

ACCESSING RECORDS FROM THE BRITISH COLUMBIA VITAL STATISTICS AGENCY UNDER THE *ADOPTION ACT*— FILING AN APPLICATION FOR SERVICE

ACCESS TO VITAL STATISTICS AGENCY RECORDS UNDER THE *ADOPTION ACT*

This guide explains requirements for the release of records under the *Adoption Act* and how to file the enclosed “Application for Service Pertaining to an Adopted Person or Birth Parent” form. Additional forms may be obtained from our website:

www.gov.bc.ca/vitalstatistics

ACCESS TO ADOPTION INFORMATION

Over the last few decades societal attitudes toward adoption have changed. Increasingly, people involved in adoptions want greater openness and access to information.

Many adopted people want to know about their biological origins and cultural heritage. Birth parents also want information about the current health and well-being of children for whom they made an adoption plan. Adopted people and birth parents sometimes want to meet one another.

The *Adoption Act* provides for greater openness in adoption. When changes to the *Act* came into effect on November 4, 1996, adopted people and birth parents were able to apply to the Vital Statistics Agency to obtain provincial adoption records on file with the Vital Statistics Agency.

ELIGIBILITY UNDER THE *ADOPTION ACT*

The option of filing an application for service is available to adopted people 19 years of age or older and to birth parents once the adopted person has reached 19 years of age.

WHAT RECORDS ARE AVAILABLE TO ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS?

Born and Adopted in B.C.:

People born and adopted in British Columbia receive a certified photocopy of their original Birth Registration showing their birth name (including the names of any birth parents on the record), a certified photocopy of their adoption order, and any identification particulars of the adopted person provided a disclosure veto has not been filed.

Birth parents of people born and adopted in British Columbia receive an amended*, certified photocopy of the adopted person’s original Birth Registration, including any change of name subsequent to the adoption, and a certified photocopy of the adoption order.

Born Outside B.C., but Adopted in B.C.:

People born in a different province but adopted in British Columbia, receive a certified photocopy of the adoption order and any identification particulars of the adopted person. Please note that a certified photocopy of the adopted person’s out-of-province original Birth Registration is not released in order to protect the privacy rights of the birth parents. This document needs to be ordered from the adopted person’s place of birth.

Birth parents of people adopted in British Columbia, but not born in British Columbia, receive an amended*, certified photocopy of the adoption order and any identification particulars of the adopted person following the adoption.

*Before any adoption record is released to a birth parent, all identifying information pertaining to adoptive parents is deleted to protect their right to privacy.

WHAT ARE THE FEES AND ACCOMPANYING IDENTIFICATION REQUIRED FOR THIS SERVICE?

For each search of records and copy of a birth registration and adoption order, the genealogy search fee applies. The genealogy search fee for each search of records and copy of birth registration and adoption order (if available) is \$50.00*. As proof of identity, applicants are required to attach a photocopy of their birth certificate to the "Application for Service Pertaining to an Adopted Person or Birth Parent" form. All applicants are requested to fill out this form to the best of their ability. Applicants should expect a turn around time of **approximately 6 weeks** for the release of their documents.

*Fees are subject to change.

LIMITATIONS

When a search for adoption records is successful but a disclosure veto has been filed under Section 65 of the *Adoption Act* (as annotated on the birth event), the Vital Statistics Agency releases adoption records provided the information contained in the records does not allow for the identification of the person filing the disclosure veto. Where a written statement has been filed by an adopted person or a birth parent has filed a disclosure veto, the Vital Statistics Agency forwards this statement to the other applicant.

When a search for adoption records is successful but a no-contact declaration filed under Section 66 of the *Adoption Act* exists (as annotated on the birth event), the Vital Statistics Agency contacts the applicant to advise them of the situation. The applicant is provided with a "Statutory Declaration and Undertaking" form (that requires notarization of the undertaking), specifying the conditions under which information is released.

Only after processing the undertaking is the adoption information released including a copy of any written statement filed with the no-contact declaration. Failure to submit the undertaking in the form required results in the information not being released. In addition, failure to submit the undertaking within 90 days of notification by the Vital Statistics Agency results in the forfeiture of the service fee. Subsequent requests are assessed the normal service fee.

The filing of a disclosure veto or no-contact declaration applies only to records held by the Vital Statistics Agency. For more information on disclosure vetoes and no-contact declarations, please see our website:

www.gov.bc.ca/vitalstatistics

WRITTEN STATEMENT

In recognition of the importance of information to an adopted person or birth parent, the person filing a disclosure veto or no-contact declaration has the option of filing a **written statement** with the Vital Statistics Agency. This written statement may include social, medical, and health information, and possibly, information on why contact or disclosure of identifying information is not desired at this time.

Where a written statement has been filed by an adopted person or a birth parent has filed a disclosure veto or no-contact declaration, the Vital Statistics Agency forwards this statement to the applicant upon completion of the processing of their application for birth registration and adoption order information.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mailing Address: Vital Statistics Agency, Confidential Services, PO Box 9657 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria BC V8W 9P3
Telephone: 250 952-9057 (Victoria & Outside B.C.), 1 888 876-1633 (within B.C.)
Web: www.gov.bc.ca/vitalstatistics

Apply for services in person at any Service BC Centre. Visit www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca for your nearest location.

