

THE STATUTES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS ACT

(CHAPTER 267)

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Registration of Births and Deaths Act

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An Act for the registration of births and deaths.

[1st July 1938]

Short title.

1. This Act may be cited as the Registration of Births and Deaths Act.

Inter-pretation.

2. In this Act —

“house” includes a public institution;

“medical practitioner” means a person registered under the Medical Registration Act;

Cap. 174.

“occupier” includes the keeper, master, matron, superintendent or other chief resident officer of every public institution, and, where a house is let in separate apartments or lodgings, includes any person residing in such house who is the person under whom such lodgings or separate apartments are immediately held or his agent;

“public institution” includes prison, lock-up, mental hospital, hospital, and any other public or charitable institution;

“register” includes all register books in existence upon the commencement of this Act as well as any registers provided under section 5;

“still-born” and “still birth” apply to any child which has issued forth from its mother after the twenty-eighth week of pregnancy and which did not at any time after being completely expelled from its mother breathe or show any other signs of life;

words referring to burial of bodies shall be held to include burning of bodies.

Appointment of officers.

3.—(1) The President may appoint, by name or office, a Registrar-General of Births and Deaths who shall be responsible for carrying out the provisions of this Act and shall have general charge and supervision of all registers kept and of all matters done or performed under this Act.

(2) The President may appoint, by name or office, a registrar for each local registration area with such supervising deputy registrars, deputy registrars, clerks and subordinate officers as he may think necessary for the purpose of performing the several duties prescribed by this Act.

(3) The limits of each local registration area shall be such as may be from time to time declared by notification in the *Gazette* and shall, unless otherwise provided, be deemed to include the territorial waters of Singapore adjacent thereto.

4.—(1) The Registrar-General shall, within such period after the expiration of every year as may be prescribed, and in any case not later than 31st March in each year, compile a summary of the births and deaths of the past year in the prescribed form. Annual reports.

(2) The Registrar-General shall also at the same time compile a general report on the increase or decrease of the population, and on any special causes appearing to affect the same as far as the same can be assumed from the registrars' returns.

5.—(1) The Registrar-General shall cause to be provided a sufficient number of registers for the registration of all births and deaths, and shall furnish to every registrar such registers as he requires. Registers.

(2) Such registers shall be in the prescribed form.

6.—(1) The registers of each local registration area shall be kept at the office of the registrar, whose duty it shall be carefully to preserve the same, and the custody thereof shall be handed down to succeeding registrars of that area in such manner as the Minister may direct. Custody of registers.

(2) On the application of the Registrar-General the Minister shall cause to be furnished, at the expense of the Government, for the use of the registrars, sufficient fire-proof receptacles, strong-rooms and other equipment to hold and preserve the registers to be kept by such registrars.

(3) Every such receptacle or strong-room shall be furnished with a lock and two keys and no more, and one of such keys shall be kept by the registrar and the other key shall be kept by the Registrar-General.

(4) The registers of each local registration area while in the custody of a registrar and not in use shall always be kept in the aforesaid receptacles or strong-rooms, which shall always be kept locked.

Registers
not open
to public
inspection.

7. Registers shall not be open to inspection by the public.

Information
as to births
and deaths.

8.—(1) Every deputy registrar shall inform himself carefully of every birth, still birth and death occurring in his district and shall forward particulars of the same in the prescribed form through the supervising deputy registrar (if any) to the registrar of the local registration area, who shall register the same without delay in the prescribed register.

(2) In cases of death the deputy registrar or some other officer authorised by a registrar or supervising deputy registrar for the purpose of this subsection shall if practicable personally inspect the corpse and make enquiries among the persons present at the death, unless the fact and cause of death are certified by a medical practitioner in the prescribed form.

(3) Every deputy registrar shall forward through the supervising deputy registrar (if any) to the registrar at intervals of not more than one week reports of births and deaths registered within his area, setting forth when possible the name, residence, age, sex, nationality, race, and occupation of each deceased person, period of continuous residence in Singapore and last place of residence before arrival in Singapore, as well as the duration of illness, the date and cause of death, the name and qualification of the medical practitioner certifying the same and such other particulars as may be prescribed.

Occupier and
relatives to
register live
births.

9. In the case of every child born alive, the father and mother of the child, and the occupier of the house in which to his knowledge the child is born, and each person present at the birth and the person having charge of the child and, if the birth occurs in a ship or vessel, the master or other person having charge of the ship or vessel shall, within 14 days after the birth has taken place, furnish to any deputy registrar of the local registration area within which the birth has occurred, the particulars of the same in the prescribed form, and shall certify to the correctness of such information by signing his name in the prescribed place on the form.

