

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES  
FOR  
CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS  
SYSTEM OF GHANA

## **FORWARD**

The need for comprehensive effective CRVS system has long been recognized because of the important role it plays. Information obtained from an effective CRVS system is critical, in tracking of individual births and building profiles of mortality and causes of death. These data play a fundamental role in planning and monitoring public health outcomes, as well as a broad range of outcomes in other policy domains.

CRVS systems incorporate multiple business processes including: recording of all details related to the vital event; notification of the event to the authorities; registration of the event; and generation of VS. A variety of actors are involved in the recording, notification and registering of these vital events, as well as in the use of the system's outputs. The involvement of multiple institutions and actors in CRVS makes it important to provide guidance on how to access data from the System and share data produced in the system.

In recent times, there have been various efforts in countries to harness the potential of technologies; computer and mobile based, to strengthen their CRVS information systems as a whole.

It is our hope that this SOPs will provide a one stop shop on the procedures and requirements that are needed to secure these services produced in the CRVS system and eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AR</b>	Assistant Registrar
<b>BDR</b>	Births and Death Registry
<b>CR</b>	Coroner's Report
<b>DHIMS</b>	District Health Information Management System
<b>DRO</b>	District Registration Officer
<b>DSU</b>	District Statistical Unit
<b>FORM A</b>	Birth Registration Report Form A
<b>FORM B</b>	Death Registration Report Form B
<b>GHS</b>	Ghana Health Service
<b>GSS</b>	Ghana Statistical Service
<b>IATC</b>	Inter-Agency Technical Committee
<b>JS</b>	Judicial Service
<b>MCCoD</b>	Medical Certificate of Cause of Death
<b>MDAs</b>	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
<b>MLGRD</b>	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
<b>MMDAs</b>	Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies
<b>MoJAGD</b>	Ministry of Justice and Attorney General Department
<b>RGD</b>	Registrar General's Department
<b>SOPs</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>VA</b>	Verbal Autopsy
<b>UCOD</b>	Underlying Cause of Death
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>COD</b>	Cause of Death
<b>BPM</b>	Business process map
<b>EA</b>	Enterprise Architecture
<b>DSU</b>	Data Service Unit
<b>RDC</b>	Resource and Data Center
<b>CSU</b>	Client Service Unit

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# CHAPTER 1

## 1.1 Overview of CRVS system improvement in Ghana

A Civil Registration (CR) system is defined as: “the continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events provided through decree or regulation in accordance with the legal requirements of each country” (UN, 2001). A CR system provides for the legal identity, be it, recognition of a person’s existence under the law, issuing a legal document that serve as proof of belonging (nationality) and other social characteristics of an individual.

Ghana has come a long way in the improvement of its CRVS system since the declaration in September 2012 at Durban, South Africa by African Ministers responsible for civil registration. She has since then developed a national Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) strategic plan to improve its CRVS system. The strategic plan was based on the Comprehensive Assessment Report which described the status of Ghana’s CRVS system in terms of the legal frameworks that guide registration, the operation and management of the systems responsible for these functions, the adequacy of human resources and interface of the civil registration systems with the generation of vital statistics, among others.

The Strategic Plan includes a number of interventions aimed at improving the CRVS system in Ghana. The Strategic Plan has been submitted to the Minister for Finance for onward submission to Cabinet for consideration and approval. Ghana got to this stage with lot of support from its development partners (UNICEF, UNFPA, and UNDP).

Further impetus to this programme was drawn from a grant agreement on April, 2016 between Vital Strategies, GSS and GHS to collaborate as part of the Bloomberg Data for Health (D4H) Initiative to support the implementation of aspects of the submitted CRVS strategic plan.

Through this collaboration, Ghana has used Enterprise Architecture (EA) as a tool to develop a more detailed system design and re-engineering of the CRVS processes. Specifically, through the EA tool target Business Process Maps (BPMs) for registration of births, deaths, marriages and divorces have been developed.

Also, the development of an active notification process as part of activities to implement community-based Verbal Autopsy (VA) and the development of an IT strategy aimed at digitizing Civil Registration functions and building interoperability between key stakeholders’ databases are on-going. Again, the development of optional CRVS Service Delivery Points (SDPs) strategy and reviewing and drafting of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for key CRVS institutions are nearly completed.

Other interventions already implemented include: use of anaconda software to identify areas where quality of Underlying Cause of Death (UCOD) data can be improved, improvement of processes for capture of Cause of Death (COD) data in Health facilities and integration of COD data into the death registration process, designing and field testing of community-based death notification and automated VA systems.

## 1.2 Purpose

These compiled SOPs is designed to enable all stakeholders follow a standardized approach to registration of vital events (births, deaths, foetal deaths and cause of death, marriages and divorce) occurring in all parts of the country to achieve uniformity in the registration process. These procedures therefore provide guidelines on how registration of these vital events (births, deaths, marriages and divorce are conducted in the country. Again, for the various services provided, the requirements that will be needed to secure the service. These SOPs are designed for use by staff of the key institutions in the CRVS system and is also intended to facilitate training as well as reference resource material for the general citizenry who request for such services. Its main aim is to achieve efficiency, quality output and uniformity of performance, while reducing miscommunication and failure to comply with laid down regulations guiding the overall, CRVS system.

## 1.3 Scope

These SOPs capture the requirements and procedures of registration of four key vital events: Births, Deaths and Cause of death, Marriage and Divorce in the Ghana.

## 1.4 Guiding Principle

The SOPs describe the routine methods and step-by-step procedures and activities and requirements for registration and issuance of certificates pertaining to the registered vital event.

## 1.5 Organization of the Chapters

This document is organized into seven Chapters. The first chapter have four sections including an overview of the CRVS system improvement in Ghana, purpose of the document, scope of vital events covered and description of the guiding principles of the SOPs. Chapter 2 provides sections on operational definitions of vital events and their uses. Chapter 3 introduces the history of Vital Registration in Ghana covering births, deaths, the various types of marriages and divorce.

Chapter 4 provides the specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for births, deaths and cause of death with their detailed procedures and requirements. Chapter 5 addresses SOPs for marriage and divorce with the detailed requirements and procedures.

