more information).
- Although this item ***is not required***, it would help CDPH-VR's staff if you could include a photocopy of the current birth certificate if you have it (this helps CDPH-VR identify the exact record to be amended).

***If the Person Was Born January 1, 1995, or Later and Parents Are not Married:***

- VS 22 form (including back side)
- \$23 fee
- A legible copy of the completed ***Declaration of Paternity form (CS 909)***, signed by an appropriate witness and/or notarized (this form will serve as the Sworn Statement). The federal Welfare Reform Act requires that a Declaration of Paternity form be signed by both parents in the presence of a witness and/or notarized before the father can be added to the birth certificate (see additional information on page 3 explaining where to get a Declaration of Paternity form). (This law went into effect January 1, 1995.)
- Although this item ***is not required***, it would help CDPH-VR's staff if you could include a photocopy of the current birth certificate if you have it (this helps CDPH-VR identify the exact record to be amended).

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## What do I submit to add a parent's name (when they were not previously listed)? (Continued)

### ***If the Person Was Born Before January 1, 1995:***

- VS 22 form (including back side)
- \$23 fee.
- You **must** include a notarized Sworn Statement (see next section for more information).
- Although this item **is not required**, it would help CDPH-VR's staff if you could include a photocopy of the current birth certificate if you have it (this helps CDPH-VR identify the exact record to be amended).

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## Why do I need a Sworn Statement?

Effective July 1, 2003, the law requires that only an authorized person (as defined by Health and Safety Code 103526 (c)) may receive a Certified Copy of a birth or death record. To help protect against identity theft, you must complete and submit a signed, notarized Sworn Statement declaring under penalty of perjury that you are authorized by law to receive an authorized Certified Copy. *The sworn statement form is located within this pamphlet.*

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## Where can I get the Declaration of Paternity (CS 909) form?

The Declaration of Paternity (CS 909) form is only to be used by unmarried couples to establish the paternal relationship with the child.

You must use the official triplicate form (**photocopies are not acceptable**) that is available through local child support agencies. Or you can contact the Paternity Opportunity Program at the number below. The website below will provide you with a listing of local child support agencies in your county.

Once you complete the Declaration, it must be filed with the California Department of Child Support Services. You will need to submit a photocopy of the Declaration to the CDPH-VR office (with the VS 22 form) to add the father to your child's birth certificate.

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## Where can I get the Declaration of Paternity (CS 909) form? (Continued)

For more information about establishing paternity, contact the California Department of Child Support Services, Paternity Opportunity Program (POP) by telephone at (916) 464-1982 or (toll free) at 866-249-0773; e-mail to [askpop@dcss.ca.gov](mailto:askpop@dcss.ca.gov); or [visit their website](http://www.childsup.ca.gov/resources/establishpaternity.aspx) (<http://www.childsup.ca.gov/resources/establishpaternity.aspx>).

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## What information can I change or add with a VS 22 form?

This form can be used to:

- Add the parent that should be listed in Items 6A-6C **if they were not included on the original birth certificate.**
- Change the child's last name to match the last name of either parent. Or, add a parent's last name to the child's last name already listed on the birth certificate.

Example (parent's last name is "Harris"):

- If Child's Birth Name is listed as **John Michael Adams**
- Add Parent's Last Name (Harris) **John Michael Adams Harris**
- **Add** the child's first or middle name when none previously existed.
- Make minor corrections (e.g., spelling of name, incorrect date of birth for parents, etc.). This form **will not allow** CDPH-VR to **change** the child's first or middle names already listed on the birth certificate (this type of change requires a court order and is handled through the Court Order Name Change process).

Documentation supporting the correction may be requested and not returned. Keep copies of documents submitted.

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## Where can I get the VS 22 form?