Surname
of child.
21/79.

10.—(1) Any surname of a child to be entered in respect of the registration of the birth of the child shall be that of the father of the child; but where the child is illegitimate and the

father is not an informant of the birth, the surname, if any, shall be that of the mother of the child.

(2) The registrar may at any time within 7 years after the birth of a child in his local registration area add the surname of the child to an entry in other respects complete, on proof to his satisfaction that the person on whose behalf the application is made is the person referred to in the entry and such addition shall be made known in writing to the Registrar-General.

(3) Where before 5th October 1979, the father of an illegitimate child was an informant of the birth of the child and — ^{21/79.}

- (a) the joint surnames of both parents of the child; or
- (b) the surname of the mother of the child,

has been entered in a register of births as having been given to the child, the registrar having the custody of the register shall, upon an application being made in accordance with subsection (4), forthwith enter in the register the surname of the father as having been given to that child, without making any erasure of the original entry.

(4) An application for the surname of the father of an illegitimate child to be entered in a register of births as having been given to the child shall — ^{21/79.}

- (a) be made in the prescribed form by any parent or guardian of the child or, where the child has attained 21 years of age, by himself; and
- (b) be accompanied by the prescribed fee.

11.—(1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3) where before the expiration of 12 months from the date of the birth of any child — Registration of name of child or of alteration of name.

- (a) which was registered without a name, a name is given to the child; or
- (b) the name by which the child was registered is altered,

the registrar having the custody of the register in which the birth was registered, upon delivery to him at any time of a certificate in the prescribed form signed —

- (i) if the name was given or altered in baptism, either by the person who performed the rite of baptism or by the person who has the custody of the register (if any) in which the baptism is recorded;
- (ii) if the name has not been given to the child in baptism, by the father, mother or guardian of the child or other person procuring the name of the child to be altered,

and upon payment to him by the person procuring the name mentioned in the certificate to be entered of the prescribed fee, shall, without any erasure of the original entry, forthwith enter in the register the name mentioned in the certificate as having been given to the child, and state upon the certificate the fact that the entry has been made.

(2) Not more than one entry under subsection (1) shall be made by the registrar in respect of any child.

(3) No alteration of any name shall be entered in any register under subsection (1) after a certified extract of the relevant entry in the register of births has been furnished to any person.

(4) Where the name of a child is given or altered in baptism the person who performed the rite of baptism or who has the custody of any register in which the baptism is recorded shall issue the certificate required under this section on payment of a fee not exceeding \$1.

(5) This section shall not apply in relation to a still-born or deceased child and shall be without prejudice to section 12.

Special provision for registration of name within 7 years from registration of birth.

12.—(1) Notwithstanding section 11 the Registrar-General may in his discretion, on application being made to him in the prescribed form and on payment of the prescribed fee, enter or cause to be entered in the register in which the birth was registered the name of any child the birth of which was registered without a name not more than 7 years before the date of the application.

(2) Any person who is aggrieved by any decision of the Registrar-General under subsection (1) may appeal therefrom to the Minister whose decision shall be final and conclusive.

13.—(1) It shall be the duty of the parent or guardian or other person having the custody of a child whose birth was registered without a name to apply in the prescribed manner for the registration of the name of the child within 12 months of the date of the birth of the child.

Penalties for failure to register name.

(2) Any person whose duty it is under subsection (1) to apply for the registration of a child's name and who without reasonable cause fails to do so within the time required shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$100 and to a further fine not exceeding \$40 for every day during which such failure continues after conviction:

Provided that the Registrar-General may impose and order to be paid to him forthwith a penalty not exceeding \$50 and, for every day during which such failure continues after the imposition of the penalty, a further penalty not exceeding \$20; and he shall pay into the Consolidated Fund all penalties received by him under this subsection.

(3) No prosecution shall be instituted for any offence in respect of which the Registrar-General has imposed a penalty under the proviso to subsection (2).

(4) The amount of any penalty imposed under the proviso to subsection (2) may be recovered in the manner provided by section 224 (b) (iii) of the Criminal Procedure Code, as if it were a fine.

Cap. 68.

14. In the case of every still birth it shall, unless there has been an inquest, be the duty of the person who would, if the child had been born alive, have been required by section 9 to give information concerning the birth, to give information within 14 days after the still birth has taken place to any deputy registrar of the local registration area in which the still birth occurred of the particulars required to be registered concerning the still birth and every such person on giving information shall either —

Still births.

