



# How to register the birth of your child

## Addressing YOUR questions about birth registration

The Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration is in the process of replacing the Births, Marriages and Deaths Registration Act of 1963 with a new law that will be more appropriate to the needs of Namibia and more feasible to implement in practice. The Ministry will be engaging in public consultation around the law reform proposals, and hopes that this process will also raise the level of public awareness of the importance of registering all vital life events.

As part of this process, during the following months, the Ministry will be answering some of your questions about birth registration. This column will appear in The Namibian. You can also access the column on the MHA and LAC websites ([www.mha.gov.na](http://www.mha.gov.na) and [www.lac.org.na](http://www.lac.org.na)). The answers are based on the 1963 law which is currently in force.

**My child was born last year in the Kunene region but I did not register her. I am now living in Windhoek. Can I register my child in Windhoek?**

Yes you can register the birth of a child at any office. If you are registering a child under the age of one year you should go to your local hospital registration point. If the child is older than one year you should go to your local Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration office.

**I have lost my birth certificate. Do I have to go back to the office where I was registered to get a copy?**

You can get a copy of your birth certificate at any office regional office and some of the larger sub regional offices. If the office cannot trace your record electronically, you will have to go back to the office where you were initially registered.

**I am 15 years old. I do not have a birth certificate. I am living in Swakopmund. My parents are living in the north. Can I register myself?**

No, it is important that your parents are there to witness that you are their son or daughter. You also need to bring proof that you were born in Namibia, such as proof of birth from the hospital where you were born. Your parents also have to bring their ID documents or birth certificates.

**I am 26 years old. I do not have a birth certificate. Do my parents still have to come with me to register me?**

No, your parents do not have to come with you. However because you are registering so late the Ministry will investigate your case. They may ask for your parents to come to the office. This is to check all the details of your application. This is because sometimes people try to register their birth even when they were not born in Namibia.

**My child is not registered. The father is dead and we have lost the death certificate. Can I still register the father on the birth certificate?**

The Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration will only add a deceased father to the birth certificate if you can provide a legal document where he declares paternity of the child, for example a maintenance order. If you do not have this information, the Ministry will issue a birth certificate with the mother's details only and the child will be given the mother's surname. The Ministry makes exemptions to this rule, if the father passed away during pregnancy, and the immediately family declared that he was the father of the child. The name of the deceased parent can only be entered when the birth certificate is issued for the first time. Deceased persons cannot be added to the birth certificate at a later date.

**I was married to the father of my child but we got a divorce last year. Should we change the birth certificate?**

No your child was born to you both when you were married. The birth certificate will not be changed. If the parents were not married when the child was born but then got married, you can have the birth certificate changed to show the parents are married. The Ministry is planning not to include any information about whether or not the parents are married on the new birth certificates.

**Send your suggestions for law reform or questions about how to register the birth of a child to 081 600 0098. We will select a few of the most common questions to respond to in this column, as space permits. If your question is not addressed in the column, you can contact your nearest Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration Office for assistance.**

**UNICEF and the Legal Assistance Centre are supporting the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration in this initiative**