One VS 22 form is included if you receive this pamphlet by mail. If you need additional copies of the VS 22 form, or are accessing this pamphlet on the CDPH-VR website:

- [Download a fillable form](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/PSB/Pages/BirthDeathMarriageCertificates.aspx) (<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/PSB/Pages/BirthDeathMarriageCertificates.aspx>).
- [Order paper forms](https://apps.cdph.ca.gov/AutoForm2/Page/SecureCode.aspx) electronically to be mailed to you (<https://apps.cdph.ca.gov/AutoForm2/Page/SecureCode.aspx>). Because of the volume of phone calls CDPH-VR receives, the internet is usually a faster process for customers than calling the Customer Service Unit.
- Call the Customer Service Unit at (916) 445-2684.
- You can also get the form from the County Recorder or County Health Department in any California county.

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## How do I complete the VS 22 form?

A sample of what a completed VS 22 form should look like is attached.

### PART I:

- **Items 1A-1C:** Complete the information exactly as it appears on your child's current birth certificate.

**Note:** If you need a copy of your child's current birth certificate to complete this section, you can download a fillable application form for a certified copy at our website or you may obtain a paper form in the same manner as noted in the previous section. Complete and submit the application, notarized Sworn Statement, and \$25 fee to the CDPH-VR office.

### PART II:

- Enter the information ***as it should appear*** on the birth certificate.

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## How do I complete the VS 22 Form? (Continued)

### PART III:

- The parents need to complete items 15A-15F and 16A-16F.

***This form must be signed by both parents.*** If either parent refuses or is unavailable to sign the Acknowledgement of Paternity form, you will need to go to court, and the court will decide (adjudicate) the existence or nonexistence of the parent and child relationship. If you need to go to court, please request CDPH-VR's pamphlet entitled **Adjudication of Facts of Parentage**.

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## What makes a VS 22 form "acceptable?"

### Important Information

Birth certificates are legal documents that must hold up in any court, unchallenged as to their accuracy and reliability. To help CDPH-VR prepare the new birth certificate accurately:

- Every item on the amendment must be completed.
- The form must be completed using the 26 alphabetical characters of the English language.
- Appropriate punctuation includes: a hyphen such as in "Smith-Jones," an apostrophe as in "O'Hare," a period as used with "Jr.," and a comma as with "Smith, Jr."
- Unacceptable entries include: drawings, pictures, or symbols such as □, ♥, or ∞, and accents or marks added to a letter to indicate pronunciation or to distinguish it in some way, such as with è, ñ, ē, or ç
- CDPH-VR must be able to read the information on the form. It is extremely important that the form be legible. ***Typing entries on the form ensures that the information is interpreted clearly.***
- If you are completing the downloadable amendment form, print on standard 8½" x 11" letter size, plain white paper, using black ink only, at 100% scale.
- If you are not able to type the amendment form, it is extremely important that you take the extra time to print ***very clearly and legibly.***

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## Important Information (Continued)

Documents that are not legible will be returned to you to complete again.

- **Only black ink is acceptable** (per Health and Safety Code Section 102125).
- **There cannot be any erasures, whiteout, or alterations.**

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## How long will it take to get my child's new birth certificate?

The [processing time](https://archive.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/birthdeathmar/Pages/ProcessingTimes.aspx) for paternity/parentage documents can be located on the CDPH-VR website (<https://archive.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/birthdeathmar/Pages/ProcessingTimes.aspx>).

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## Once I file the amendment, what happens to the original birth certificate?

When CDPH-VR receives the acceptable documents (and fee), CDPH-VR will seal the original birth certificate and replace the sealed record with a new birth certificate.

Once the original birth certificate has been sealed, it is available only through a court order (per Health and Safety Code Section 102760).

For possible future transactions with the Social Security Administration or the Department of Motor Vehicles, you should **keep copies** of all documents that you submit to the CDPH-VR office. Once the new birth certificate is prepared, all supporting documents are sealed by the CDPH-VR office and are not available to the public.

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## What if I still have questions?

If you have read this pamphlet thoroughly and still have questions that were not answered, please call the Customer Service Unit at (916) 445-2684. If you are checking the status of your request, please wait until after the processing time has passed before contacting CDPH-VR.