(a) deliver to the deputy registrar a written certificate in the prescribed form that the child was not born alive, signed by a medical practitioner or a midwife registered under the Nurses and Midwives Act who was in attendance at the birth, or by a medical practitioner who has examined the body of the child; or

Cap. 209.

- (b) make a declaration in the prescribed form to the effect that no medical practitioner or registered midwife was present at the birth, or that no medical practitioner has examined the body, or that a certificate as required in paragraph (a) cannot be obtained and that the child was not born alive.

Occupier and relatives to register deaths.

15.—(1) When a person dies in a house the occupier of the house in which to his knowledge the death took place and the relatives of the deceased present at his death or in attendance during the last illness of the deceased, and each person present at the death, and in default of the persons heretofore in this subsection mentioned, each inmate of the house, the person causing the body of the deceased person to be buried, within 24 hours after the death, shall furnish to any deputy registrar of the local registration area within which the death has occurred, the particulars of the death in the prescribed form and shall certify to the correctness of the particulars by signing his name in the prescribed place on the form.

(2) When a person dies in a place which is not a house, or a dead body is found elsewhere than in a house, every relative of the deceased person having knowledge of any particulars required to be registered concerning the death, and every person present at the death, and every person taking charge of the body, and, if the death occurs in a ship or vessel the master or other person having charge of the ship or vessel and the person causing the body to be buried shall give to the registrar or deputy registrar, within 24 hours after the death or the finding, such information of the particulars required to be registered concerning the death as the informant possesses, and shall certify to the correctness of such information by signing his name in the prescribed place in the register.

Women may authorise male relatives to sign certificates, etc.

16. In the event of the person whose duty it is to sign any certificate or make any declaration under sections 9, 11, 14 and 15 being a woman and unable through illness or other cause to sign the certificate or make the declaration, she may authorise any male relative to sign or make it on her behalf. Such male relative shall make or sign an entry on the certificate or declaration that he is so authorised.

17. Notwithstanding anything in the preceding provisions of this Act the registrar, upon payment of the prescribed fee, may register the particulars required by those provisions within 42 days after any birth and within 3 days after any death.

Delayed registration.

18. Any person whose duty it is under the preceding provisions of this Act to furnish any particulars of any birth or death, and who without reasonable cause omits to do so within the time required by this Act shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$100:

Penalty for failure to furnish particulars.

Provided that no prosecution shall be instituted in respect of any birth or death the particulars of which have been registered under section 17.

19.—(1) Every medical practitioner, upon the death of any person who has during his last illness been attended by that medical practitioner, shall sign and deliver within 12 hours of the death to one of the persons required by this Act to furnish particulars of the death or to any deputy registrar of the local registration area within which the death has occurred, a certificate in the prescribed form.

Duties of medical practitioners as to certification.

(2) Such person shall, when furnishing particulars of the death, deliver such certificate to the deputy registrar and the cause of death as stated in the certificate shall be entered in the register together with the name of the certifying medical practitioner.

(3) In case any certificate under subsection (1) certifies that the cause of death of any person arose from plague, cholera, small-pox, or any disease that is required to be notified to foreign countries as a dangerous infectious disease under any Convention with regard to dangerous infectious disease for the time being in force, which is not known at the time to be prevalent in Singapore, the Registrar-General or the registrar or the supervising deputy registrar (if any) if he is not satisfied of the correctness of the diagnosis, may refuse to act upon that certificate and refuse to register the death until such further and other opinion as to the cause of death as he may require has been given.

20. When a medical practitioner has made a post-mortem examination of the body of any deceased person, the medical practitioner shall, unless he knows that a Coroner's

When post-mortem examination is held.

inquest or inquiry is to be held in respect of the death, within 24 hours after the conclusion of the examination, forward a certificate in the prescribed form to any deputy registrar of the local registration area within which the body of the deceased person was found, and the cause of death as stated in the certificate shall be entered in the register.

Duty of
Coroners as
to findings.

21.—(1) When an inquest or inquiry is held on the body of any deceased person the Coroner shall, within 48 hours after the conclusion of the inquest or inquiry, forward to any deputy registrar of the local registration area within which the body of the deceased person was found a certificate setting forth the cause of death as ascertained at the inquest or inquiry and such other particulars as are required for the purpose of registration and the cause of death in the certificate shall be entered in the register.

(2) When before the commencement or conclusion of an inquest or inquiry the Coroner issues a certificate authorising the burial of the body of any deceased person upon whom an inquiry or inquest is being or is to be held, he shall send a copy of the certificate to any deputy registrar of the local registration area within which the body of the deceased person was found and the deputy registrar shall enter in the prescribed form the cause of death as stated in the certificate.