APPLICATION FOR SERVICE PERTAINING TO AN ADOPTED PERSON OR BIRTH PARENT

Please read important information on reverse of this form.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERSON APPLYING				SHADED AREA FOR OFFICE USE ONLY APPLICATION FOR SERVICE #									
Current Last/Family Name	First Name	Middle Name(s)		-									
Mailing Address													
City, Province/State, Country											Postal/Zip Code		
Home Phone # (include area code)	Work Phone # (include area code)	Cell Phone # (include area code)		Email Address									

TYPE OF APPLICANT	SECTION TO COMPLETE	TYPE OF ADOPTION (Select <u>one</u> type if you were adopted.)	
ADOPTED PERSON (19 years or older)	<input type="checkbox"/> → Section A only	<input type="checkbox"/> Two Parent	→ You have two parents; both parents adopted you.
BIRTH PARENT (of adopted person 19 years or older)	<input type="checkbox"/> → Section B only	<input type="checkbox"/> Step Parent	→ You have two parents: one is a birth parent; one is a step parent who adopted you.
		<input type="checkbox"/> Single Parent	→ You have one parent who adopted you.

SECTION A: to be completed by adopted person as applicant (PLEASE PRINT)				
Instructions: Complete as appropriate to your personal circumstances <u>after</u> your adoption. (e.g. If you have one birth parent and one adoptive parent, provide <u>both</u> parents' information below.)				
NAME ON BIRTH CERTIFICATE <u>AFTER</u> ADOPTION Last/Family Name		First Name	Middle Name(s)	Sex
Date of Birth Month Day Year		Date of Adoption Month Day Year		Approximate Year of Adoption
Place of Birth (City, Province/State, Country)		Place of Adoption (City, Province/State, Country)		
Last/Family Name <u>at Birth of Adoptive Parent 1</u>		First Name	Middle Name(s)	Birthplace of <u>Adoptive</u> Parent 1 (City, Province/State, Country)
Last/Family Name <u>at Birth of Adoptive Parent 2</u>		First Name	Middle Name(s)	Birthplace of <u>Adoptive</u> Parent 2 (City, Province/State, Country)
Your Birth Name (if known)			Birthplace Registration # (From Birth Certificate)	

SECTION B: to be completed by birth parent as applicant (PLEASE PRINT)							
PARTICULARS OF BIRTH PARENTS (AT TIME OF ADOPTED PERSON'S BIRTH)							
Last/Family Name <u>at Birth of Person Who Gave Birth</u>		First Name	Middle Name(s)	Last/Family Name at Birth of Birth Parent 2	First Name	Middle Name(s)	
Birthdate of Person Who Gave Birth Month Day Year		Birthplace (City, Province/State, Country)		Birthdate of Birth Parent 2 Month Day Year		Birthplace (City, Province/State, Country)	
PARTICULARS OF ADOPTED PERSON PRIOR TO ADOPTION							
Last/Family Name		First Name	Middle Name(s)	Sex	Date of Birth Month Day Year		Birthplace (City, Province/State, Country)
Date of Adoption Month Day Year		Approximate Year of Adoption				Name of Adopted Person Following Adoption (If known)	

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

TO AVOID DELAY

- Complete the appropriate section in full and attach a **photocopy** of your birth certificate. (All requests with incomplete information **must be accompanied by a written explanation for the omission**. If any portion of the relevant event information is left blank the application will be returned for completion.)
- Be sure you are authorized to make the request (see page 1).
- Enclose the correct fee in Canadian funds by cheque, money order or credit card. (Postdated cheques are not accepted.)
- Ensure your address and telephone number are entered correctly and are clearly written.
- Note: A service charge is levied on all cheques not honoured by the payee's financial institution.

FEES

- **The genealogy search fee for each search of records and copy of birth registration and adoption order (if available) is \$50.00*.**
- Payment to be made in **Canadian funds** by cheque, money order or credit card payable to the Minister of Finance. (Postdated cheques are not accepted.)

*All fees subject to change.

MAKING A FALSE STATEMENT

Under Section 86 of the *Adoption Act*, a person must not make a statement that the person knows to be false or misleading in an application, or in connection with an application for a copy of a birth registration, or other record from the Vital Statistics Agency, or for filing a disclosure veto, or no-contact declaration.

A person who contravenes this section of the *Act* commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$5,000.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mailing Address: Vital Statistics Agency, ATTENTION: CONFIDENTIAL SERVICES, PO Box 9657 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria BC V8W 9P3

Telephone: 250 952-9057 (Victoria & Outside B.C.), 1 888 876-1633 (within B.C.)

Web: www.gov.bc.ca/vitalstatistics

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PRIVACY

This information is collected by the Vital Statistics Agency under section 26(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and will be used to fulfill the requirements of the *Vital Statistics Act* for the release of adoption information. Should you have any questions about the collection of this personal information, please contact:

Manager, Vital Statistics Agency, 250 952-2681, PO Box 9657, Stn Prov Govt, Victoria BC V8W 9P3.

PAYMENT METHODS

Cheque

Money Order

Visa

MasterCard

American Express

NOTE: Visa, MasterCard and American Express **DEBIT** cards are not accepted. We are also unable to accept **postdated cheques**. Please make cheques or money orders payable to the Minister of Finance. Interac/Cash payments can be made in person at a Service BC Centre. Visit www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca to find a location near you. **Fees are payable in Canadian funds.**

X

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Card holder signature

PRINT card holder name as shown on Credit Card

Credit Card # _____

Expiry date _____

Note: Credit Card information is not retained. Upon authorization of the payment request, all credit card information is destroyed.