Chapter 6 discusses data storage, transmission and usage in the CRVS system. It ends with showing how to access data from the four key institutions in the CRVS system. The last Chapter, (Chapter 7) discusses about the CRVS web portal, the links to be found at the site and how to access it for CRVS data.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.1 Definitions

#### **Civil Registration**

The continuous, permanent, compulsory, and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events pertaining to the population as provided through decree or regulation in accordance with the legal requirements of each country.” [The occurrences considered as vital events are live-birth, death, foetal death, marriage, divorce, annulment of marriage, judicial separation of marriage, adoption, legitimization and recognition] (UN Handbook on Training in Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems)

#### **Vital Registration**

The legal registration, statistical recording and reporting of the occurrence of and the collection, compilation, analysis, presentation and distribution of statistics pertaining to vital events which include: live-births, deaths, foetal deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, legitimizations, annulment and legal separations.” (UN Handbook of Vital Statistics Methods).

#### **Vital Statistics**

One of the main products of a civil registration system. It is the end-product of collecting, compiling, processing, analyzing and evaluating data from civil registration. Vital statistics from civil registration plays a critical role especially in-between population censuses.

### 2.2 Vital Events

**Live Birth** - is the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of conception, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy, which after such separation, breathes or shows any other evidence of life, such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord or definite movement of voluntary muscles, whether or not the umbilical cord has been cut or the placenta is attached; each product of such a birth is considered live-born.

**Death** - Is the permanent disappearance of all evidence of life at any time after live birth has taken place. (Post -natal cessation of vital functions without capability of resuscitation)

**Foetal Death** - is death prior to the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of conception, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy; the death is indicated by the fact that after such separation the foetus does not breathes or show any other evidence of life, such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord or definite movement of voluntary muscles.

**Cause-of-death** - is an official determination of conditions resulting in a death of an individual. Such determination usually become an essential data point of an official death certificate.

**Marriage** - is the act, ceremony or process by which the legal relationship of husband and wife is constituted. The legality of the union may be established by civil, religious or other means, as recognized by laws of each country.

**Divorce** - is a final legal dissolution of a marriage, that is, that separation of husband and wife which confers on the parties the right to remarriage under civil, religious and /or other provisions according to the laws of each country

**Annulment** - is the invalidation or voiding of a marriage by a competent authority, according to the laws of each country, which confers on the parties the status of never having been married to each other.

**Separation (Judicial)** - is the disunion of married persons, according to the laws of each country, without conferring on the parties the right to remarry.

**Adoption** - is the legal and voluntary taking and treating of the child of other parents as one's own, in so far as provided by the laws of each country.

**Legitimization** - is the formal investing of a person with the status and rights of a person born in wedlock, according to the laws of each country.

**Recognition** - Is the legal acknowledgement, either voluntarily or compulsorily, of the paternity of a child born out of wedlock.

## 2.3 Uses of Vital Records

### To the individual

#### *Birth record*

- ✓ Provides evidence of the fact of a person's birth and also a unique identity in terms of name, parental relationship, establishment of citizenship, place of birth, and nationality of parents among others.
- ✓ Provides proof of the person's age or date of birth to establish rights contingent upon attainment of a certain age.
- ✓ Proof of age for school entry- employment (the right to work) the right to obtain a driver's license, passport and other travel documents, open and operate a bank account, register to vote and be voted for obtain a national identification card
- ✓ Safeguard for one's human right to social status and benefit. (i.e. legal protection for juveniles in conflict with law, early marriages, child labour, child trafficking)

#### *Death record*

- ✓ Gives evidence of death for use by decedent's heirs (i.e. rights to insurance claims, social security benefits, inheritance and child maintenance allowances).

### Administrative Uses

#### *Birth record*

- ✓ Provides information for post-natal care of mother and child and identification of population at risk in public health programmes
- ✓ Provides information for administering social services and social programmes (e.g. school feeding program.)

- ✓ Provides information for research studies and follow-up surveys
- ✓ For maintaining population registers
- ✓ For maintaining electoral rolls
- ✓ For maintaining personal identification systems for national security

### ***Death***

- ✓ In public health programmes to control infectious diseases
- ✓ In programmes for public safety, accident prevention and crime eradication
- ✓ In health research of maternal or infant death
- ✓ For studies of mortality differentials by age, sex, occupation etc
- ✓ In epidemiological (transmission and control of disease) research

### **Foetal Death**

- ✓ For social and economic backgrounds of parents in retrospective (concerned or related to the past) studies;
- ✓ Studies of causes of foetal death
- ✓ Outcome of pregnancy studies

### **Statistical Uses**

- ✓ For preparing population estimates and projections
- ✓ For validation of census figures
- ✓ In cohort ( a group of people having approximately the same age) and period studies
- ✓ For construction of life tables
- ✓ In preparing health indicators, such as infant mortality rates, neo-natal (from birth to 4 weeks) mortality rates, post neonatal mortality rates, maternal mortality rates etc.
- ✓ In maternal and child health services planning and evaluation.
- ✓ For fertility data in family planning

### **Marriage Certificate**

#### **To the individual**

- ✓ For proof of one's social status as a married person by the state
- ✓ For the protection of spousal interest in the case of customary marriage
- ✓ For protection of properties jointly acquired by the spouse during the period of their marriage.
- ✓ Required for purposes such as change of name usually for a woman
- ✓ In some cases, required in application of visas

### **Divorce Certificate**

- ✓ Necessary when a party to the suit plans to remarry
- ✓ To claim inheritance and child maintenance allowances
- ✓ May be needed in visa application process when a divorcee wishes to travel outside country

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.1 Vital Registration in Ghana

Vital registration started in Ghana (Gold Coast) in 1888 - when the cemeteries ordinance was passed to regulate the interment of deceased persons in certain areas of the then colony. Registration was originally not associated with any department till 1895 when it was handled by the sanitary branch of the department of medical services.

<b>1912 -1926:</b>	Placed under the Medical Department
<b>1948 -1960:</b>	Placed under the Registrar General's Department
<b>1965</b>	: Births and Deaths Registry established within the Ministry of Local Government to handle data collection aspects of registration while the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) now the Ghana Statistical Service, handled data processing
<b>1972</b>	: Births and Deaths Registry assigned to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning under the direct supervision of the Government Statistician
<b>1984</b>	: In line with government decentralization programme Births and Deaths Registry reverted to the Ministry of Local Government.