(3) The Coroner shall, within 48 hours after the conclusion of the inquest or inquiry, forward to the registrar or any deputy registrar of the local registration area within which the body of the deceased person was found a certificate setting forth the cause of death as ascertained at the inquest or inquiry and such other particulars as may be required for the purposes of registration, and the cause of death as stated in the certificate shall, if different from that already registered, be substituted therefor and the alterations duly certified and signed by the registrar.

Duties
of police
officers.

22.—(1) All police officers shall obtain information of every birth and death within their respective districts, and also information respecting the father and mother of every child born in their district, and respecting the occupier of any house in their district in which any birth or death happens, and give notice thereof to the registrar or deputy registrar of the local registration area.

(2) Any police officer who knows such particulars and wilfully omits or neglects to give notice thereof to the proper registrar or the deputy registrar shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$100.

23.—(1) Notwithstanding the neglect of any person to report or furnish information as to any birth or any death within the time required by this Act, it shall be the duty of the registrar or the deputy registrar to procure by all means within his power the best and most accurate information respecting any birth or death which has occurred within his area, and upon such information he shall make an entry of the birth or death in the manner hereinafter mentioned but not, in any case, until after the expiry of 42 days after the birth or 3 days after the death, as the case may be: Late registration.

Provided that after the expiration of 12 months next after the birth of any child or after the expiration of one week next after any death or after the finding of any dead body elsewhere than in a house, the birth or death shall not be registered except with the written authority of the Registrar-General, who may in his discretion refuse or grant authorisation for registration in the manner in this section provided, and a note of the authorisation (if granted) shall be made in the register.

(2) Every such entry shall be made in a register specially kept for late registration, to be called the late register, and subject to subsections (3) and (4), section 25 shall apply to certified extracts of such entries in the like manner as they apply to certified extracts from an ordinary register.

(3) Every copy of an entry in a late register shall be in a form readily distinguishable from all other certified extracts, and shall have printed on it conspicuously the words "LATE REGISTRATION" and no copy so marked shall be receivable in evidence, as prescribed in section 25 unless the truth of the facts therein entered shall have been found by a Magistrate's Court in a proceeding instituted before it under this section and the court has certified its findings in the register. Such a proceeding may be instituted by any person claiming to have an interest in substantiating the record and shall be brought by way of information and summons to be served on the registrar calling upon him to show cause why a certified copy of the entry should not be

entitled to be received in evidence in the manner and to the extent provided by section 25.

Cap. 162.

(4) Where, under the provisions of the Legitimacy Act or any regulations made thereunder, any late register is used for the purpose of registering the birth of a legitimated person, every copy or extract of any entry relating to the re-registration, certified under the hand of the registrar for the time being to be a true copy or extract, shall be prima facie evidence in all courts and before all tribunals of the dates and facts contained or set forth in the copy or extract.

(5) The fact that any birth or death has been recorded or permitted to be recorded under subsection (1) or authenticated by a Magistrate's Court under subsection (3) shall not affect the liability of any person to punishment under section 18.

Correction
of errors.

24.—(1) No alteration shall be made in any register except as authorised by this Act or by the Legitimacy Act.

(2) Except as provided in subsection (4), any clerical error which may be discovered in any register shall be corrected by a registrar who shall initial the entry in which the error has been discovered.

(3) Any error of fact or substance in any register may be corrected by entry (but so that no alteration of the original entry is made) by a registrar on payment of the prescribed fee and on the production to him by the person requiring the error to be corrected, of a statutory declaration setting forth the nature of the error and the facts of the case, and made by two persons required by this Act to give information concerning the birth or death with reference to which the error was made, or, in default of such persons, then by two credible persons to the satisfaction of the registrar having knowledge of the truth of the case, and the registrar shall initial the entry and shall add thereto the day and the month and the year when the correction is made.

(4) Any clerical error in any register relating to any death registered on a certificate issued by a Coroner may on the receipt of a certificate or an amended certificate from the Coroner setting forth the nature of the error and authorising the correction of the entry, be corrected by a registrar, who shall place his initials opposite the entry in which the

error occurred and shall add thereto the day and the month and the year when the correction is made.

(5) Any error of fact or substance in any register in connection with any death registered on a certificate issued by a Coroner may on receipt of a certificate or amended certificate from the Coroner setting forth the nature of the error and the facts of the case, be corrected by an entry (but so that no alteration of the original entry is made) by a registrar who shall add to such note or entry the words "Corrected by me on the authority of a certificate from the Coroner" and shall sign such note or entry and shall add thereto the day and the month and the year the correction is made.

