



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 and www.lac.org.na). The answers are based on the 1963 law which is currently in force.

My child is 2 years old and does not have a birth certificate. The father is in prison. We are not married. What can I do?

You do not have to identify the father. No one will be named as the child's father on the birth certificate. Information about the father can be added at a later date, and the child can be given the father's surname at this point if you both consent. There is no cost to make this change. You could make the change when the father comes out of prison. Or the father can make a sworn statement that he is the father and that he consents to being on the birth certificate. You can take this letter and a copy of his ID when you register and his details will be included on the birth certificate.

My daughter was born in 2011 but she still does not have a birth certificate because her mother does not have any identity documents. We are not married. What can I do?

The mother should register herself first. Then you and the mother can register your child together, or the mother can register the child in her name only. The Ministry plans to change the new law to make it easier for either parent to register the child.

Our son was born before the father and I got married. He was registered in my surname. We got married last year. How do I change our son's surname to my married surname?

You should take your marriage certificate to your local Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration office. There is no charge to make this change.

When my child was born the father registered him and he used his surname. The father has died and I want to change the child's surname to mine, how do I do this?

You need to make a sworn statement indicating the reasons for the change of surname and giving your contact details (residential address, postal address, email and telephone number). You should take along your ID documents, the father's death certificate and the original birth certificate for your child.

My child's father is an Angolan national and he stays far from me. We are not married. Is it possible to register the child on my surname?

Yes you do not have to give any details about the father. The child can have your surname.

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