### 3.2 Birth and Death Registration in Ghana

The registration of births and deaths is compulsory in all parts of Ghana and is applicable to the entire population of Ghana, irrespective of race or country of origin. This is made possible by the current Vital Registration Legislation (i.e. Registration of Births and Deaths Act 301 of 1965.) which replaced the Registration Ordinance of 1926.

The Act also provides for the registration of foetal deaths and seeks among other things to:

- Promote public health in the country.
- Extend births and deaths registration facilities to the entire population of the country
- Establish an efficient system of births and deaths registration records for the citizenry
- Obtain vital statistics data which are adequate and efficient for deriving reliable demographic estimates to support public health planning,
- Provide information for policy formulation at various levels of governance and for development planning in the country.

The Births and Deaths Registry (BDR) operates a centralised system in the civil registration process, with a vision of attaining complete births and deaths registration in Ghana. The Registry is responsible for directing, coordinating and monitoring the birth registration process nationwide, and the promotion of national standards and uniform registration of all events occurring within the country and among various groups of the population. The BDR plays an administrative as well as a technical role over the network of all local civil registration offices. It establishes all local registration offices and provides registration materials to local registrars to guide their daily work.

The BDR is responsible for the supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the registration process in all the local offices.

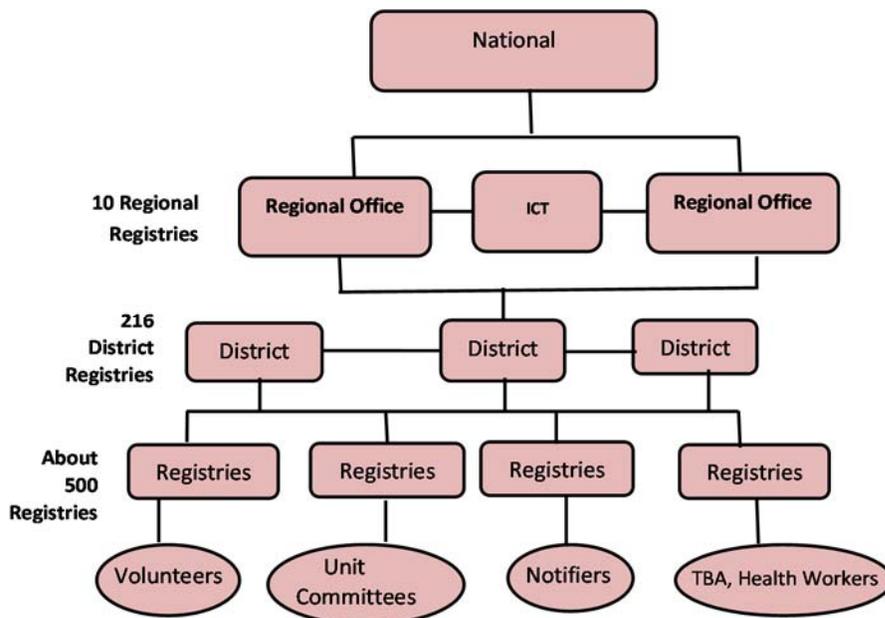
The registration system has gone through a series of transformation, just as the law establishing it has seen a number of amendments. All this was aimed at improving upon the final delivery of the system. Its specific functions include:

- a) Legalisation of registered Births and Deaths.
- b) Storage and management of births and deaths records/ registers
- c) Issuance of Certified Copies of Entries in the Registers of Births and Deaths upon request.
- d) Effecting corrections and insertions in the Registers of Births and Deaths upon request
- e) Preparation of documents for exportation of the remains of deceased persons
- f) Processing of documents for the exhumation and reburial of the remains of persons already buried.
- g) Verification and authentication of births and deaths certificates for institutions, especially the foreign missions in Ghana.

### Organizational structure of the Births and Deaths Registry

In accordance with Act 301 (1965) the Central Office in Accra is headed by the Registrar. There are sub-national offices comprising Regional Registries, Metropolitan/Municipal/District registries, and zonal registries.

### The Organogram of the Birth and Death Registry- Operational



### 3.3 Marriage registration in Ghana

The Registrar General’s Department (RGD) is the institution mandated by law to register marriages in Ghana. The law that established the Registrar General’s Department is CAP 127 and

it dates back to the colonial period. The law states inter-alia, the registration of marriages between a man and a woman in each district which shall be entered in a book called the Marriage Register Book. This book shall be kept at the Registrar's Office. Marriage legislations date as far back as 1884 in Ghana. The Current Law on marriages is the Marriages Act, 1884-1985. (Cap 127).

The Law identifies three types of valid marriage recognized by the Ghanaian law: (1) Customary marriage, (2) marriage under the Marriage Ordinance and (3) Islamic marriage under the Marriage of Mohammedans Ordinance. The Marriages Act, 1884-1985 has been amended extensively. The Customary Marriage Registration used to be mandatory but has been amended subsequently to be permissive by PNDCL 263. 119.

In carrying out this mandate the RGD has set up the following authorities for solemnization of marriages in Ghana: (a) Metropolitan/Municipal Assemblies, District courts, Registrar General's Department. (b) Licensed Churches and licensed Ministers of Religion. (c) Special license by the Principal Registrar of Marriages. Basically, the marriage process involves issuance of licenses authorizing the marriage to proceed, and the solemnization. Following the issuance of the Registrar's certificate (or license), either these institutions solemnize the marriage for the couple or the couple takes the Registrar's certificate to a licensed church where the marriage is solemnized and the marriage certificate issued.

Generally, for all the three types of marriages 'the law currently indicates that only men and women aged eighteen years and above, who are not closely related by blood or through marriage, can lawfully enter into a marriage provided that other laws in force do not prohibit the relationship.

### 3.3.1 Customary marriage

Customary marriage is the most common form of marriage in Ghana. The specific customary rites that are followed vary from group to group, although in virtually all cases customary marriage involves a gathering at which the bridegroom's family makes payment of a bride-price to the bride's family, followed by the bride being asked if she will accept the bridegroom as her husband. Customary marriages are celebrated under customary law and are potentially polygamous, as there is no limit to the number of wives a man can marry under this marriage type. Customary marriages are the oldest form of marriage in Ghana. Before the customary marriage law was amended in 1991, PNDCL 263 of 1991, the law, as enacted in 1985 made the registration of customary marriages and divorce mandatory and this was to be done within three months of contracting such marriage.