(6) Notwithstanding subsections (1) to (5) in any case —

(a) where any entry has been made in any register using a Japanese date or place name the registrar may alter the date or place name to accord with the English calendar and the place name used prior to the Japanese substitution and shall initial any such alteration when made; or

(b) where any entry relating to nationality has been made in any register and the entry does not for any reason accord with the entry which should have been made had Singapore not been occupied by the Japanese the registrar may substitute for that entry the entry which should have been so made and shall initial any such substitution.

25.—(1) Except as otherwise provided in this section and subject to section 23, every registrar shall, upon receiving an application therefor and upon payment of the prescribed fees, furnish to any person applying for it a certified extract of any entry in any register, other than a register of still births, in his charge.

Extracts from registers.

(2) Every such application shall be made to the registrar of the local registration area in which the birth or death was registered, and shall be made on the form prescribed for that purpose.

(3) When an application for a certified extract has been made in accordance with this section, it shall be lawful for

the registrar to refuse to furnish such extract if and so long as —

- (a) the particulars given in the application form are incomplete or inadequate or in his opinion inaccurate;
- (b) for any reason it appears to him that an entry found upon search cannot with certainty be connected with the person in respect of the registration of whose birth or death the certified extract is applied for; or
- (c) the birth has been registered subsequent to the commencement of this Act and the name of the person in respect of whose birth the extract is applied for has not been registered:

Provided that in every such case the registrar shall furnish in writing to the person applying for the extract the reason for his refusal.

(4) When a registrar has refused to furnish a certified extract under this section, the person applying for the extract may appeal to the Registrar-General and from him to the Minister, whose decision shall be final, on the ground that he has supplied sufficient information to enable the registrar to furnish the extract; and the Registrar-General or the Minister may thereupon direct the registrar to make further search.

(5) Every copy or extract of any entry in any register at each local registration area certified under the hand of the registrar for that area for the time being to be a true copy or extract shall, subject to the limitation provided in section 23 (3), be prima facie evidence in all courts and before all tribunals of the dates and facts set forth in such copy or extract:

Provided that this subsection shall not apply to any copy or extract of any entry in which the name of the person born has not been registered.

(6) A registrar may in furnishing any copy or extract of any entry under subsection (1) translate into English any entry made in any other language and subsection (5) shall apply to every copy or extract so translated.

26. Registrars shall perform such duties connected with vaccination as are required to be performed by registrars of births and deaths under Part V of the Infectious Diseases Act. Duties with regard to vaccination. Cap. 137.

27.—(1) Any person who —

- (a) wilfully makes or permits to be made for purposes of registration any false statement;
- (b) wilfully or knowingly furnishes or permits to be furnished any false information touching any of the particulars hereby required to be made known;
- (c) makes or permits to be made any false entry in any register, knowing the same to be false; or
- (d) wilfully destroys or permits to be destroyed any entry in any register,

Offences and penalties.

shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to both.

- (2) (a) Any person who wilfully or carelessly destroys, injures, mutilates, defaces, or loses any register used for the purpose of this Act;
- (b) any registrar or deputy registrar who refuses or omits without reasonable cause, the proof of which shall rest with the person accused, to register or record any birth or death, within his area of which he has notice or knowledge; or
- (c) any registrar who carelessly or wilfully allows any register to be destroyed, injured, mutilated, defaced or lost while in his custody or keeping,

shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$500 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both.

(3) Any person who wilfully neglects or omits to comply with section 19, 20 or 21 shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$100.

28. No prosecution for any offence under this Act shall be instituted except with the sanction of the Attorney- Prosecutions.

General, the Solicitor-General, the Registrar-General, a registrar or a supervising deputy registrar.

Rules.

29.—(1) The Minister may make rules in respect of all or any of the following matters:

- (a) the form of the registers and the manner in which the registers are to be kept;
- (b) the forms of any certificates, notices, or other documents required for the purpose of carrying out this Act;
- (c) the fees to be collected under this Act and the conditions under which and the persons by whom the collection of such fees may be waived in whole or in part;
- (d) the making of searches and the giving of certified copies;
- (e) the custody of the registers and other documents connected with the business of registration;
- (f) any other matters which are required to be prescribed as to which it is expedient to make rules for carrying into effect the objects of this Act.

(2) Such rules shall be published in the *Gazette*.

Fees to be
paid into
Consolidated
Fund.

30. All fees collected under this Act shall be paid into the Consolidated Fund.