

# Statutes and Codes Affecting Town Clerks, Registrars of Vital Records and Family History Researchers<sup>1</sup>

## A summary of official codes pertaining to the access of Vital Records

During all normal business hours, members of genealogical societies incorporated or authorized to do business or conduct affairs in Connecticut...

- (1) Have full access to all vital records in the custody of any registrar of vital statistics, including certificates, ledgers, record books, card files, indexes and database printouts, except all confidential files, including adoptions, gender changes, gestational agreements paternity, death certificates with an amended cause of death.
- (2) Are permitted to make notes from such records,
- (3) Are permitted to purchase certified copies of such records, and they,
- (4) Are permitted to incorporate statistics derived from such records in the publication of such genealogical societies.<sup>2</sup>

Vital Records open to the public are...

- All death records.<sup>3</sup>
- All Marriage records.<sup>4</sup>
- Birth records and fetal death records more than 100 years old.<sup>5</sup>

Access to birth and fetal death records<sup>6</sup> less than 100 years old is permitted to...

- (1) The person who is the subject of the birth record if over 18 years of age.
- (2) Such person's children, grandchildren, spouse, parent, guardian or grandparent.
- (3) The chief executive officer of the municipality where the birth or fetal death occurred, or the chief executive officer's authorized agent.
- (4) The local director of health for the town or city where the birth or fetal death occurred or where the mother was a resident at the time of the birth or fetal death, or the director's authorized agent.
- (5) Attorneys-at-law and title examiners representing such person or such person's parent, guardian, child or surviving spouse.
- (6) **Members of genealogical societies incorporated or authorized by the Secretary of the State to do business or conduct affairs in Connecticut.**<sup>7</sup>
- (7) Agents of a state or federal agency as approved by the Department of Public Health.
- (8) Researchers approved by the Department of Public Health pursuant to section 19a-25.

Members of genealogical societies may purchase certified copies of birth, marriage, death and fetal death records in the custody of any vital records registrar. Genealogists or individuals 18 years or older cannot obtain an uncertified copy of any certificate in the custody of any vital records registrar, regardless of whether the certificate is 100 years old.<sup>8</sup>

This summary was approved by:

The Connecticut Town Clerks Association, Inc.; Suzanne Speers, Registrar of Vital Records for the State of Connecticut; Eunice DiBella, Connecticut Public Records Administrator; Mark Jones, Connecticut State Archivist; The Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council

Recently, Military Discharge Documents in Connecticut, such as DD-214s, were made confidential to the public for a period of seventy-five years. However, they are open to members of genealogical societies "incorporated or authorized by the Secretary of the State to do business or conduct affairs in this state."

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "family history researcher" and "genealogist" are used synonymously.

<sup>2</sup> Connecticut General Statute §7-51a(a) as amended by P.A. 01-163

<sup>3</sup> Genealogists are authorized to obtain a certified copy of my death certificate with the social security number and administrative purposes section included (amended by P.A. 01-163 Section 13 (C.G.S. §7-51a(c)), effective 1 January 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Genealogists are authorized to view marriage certificates after 1 July 1997 with the social security numbers included, but may not copy Social Security numbers or obtain certified copies with the numbers on them.

<sup>5</sup> The Registrar of Vital Records has recommended that if a request is made for a birth certificate over 100 years old listing an unnamed registrant, that the registrar should inquire whether the registrant is deceased. If so, the genealogist should provide the registrar with a certified copy of the registrant's death certificate. The local registrar will then mark the birth certificate "Deceased" and issue a copy of the birth certificate. See *Vital Times*, published by the Department of Public Health, Vital Records Section, volume 1, issue 1 (September 2001), page 4.

<sup>6</sup> The Public Health Code 2000, §19a-41-2, states "[a]nyone requesting a copy of, either in person or by mail, or access to or permission to examine the original of any copy of the birth certificate or birth certificate or birth record in the custody of any registrar of vital statistics or the Department of Public Health shall provide documentation proving that such person is entitled to a copy of or access to birth certificates under C.G.S. §7-51." Family History Researchers should show an approved and current genealogical society membership card along with a photographic identification card and submit a written request for birth records less than 100 years of age.

<sup>7</sup> Those authorized societies include the societies on the list from the Commissioner of the Department of public Health and the list is available at the Connecticut State Library Website, <http://www.cslib.org>.

<sup>8</sup> PA 01-163 sections 12 and 13.