There is no legal limit to the number of customary wives a man may have, nor is there any limit to the number of such marriages that can be legally registered under the Customary Marriage and Divorce Registration Law, 1985 (PNDCL 112). The potentially polygamous nature of customary marriage distinguishes it from marriages performed under the Marriage Ordinance.

### 3.3.2 Islamic Marriage

Islamic marriage is a type of marriage made in accordance with Islamic rules regarding marriage. Marriage under Islamic law may be polygamous and under the Marriages Act, they must be registered in order to be valid.

The colonial legislation applicable to Muslims (Mohammedan Ordinance 1907), is limited to administrative or procedural matters such as providing for registration of marriage and divorce. Mohammedan marriages are based on Islamic rules and are potentially polygamous since a Muslim man can marry up to four women at a time. However, the import of this is not seen in the current law. Section 24 of Cap 127 is on the method of registration. This section of the law was formerly CAP 129, which is currently consolidated under CAP 127.

### 3.3.3 Christian and other Marriages

Ordinance Marriage enables a man to marry only one woman and is based on Christian principles of monogamy meaning that unless the man or woman dies or the marriage is legally dissolved, neither party can marry another person.

There are three kinds of Ordinance Marriage A couple can choose to marry under any of these three Certificates: *A Registrar's Certificate* which is provided by the MMDAs, District Courts and the RGD itself or *A Marriage Officer's Certificate* provided by licensed churches and licensed ministers of religion or by *A Special license* provided by the Principal Registrar of Marriages.

To marry under the Authority of a *Registrar's Certificate*, one of the parties to the intended marriage shall sign and give the Registrar of the District a Notice of Marriage. Upon receipt of the notice the Registrar shall enter the particulars in the marriage book and publish the notice on the Notice Board outside the Office for 21 days or until 3 months have elapse. The Registrar then issues a Registrar Certificate or License to marry and within 3 months with the 21 days inclusive, celebrate the marriage, if satisfied that the conditions have been met after 21 days including payment of prescribed fee. The marriage officer being satisfied of the banns of marriage and if a caveat has not been entered shall at any time within 3 months issue a marriage certificate after the celebration of the marriage.

To marry under a *Marriage Officer's* certificate is when a minister of religion (Christian or Muslim) who has been duly licensed and gazette to perform marriages officiates the marriage ceremony in a licensed place of worship.

To marry under a *Special License*, the Registrar has to be satisfied by an affidavit that a lawful impediment to the proposed marriage does not exist and that the necessary consent to the marriage has been dispensed with, the giving of notice and issuance of a Registrar's certificate and may grant license, which shall be in the form set out authorizing the celebration of the marriage between the parties named in the marriage may be celebrated in a place other than a licensed place of worship or a Registrar office if the Registrar so authorize. The Registrar waives certain conditions for an Ordinance Marriage such as the length of time for notices or permits a venue (other than the Registrar General's Office, MMDA or Church)

## 3.4 Divorce registration in Ghana

The Customary Marriage and Divorce (Registration) Law 1985, which provided for the proper registration of customary marriages and divorces in Ghana, was retroactive. That is, it applied to customary marriages and divorces contracted before, as well as after, its enactment. Noncompliance was punishable by fine or imprisonment, but the marriage would still be regarded

as valid. However, its amendment in 1991 provided that registration of customary marriages and divorces would no longer be mandatory, a weakness in the law that undermines registration efforts.

The process of divorce has gone on in the Courts nationwide since time immemorial. The divorce petitions are filed in either the District, Circuit or the High Court depending on the value of properties a couple hopes to share in the occasion of the divorce. Divorce cases are also heard by the Supreme Court but usually when disputes arise out of property sharing.

In the Courts, a customary law marriage can be terminated by either party to the marriage by applying under the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1971 (Act 367). The grounds to grant such a petition is that the marriage has broken down beyond reconciliation. To satisfy the Court that the marriage has broken down beyond reconciliation the petitioner shall prove one or more of the following facts:

- a) that the respondent has committed adultery and that by reason of such adultery the petitioner finds it intolerable to live with the respondent; or
- b) that the respondent has behaved in such a way that the petitioner cannot reasonably be expected to live with the respondent; or
- c) that the respondent has deserted the petitioner for a continuous period of at least two years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition; or
- d) that the parties to the marriage have not lived as man and wife for a continuous period of at least two years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition and the respondent consents to the grant of a decree of divorce; provided that such consent shall not be unreasonably withheld, and where the Court is satisfied that it has been so withheld, the Court may grant a petition for divorce under this paragraph notwithstanding the refusal; or
- e) that the parties to the marriage have not lived as man and wife for a continuous period of at least five years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition; or
- f) that the parties to the marriage have, after diligent effort, been unable to reconcile their differences.

The process of registering a divorce is not very clear in the country. There are no special forms for the registration of divorce cases. Ordinary A4 paper is used to file cases or type or write judgment. In most divorce cases, they are heard in camera (that is, behind closed doors).

## CHAPTER 4

### 4.1 SOPs for Vital Events Registration

This chapter details out the step-by-step processes and requirements for registration of births, deaths, and cause of death.

### 4.2 SOP for Birth Registration

The Births and Deaths Registry is required by the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1965 (Act 301) to register all births and deaths occurring in Ghana. The Birth Registration Report Form, referred to as Form 'A' is used to register births.

Type of form	Information Capture on form
Form A	<i>Name of Child, Date of Birth, Place of Birth, Parents Name and Nationality, Mother's Maiden Name, Parents Occupation, Religion, Age of Parents, Address of Parents, Informant's Name and Relationship to Child, Parents Education.</i>

#### 4.2.1 Procedures for Birth Registration

The process of registration of births starts with an informant preferable the parent coming to the registry with the child to register a fresh birth. The parent/informant is required to submit the child's welfare or weighing card provided by the Ghana Health Service (GHS). The Registration Officer interviews the informant and completes the Birth Report Form which must be duly signed by the informant having satisfied him/herself as to the correctness of the information recorded. The Registration Officer then makes an Official Record of the information in the Register of Births, which is then signed by the informant.

