

Family Searches *Genealogy*



Alberta's Vital Statistics Answers
Your Frequently Asked Questions



Alberta
GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Frequently Asked Questions

Genealogical Searches

What is a Genealogical Search?

A genealogical search is generally what someone does to find out more about their family tree and Vital Statistics is often used as a research resource. Here are a few facts about Vital Statistics records that may help you.

- Vital Statistics only has the records for: birth, marriage, death, and stillbirth registrations that were registered in Alberta.
- Vital Statistics have Alberta birth records dating from approximately 1850 to the present and Alberta marriage and death records dating from approximately 1890 to the present.
- An individual requesting a genealogical search should ask for a photocopy of a registration, as this document carries the most information of any document that is produced through Vital Statistics.
- Alberta Vital Statistics records cannot be accessed over the Internet.

The Vital Statistics office is only one of many places through which a genealogical search may be conducted. Records may also be found through churches, the Provincial Archives of Alberta, the Alberta Genealogical Society, libraries (including the Legislative Library), and local history books.

When Vital Statistics does not have a record of the event you are searching for and you have documents to support its existence, you may want to register a delayed registration with the Vital Statistics office. For more information about delayed registrations, contact Government Services Call Centre. (See back cover for Contact Information.)

Who can request a Genealogical Search?

Vital Statistics records are **not** public. The person applying for a genealogical search **must show they are eligible** to apply for someone else's birth, marriage, death, or stillbirth documents.

The **only exceptions** are:

- After 100 years have passed anyone can apply for any birth registration.
- After 75 years have passed anyone can apply for any marriage registration.
- After 50 years have passed anyone can apply for any death or stillbirth registration.

The information below shows who is eligible to make application for birth, marriage, and death documents as restrictions apply.

Birth

- The **person** whose name is on the birth registration.
- A **parent** of the person whose birth is registered as established by registration documents or by court documents.
- A **guardian, trustee**, or person with **power of attorney** for the person whose birth is registered as established by court documents. Proof is required.
- Any person with **written authorization** from the person whose birth is registered or from a parent of the person whose birth is registered.

- Any person with an **order from the court**. A court document is required.
- A person **adopting a child** may apply for that child's biological birth certificate. Proof of a pending adoption is required.
- A **legal representative** (lawyer, social worker, consulate officer) for an eligible applicant or for their official duties. Proof of profession is required.
- Any person who requires it to comply with the *Child Welfare Act* or the *Parentage and Maintenance Act*. Proof is required.
- Any **adult next-of-kin* of a person** whose birth is registered when that person is deceased.
- The **executor of a person's estate**, when the person whose birth is registered is deceased. Proof is required.
- When the person whose birth is registered is deceased and there are no eligible applicants, an **offspring of a deceased next-of-kin*** may apply.

When a birth record is 100 years old, anyone may apply for that record.

Marriage

- A **person** whose marriage is registered.
- Any person with **written authorization** from a person whose marriage is registered.
- A **legal representative** (lawyer, social worker, consulate officer) of any eligible applicant or for their official duties. Proof of profession is required.
- Any person with an **order from the court**. A court document is required.
- A **guardian, trustee** or person with **power of attorney**, for a person whose marriage is registered as established by court documents. Proof is required.
- Any **adult next-of-kin*** of the deceased bride and/or groom.
- The **executor** for the estate of the deceased bride and/or groom. Proof is required.

- When **both** bride and groom are deceased and there are no eligible applicants, **offspring of a deceased next-of-kin*** may apply.

When a marriage record is 75 years old, anyone may apply for that record.

Death

- Any **adult next-of-kin*** of the deceased person.
- A **guardian, trustee,** or person with **power of attorney** for the deceased person whose death is registered as established by court documents. Proof is required.
- Any person with **written authorization** from the person who is an **adult next-of-kin*** to the deceased person whose death is registered.
- A **legal representative** (lawyer, social worker, consulate officer) of any eligible applicant or for their official duties. Proof of profession is required.
- The **executor** of the deceased person's estate.
- A **funeral home representative** who is making, or has made, arrangements for the deceased person.
- An **organization that provides benefits** to the deceased person's survivors or beneficiaries (e.g., insurance company, trust company) Proof of organization is required.
- Any person with an **order from the court.** A court document is required.

When a death record is 50 years old, anyone may apply for that record.

* **Next-of-kin** are: mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, spouse or common-law spouse. This does **not** include in-laws, grand children, grand parents, step-relatives, aunts, uncles, nieces or nephews. Persons who have been adopted or who have placed their child for adoption are **not** next-of-kin to biological relations.

What do I need to provide for a Genealogical Search?

Many times when an application for a genealogical search is made, full information and exact dates are not known. Please provide as much information as you can, because the more information provided the better the chance of locating a record. If the exact date of an event is unknown, it is important to at least provide the year or give a range of dates to search as all Vital Statistics events are filed in date order. Searches will include the year before and the year after a given date when necessary.

The information you need to provide depends on the type of record you are looking for, for example:

Birth

- Child's name
- Child's birth date
- Child's place of birth
- Child's sex
- Parent's names (include the mother's maiden last name)
- Parent's place of birth

Marriage

- Groom's name
- Groom's place of birth
- Date of marriage
- Place of marriage
- Bride's name (include maiden last name or last name at time of this marriage)
- Bride's place of birth

Death

- Deceased's name
- Deceased's sex
- Deceased's marital status
- Date of death
- Deceased's date of birth
- Deceased's age
- Deceased's usual residence
- Place of death

Applicant's Information

No matter what you are searching for, **always** include the following applicant's information in your request.

- Full name of the person making the application
- The relationship between the person making the application and the person whose document is being ordered
- Full return address for the applicant
- Phone number for the applicant (day time)
- Why the document is required
- Signature of the person making the application
- Date the application is being made

How much does a Genealogical Search cost?

Fees are calculated for each three-year period searched or portion thereof. Some registry agents may accept payment by credit card. Contact your nearest registry agent office for details.

How long does a Genealogical Search take?

Due to the complex manual research involved in completing a genealogical search of the Vital Statistics records, please allow up to six weeks processing time.

To conduct a genealogical search for events that occurred outside Alberta, contact the province/territory where the event took place.

How do I submit my Genealogical Search Application?

Alberta genealogical searches cannot be done on the Internet. Alberta residents may either complete an application form or write a letter with all the required information and submit it to an Alberta registry agent. Applications mailed to Vital Statistics from within Alberta will be returned to the applicant unprocessed.

Application forms are available from a registry agent office, the Alberta Government Services Web site or through the department's interactive telephone faxback system. (See below for details.)

Contact Information

To find out more about the registry agent network and the faxback system, contact the Government Services Call Centre at:

- Edmonton (780) 427-7013
- Alberta rite-line (toll free in Alberta only)
310-0000 then dial (780) 427-7013

Alberta Government Services Web site www.gov.ab.ca/gs

See the Alberta Yellow Pages under Licensing and Registry Services for registry agent locations.

