

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

New Birth Certificate Design

What's new about this design?

The new certificate is 125 mm wide by 176 mm high or 5 inches wide by 7 inches high. It is designed to discourage people from carrying it in their wallet or purse because certificates are frequently lost or stolen. Birth certificates, because they are a foundation document, should be stored in a safe place unless it is needed.

The stock for the new document is high security polymer plastic. Specifically, the certificate has:

- Two transparent windows one with a colour shifting property and one with three 'floating' maple leaves
- Unique watermark/shadow features maple leaves; Canada geese
- Thread feature containing the word "CANADA" repeated
- Tactile printing similar to that found on Canadian currency
- Colour shifting printing, "CANADA" in three waves below the clear window containing the maple leaves (purple/green); and
- Contains the provincial brand in colour with the jurisdiction's seal and a signature

The new design also contains certain forensic features that assist authorities in determining the validity of the document.

Why is the design being changed?

The standard certificate in use is more than 20 years old. While features have been added, with new developments in technology and emerging threats related to identity theft, tampering and counterfeiting, the Vital Statistics Council for Canada recognized the need to update the standard document design to offer the latest protection against counterfeiting and tampering.

Should Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who have older, NL-issued birth certificates be concerned about identity fraud or identity theft?

Birth certificates are a foundation identity document, and we should all be vigilant about protecting ourselves against identity fraud and identity theft.

People should ensure that birth certificates are kept in a safe location at all times, and they should not carry their birth certificates in a wallet or purse for use as general identification.

Although there is no requirement to do so at this time, people in this province may order a new format birth certificate at any time.

How much will the new birth certificate cost?

The cost for a birth certificate remains the same - \$20.

What about old certificates - are they still valid?

Yes.

Your current birth certificate will continue to be a valid NL birth certificate.

In some instances where identity security is of utmost importance, citizens may be asked by other agencies to provide the new, more secure document as proof of identity or citizenship.

Are old certificates being replaced free of charge?

No. The fee is required to cover the costs for production and issuance of the new document.

Can individuals born in other provinces get the new secure birth certificates?

You must apply for your birth certificate from your province of birth. Several Canadian provinces already have adopted the new certificate or plan to adopt it during 2008.

What is the Vital Statistics Council for Canada?

The Council is an association of vital statistics experts from across Canada with a mandate to develop, strengthen and support the Canadian system of vital statistics. Each Canadian province and territory is represented by a member of the Council as well as Statistics Canada.

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