The parents of the child (father, mother or both) have the responsibility to register the birth. If the birth occurred in a community far from the registration point, or in the event of incapacitation of both parents an informant could report the birth for registration. The birth Act defines an informant (secondly informant) as:

- a) Any occupier of the premises in which the child is born, if he/she has knowledge of the birth;
- b) Any person present at the birth;
- c) Any person having charge of the child.

Such a person should be capable to furnish the prescribed particulars for registration. Under such circumstance the particulars of the informant is also captured on the Form A. This information includes his/her full name Relationship, Residential address, and National Identification Number (if available). After this, a birth certificate (having the name of the child, date of birth, place of birth and parents name and nationality) is immediately issued out by the one registering the child for free. The child welfare card is then endorsed as having been used for registration by entering the birth certificate number in the appropriate slot on the card. The parent or child can apply for a Certified Copy of Entry in the Register of Births any time the need arise. The certified copy comes with a fee.

#### 4.2.2. Requirements for birth registration before age one

The birth of every child is registered in the district where the birth occurred. It is the duty of the parents (father, mother or both) to register the birth of the child. The birth must be registered within 12 months of occurrence. Registration outside this period attracts a penalty.

##### Steps

1. Parents/informant is present at the registry to register a fresh birth.
2. Parent or informant produces evidence of birth, such as a Child Health Record. (Weighing Card provided by the Ghana Health Service (GHS) preferably and others (ie maternal record book? Yellow card, discharge slip)
3. The Registration Officer interviews the informant and completes the Birth Report Form A
4. Informant verifies the correctness of the information recorded and signs the Form A
5. The Registration Officer then makes an Official Record of the information in the Register of Births, which is then signed by the informant.
6. A birth certificate (having the name of the child, date of birth, place of birth and parents name and nationality) is immediately issued to the informant for free
7. The child welfare card is **then endorsed** (REGD/Date/Entry Number/Name of Registry) as having been used for registration by entering the birth registration number in the Register of Births in the appropriate slot on the Child Health Record Card.

The parent or child can apply for a Certified Copy of Entry in the Register of Births any time the need arise. The certified copy comes with a fee. Corrections and insertions may also be made after registration. It is an OFFENCE to register the same birth more than once

#### 4.2.3 Requirement for registration after age one (Late Registration of Birth)

Late registration of birth follows the same process as registration of fresh birth (before age one), with few exceptions. If a birth is not registered before age one. It is considered a late registration.

The process of registration starts at the District level, through the Regional Office to the Head Office in Accra where the final certificate is issued. For late registration, no birth certificate is issued rather a Certified Copy of Entry in the register of births is issued but at the Head Office and sent to the place of registration for collection. In this instance, the local registrar cannot sign the certificate except the Registrar at the Central Registry in Accra.

Requirements for late registration of birth

1. a weighing card  
b. Baptismal card issued not more than 5 years after birth
2. A declaration form signed by the father of child (person to be registered)
3. In the absence of a weighing card an affidavit from the mother of the child
4. An identity card of the person being registered, who is above 15 years old as well as the telephone number and ID card of the informant/witness

#### 4.2.4 Requirements to apply for Certified Copy of Entry in the Register of Births

The general requirements are:

- Completion of an application form with an attachment of the birth certificate or a weighing card for which the birth extract is being requested for.
- Identification of person making the request (Passport, Driver's license, voters ID, national ID)
- Telephone Contact
- Payment of prescribed fees

### 4.3 SOPs for Death Registration

#### 4.3.1 Procedures for Death Registration

The procedures through which an informant go through before registering a death are different for deaths that took place in a health facility and deaths that took place outside a health facility (ie in the community).

#### 4.3.2 Death in a health facility

##### Steps

1. Doctor who last attended to the deceased presents to the informant a signed Medical Certificate of Cause-Of-Death
2. Informant goes to the nearest local Registry in the district where the death event occurred to begin registration process.
3. Informant is interviewed by Registration Assistant to complete the registration process
4. Informant verifies information captured by Registration Assistant and signs Form B

5. Registration Assistant enters information into Register of Deaths and Informant signs appropriate column of the Register of Deaths.
6. Registration Assistant Then issues: -
  - A Burial Permit where burial is to take place in the district where the death occurred or
  - A Death certificate (for a prescribed fee) where burial is OUTSIDE the region where death occurred
7. Informant reports for grave space at the place where the place of burial (District Assembly /owner of cemetery)
8. Informant delivers Burial Permit to the Sexton/Manager of the Cemetery where deceased is to be buried on day of burial.
9. In the case of Death Certificate, Informant surrenders Death certificate to the Registry Office nearest where deceased is to be buried for a burial permit. This is then delivered to the Sexton/Manager for burial.
10. Sexton returns burial permits to Registry of issue.

#### 4.3.3 Death outside a health facility

Deaths that occurred outside a health facility, are considered as a coroner's case. A coroner is a public Official who investigates by inquest any death not due to natural causes. The District Magistrate is a coroner for the area of jurisdiction of the District Court to which the Magistrate is appointed.

1. Police informed by informant and body moved to the mortuary pending a postmortem Coroner Inquest.
2. A Coroner's Report is issued after inquest and this is then used to start the registration process.
3. Informant presents Coroner's Report or Certificate to nearest BDR Office to start registration process.
4. Registration Assistant Interviews Informant and completes Death Registration Report form "B".
5. Informant appends signature to completed Form "B" certifying information recorded as correct
6. Registration Assistant enters information into Register of Deaths and Informant signs appropriate column of the Register of Deaths. Registration Assistant Then issues: -

A Burial Permit where burial is to take place in the district where the death occurred  
or

A Death certificate (for a prescribed fee) where burial is OUTSIDE the region where death occurred.

7. Informant delivers Burial Permit to the Sexton/Manager of the Cemetery where deceased is to be buried.
8. In the case of Death Certificate, Informant surrenders Death certificate to the Registry Office nearest where deceased is to be buried for a burial permit. This is then delivered to the Sexton/Manager for burial.
9. Sexton returns burial permits Registry of issue.

#### 4.3.4 Requirements for Death registration

Every death is registered in the district where the death occurred.

- 1) The informant with any of the following two documents, reports the death event to the nearest Registry Office in the locality where the death occurred.

<b>The Medical Certificate of Cause-of-death (MCCOD)</b>	<i>: A document issued by a medical officer who was last in attendance when the death occurred.</i>
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<b>The Coroner's Report (CR)</b>	<i>: A report from the police as a result of the death having not occurred at the hospital or a recognized health institution.</i>
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On each of these documents will be the deceased's name, house number, date of death, cause-of-death, doctor's name and qualification and date of issue of the document. Upon provision of either of the above documents the Registration Assistant proceeds to register the event.

If the death is being registered within seven days after occurrence of death and the body is not buried, this does not attract any penalty. However, if the death is being registered after 21 days of occurrence and the body is not buried; this attracts a penalty.

Where the deceased is to be buried in the district within which the death occurred, a burial permit is to be issued. However, if the body is to be transported from one region of occurrence to another region then a Death certificate and not a Burial permit is issued. In this case upon arrival at the place of burial a Burial permit will then be obtained from the BDR Office in that district.

#### 4.3.5 Requirements for Death registration after burial

It is against the law to inter a dead body before applying for registration. However, if this should happen the following procedures and requirements have to be met.

##### Steps

1. Informant reports the death to the nearest BDR Office in the locality where the death occurred.
2. Registration Assistant interviews the Informant and if satisfied with information, partially completes Death Registration Report Form 'B' and a Declaration Form and Informant pays the appropriate penalty
3. Informant declares partially completed documents before a Commissioner of Oaths, Court Registrar or Notary Public, supported by any one of the following:
  - (i) Medical certificate of cause-of-death
  - (ii) Coroner's Certificate together with Police Report

- (iii) Affidavits from a High court sworn by the next of Kin and another sworn jointly by head and two principal members of the family of the deceased
  - (iv) Headed letter from Imam, Pastor who officiated the burial service
  - (v) Headed letter from the person who gave the grave space
  - (vi) If the deceased lived in a rented house/apartment, the owner should provide a sworn affidavit
4. Informant must present a declaration from the owner/manager/sexton of the cemetery where the deceased was buried.
  5. Informant returns declared documents to the Registration Assistant who forwards application to the Registrar of Births and Deaths for approval or otherwise
  6. The Registrar of Births and Deaths returns the declared documents together with his authority to the Registration Officer.
  7. Registration Assistant enters the information in the Register of Deaths and issues Extracts to the Officer.

Note: The Registration Officer may also conduct investigations to satisfy him/her before forwarding the forms to the Head Office. This includes visiting the community where the death occurred to check and if possible, the place of burial.

#### 4.3.6 Requirements for burial outside region of death

If the burial of the deceased is to take place outside the region where the death event occurred:

##### **Steps**

1. A Death Certificate will first be issued to the informant to facilitate the transportation of the body to the region of burial.
2. At the region of burial, the informant will surrender the Death Certificate to the local registrar who will then provide the informant with a Burial Permit for burial.
3. The Sexton after inspecting and collecting the Burial Permit from the bereaved family will allow the burial to take place.
4. Sexton returns the Burial Permit to the local BDR Office.

#### 4.3.7 Requirements for exporting of a dead body outside Ghana

If a dead body is to be sent outside the borders of Ghana for burial, the BDR has to issue a Death Extract for that body. The requirements for the issuance of the Death Extract

1. Certificate of embalmment issued from the Division of Pathology of the hospital where the death occurred
2. Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (2 copies)
3. Permit for exportation from the Metro Public Health Department.

Upon receiving these documents the Death Extract is issued to facilitate to exportation of the dead body.

#### 4.3.8 Requirements for importing a dead body

If a dead body is being brought from outside the borders of Ghana for burial, the BDR has to issue a Burial Permit for that body. The requirements for the issuance of the Burial Permit:

- Certificate of health issued from the country of origin
- Medical certificate from the country of origin
- Certified copy of entry in the register of deaths of the country of origin
- Death Certificate from the country of origin
- 
- Upon receiving this document a burial permit is then issued for the burial of the body

Cremation:

1. Carried out with permission of medical officer of the district
2. Done under the supervision of the District medical officer
- 3.

#### 4.3.9 Requirements for registration of foetal deaths

The law states that foetal deaths which occur in any district shall be registered.

1. Foetal death that occurs in a health facility is to be certified or signed by a registered medical practitioner or a midwife who was in attendance or who examined the foetus.
2. Foetal deaths that occur outside a health facility
  - a. A declaration is to be made to the effect that no medical practitioner or midwife was present at the occurrence or has examined the foetus or that his or her certificate cannot be obtained in respect of the foetal death

### 4.4 SOPs for Alteration /Changes in records

In addition to registration of births and deaths occurring in the country, the BDR also provide a number of services to the general public including Diplomatic missions. These services include legitimate alterations on a child's birth certificate and verification of births and death records. The

alterations include insertion of new given names, father’s details, typo graphical errors, clerical errors, (error that will not affect the identity of the individual is clerical error). Errors of fact or substance are those that affect the identity of the individual. These legitimate alterations however, are done based on provision of authentic documents, affidavits etc specified in the Births and Deaths Act 301 1965.

### **Alteration / Changes in Registers**

Alteration include changes, insertion and deletion of names, typographical errors, wrong spelling of names etc. The BDR ACT makes provision for legitimate corrections to be effected on captured records.

#### 4.4.1 Alterations to a Birth Record

<b>Alteration</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
<i>Child’s name</i>	An affidavit from Child’s parents (Joint affidavit and other evidence ie baptismal certificate, school certificate)
<i>Information on Father Name, Nationality, Religion, Occupation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An affidavit from father and an identity card to               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ add a name or correct a typo error <b>but not to change name</b></li> <li>○ <i>To change father’s name completely you will need to provide a DNA report</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Information on Mother Name, Nationality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An affidavit from mother               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ to add a name or correct a typo error but <i>not to change name</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Place of birth</i>	May be altered on the provision of credible documentary evidence (weighing card, baptismal card)
<i>Date of birth of child</i>	<i>Day and Month</i> may be altered only upon provision of credible documentary evidence ie baptismal cert issued not more than 5years of occurrence of birth

#### 4.4.2 Requirements for Search of records

<b>General Search:</b>	This is when the client knows the date of the event (birth/death) but does not know the date of registration.
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<i>Requirements:</i>	<p><b>Steps</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Client completes a search application form indicating name, date of the event (birth/death), place of birth/death and parents' names and possible date of registration to facilitate the search.</li> <li>2. A photo ID of client</li> <li>3. Payment of prescribed fees (not refundable)</li> </ol> <p><i>If the date of the event (birth/death) is before 7 July 2009 then this calls for a manual search. If the date of the event is after 7<sup>th</sup> July 2009 then the search begins with an electronic search.</i></p>
<b>Particular Search</b>	This is when the client knows the exact date of registration and possible place of registration of the event (birth/death)
<i>Requirements:</i>	<p><b>Steps</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The client completes a search application form indicating name, date of the event (birth/death), place of birth/death and parents' names and possible date of registration to facilitate the search.</li> <li>2. A photo ID and mobile phone number of client</li> <li>3. Payment of prescribed fees (not refundable)</li> </ol>

#### 4.4.3 Validation of Records submitted from Embassies, Employers etc

Type of record (birth certificate or extract, death certificate or extract etc)	This is when Employers, Diplomatic Missions, Courts etc want to confirm birth or death records on individuals they are dealing with.
<i>Requirements</i>	<p><b>Steps</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employer, Diplomatic Mission etc submits an Official request letter and a copy of the record to be validated to the Registrar of Births and Deaths</li> <li>2. Payment of prescribed fees (not refundable)</li> </ol>

#### 4.4.4 Verification of records by individuals

Type of record (birth certificate, birth extract, death certificate etc)	This is when individuals personally request for verification of information on their birth records or records of deceased family members
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Requirements	<p><b>Steps</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Individual completes a search application form attaching a copy of the record if available,</li> <li>2. A photo ID and mobile phone number of individual making request</li> <li>3. Payment of prescribed fees (not refundable)</li> </ol>
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#### 4.4.5. Registration of Abandoned / Deserted Child

The BDR Act makes provision for the registration of abandoned or deserted children. In such registrations, the parent's sections are left blank and the person providing information for the registration is used as the informant.

**Required documents:**

- A Police Report and
- A letter from a children's home

These two documents are first verified before the registration process begins

#### 4.4.6 On-line application for Birth and Death Extracts

**The service is currently available for Births Extracts**

**Steps**

1. Log onto the eservices portal. [www.eservices.gove.gh](http://www.eservices.gove.gh)
2. At the top right corner click on register if first user
3. Fill up the registration form and ensure all mandatory fields are completed
4. Read through to ensure your details are corrected
5. Submit your registration form by clicking on the submit button
6. Check your e-mail to confirm your registration
7. Log on with your registration ID and password
8. Select the BDR ICON to enter the BDR portal
9. Read the guidelines before applying
10. Click on new application if new user
11. Fill up the application form
12. Scan and upload the image of your existing birth certificate and submit.
13. Go to my application and click on make payment
14. Register on the payment platform if first user to make payment([epay.gov.gh](http://epay.gov.gh))

## 4.5 SOPs for Cause-of-Death (CoD)

By law the Ghana Health Service is the mandated institution to produce the CoD for all deceased persons in the country. Below are the procedures and requirements to produce a CoD certificate. Deaths occurring in a health facility are captured in the discharge report and/or death reports. The patient's folder is the source for obtaining more detailed information about the deceased. The Medical Officer that last attended to the patient by law is the designated Officer to medically pronounce the death of a decease, through post mortem (surgical) or verbal autopsy (in rear cases). Detail information and the probable cause of death of the decease are then recorded on the medical cause of death certificate. This certificate is a standardized medical cause of death developed to World Health Organization specification.

The information required to produce the Medical Cause of Death Certificate are as follows:

SN	Variable		
1	Name of Deceased		
2	Address of deceased		
3	Date last reviewed		
<b>Administrative Data</b>			
4	Folder Number		
5	Certificate of CoD Number (Unique ID generated by health information Officer)		
6	Facility Code (Unique DHIMS2 code for facility)		
7	Serial Number		
8	Sex		
9	Date of birth		
10	Date of death		
<b>Frame A: Medical Data; Part 1 and 2</b>			
11	<i>Cause of Death (Patient's folder of Autopsy report)</i>		
	<b>Part 1</b>	a	Disease or condition directly leading to death It means the disease, injury or complication that caused death
		b	Intervening Cause of (a)
		c	Intervening cause of (b)
		d	Originating cause of (c)
	<b>Part 2</b> Used for conditions that do nt belong to the sequence but still contributed to the death, for eg by impairing the patient's general condition		
<b>Frame B: Other Medical Data</b> (Used for collection addition information on the manner of death, information on foetal and infant deaths and information related to maternal deaths)			
	Prior Surgery		
	Date of Surgery		
	Reason for Surgery		
	Autopsy Request		
	Autopsy findings for certification		
<b>Manner of death</b>			
	Disease		

	Accident
	Intentional self-harm
	Assault
	Legal intervention
	War
	Could not be determined
	Pending investigation
	Unknown
	External Cause of Death
	Date of injury leading to death
	Description of occurrence of external cause
	Place of occurrence of external cause
	Home
	Residential Institution
	School, other institution, public administrative area
	Sports and athletics area
	Street and highway
	Trade and service area
	Industrial and construction area
	Farm
	Other place
	Unknown
<b>Foetal or infant death</b>	
	Multiple pregnancy
	Stillborn
	If death within 24h specify number of hours survived
	Birth weight
	Number of completed weeks of pregnancy
	Age of mother
	If death was perinatal, please state conditions of mother that affected the fetus and newborn
<b>For women, was the deceased pregnant?</b>	
	At time of death
	Within 42 days before the death
	Between 43 days up to 1 year before death
	Unknown
	Did the pregnancy contribute to the death?
	Witness by my hand this day

	Signature:
	Medical Qualification:
	Address

### 4.5.1 SOPs for issuing a Coroner's Report (CR)

Death takes place outside a health facility.

#### **Steps**

1. Death is first reported to the Police who takes body to the morgue
2. A Coroner is engaged to investigate the cause of death.
3. Coroner issues Report (Coroner's Report) on cause of death after investigation
4. Report is handed over to the relative/informant to start the death registration process.

## CHAPTER 5

This chapter covers the step-by-step processes and requirements for marriage and divorce registration. It begins with the SOPs for marriage registration and concludes with the SOPs for divorce registration.

### 5.1 SOPs for Marriage Registration

Generally, for all the three types of marriages

1. Only men and women aged eighteen years and above are eligible
2. Parties should not be closely related by blood or through marriage
3. Other laws in force do not prohibit the relationship
4. The parties identify themselves with a National ID
5. Either one or both parties must have resided in the district of registration for at least 15 days prior to the registration of the marriage.

#### 5.1.1 SOPs for Customary marriage

**Generally, include the following processes**

##### **Procedures**

1. Consent by the man and woman to be married
2. Consent by both families of man and woman
3. Obtain list of items required for the customary marriage
4. Date of ceremony fixed
5. Ceremony held
6. Registration of Marriage at the District Office (optional/not mandatory)

Application for registration of Customary Marriage

*Customary marriages are registered under the Customary Marriage and Divorce Registration Law, 1985 (PNDCL 112)*

1. Complete application form to the registrar of marriages in the district of marriage or where couples live

2. Attached statutory declaration form, indicating on the part of the husband and wife, and their respective families that the marriage is valid according to the applicable customary law
3. Couple pay a prescribed fee
4. Notice is published for 28 days
5. Certificate issued if no objection is raised
6. If objection is raised, the grounds are filed in court

### 5.1.2 SOPs for Islamic marriage

A valid Islamic marriage will occur if all of the following requirements are met:

#### **Requirements**

1. There is a mutual agreement to marry;
2. A *wali* (an Arabic term meaning 'friend' or 'patron') is present to legally represent the bride;
3. A dower/dowry is paid in cash or property by the husband's family;
4. Two witnesses are present during the ceremony;
5. The marriage is registered at the District Office; and
6. The marriage is performed by a licensed Islamic priest.

#### **Registration**

The registrar of Mohammedan marriages and divorces must be notified within one week of the marriage or else the marriage will be declared null and void

#### **Steps**

1. Marriage register must be signed by
  - a) bridegroom,
  - b) bride's *wali*
  - c) the Priest
  - d) two witnesses
2. Issuance of marriage certificate

*If it is impossible for all the necessary parties to attend at the Registrar's office within a week,*

#### **Steps**

1. bridegroom or the *wali* may apply directly to the High Court for a certificate to dispense with the needed signatures of any of the parties required in the registration of the marriage (with the exception of the priest).

2. Application must be accompanied by an affidavit stating why proper registration did not occur.

***Muslims can marry under the Marriage Ordinance but must follow the rules set out by the Ordinance in order to have a valid marriage***

### 5.1.3 SOPs for Monogamous/Ordinances marriage

#### Steps

1. Couple gives notice in writing to Registrar of Marriage of district in which marriage will take place of their intention to marry with three months
2. Notice includes: Names of parties, their marital status, occupation, age, places of residency)
3. Payment of prescribed fees
4. The notice of marriage is issued and posted on the Notice Board for 21 days
5. The Registrar issues a Marriage Certificate within three months of receiving the notice if satisfied with
  - a. One of parties has live in the district where the marriage is intended to take place for 15 days before the Certificate is granted
  - b. That neither party is under twenty-one years' old
  - c. They have obtained the required consent to be married
  - d. That there is no lawful hindrance to the marriage
  - e. That neither party is married by customary law to another individual
  - f. That the marriage must take place within three months of receipt of the notice, or else a fresh notice must be given before the couple can be married.

### 5.1.4 Marrying under the Registrar's Certificate

This service is provided by the Metropolitan/Municipal Assemblies, District Courts and the Registrar General's Department.

#### Steps

1. One of the parties to the intended marriage shall sign and give the Registrar of the District a Notice of Marriage.
2. Upon receipt of the notice the Registrar shall enter the particulars in the marriage book and publish the notice on the Notice Board outside the office for 21 days or until 3 months have elapse.
3. the Registrar issues a Registrar certificate or license to marry and within 3 months with the 21 days inclusive, celebrate the marriage, if satisfied that the conditions have been met after 21 days
4. Payment of prescribed fee.

5. The marriage officer being satisfied of the banns of marriage and if a caveat has not been entered shall at any time within 3 months issue a marriage certificate after the celebration of the marriage.

#### Requirements

1. Ceremony must occur between 8 am and 4 pm on a weekday that is not a holiday
2. There should be at least two people other than the registrar.
3. Marriage Officer fills out a certificate of marriage at the conclusion of the ceremony
4. Certificate is signed by couple and two witnesses

#### 5.1.5 Marrying under the Authority of the Marriage Officer

This service is provided by licensed Churches/Mosques and licensed Ministers of religion

#### Steps

1. Notice should be provided to the Marriage Officer (Minister of Religion)
2. Marriage Officer causes banns of marriage to be published in Church or Mosque (licensed place of worship) for 21 days
3. Marriage Officer fills out a certificate of marriage at the conclusion of the ceremony
4. Certificate is signed by couple and two witnesses

#### Requirements

1. Ceremony must be conducted between 8 am and 6 pm
2. There should be presence of at least two witnesses other than the presiding minister
3. The notice of marriage is issued and posted on the Notice Board for 21 days
4. If there is no caveat after this period the Registrar's certificate is issued and within 90 days, i.e., inclusive of the 21 days, the marriage must be celebrated or the certificate becomes invalid
5. if someone lodges a caveat then this issue has to be determined by the court

The Notice is also accompanied by an affidavit attested to by one of the parties stating their condition before the intended marriage and their majority age.

### 5.1.5 Marrying under the Authority of the Special License

Currently, being issued only in Accra and Kumasi Offices of the Registrar-General's Department.

#### **Steps**

1. Registrar is satisfied with an affidavit that a lawful impediment to the proposed marriage does not exist
2. The necessary consent to the marriage has been dispensed with,
3. Registrar grants license, to authorize the celebration of the marriage between the parties in a place other than a licensed place of worship or a Registrar office if the Registrar so authorize.

## 5.2 SOPs for Divorce Registration

In general, any of the partners in a marriage has a legal right to institute divorce petition in a law court for dissolution of the marriage they have contracted. The Matrimonial Causes Act 1971, (Act 367) provides that a customary marriage, an Islamic marriage and marriage under the Marriage Ordinance can be dissolved before a court of law. However, in the case of dissolution of a customary marriage, the Court is enjoined to consider the customary rules of the parties.

### 5.2.1 SOPs for Divorce of Customary marriage

Customary marriages can be dissolved by either party. A customary marriage may be ended if the wife is infertile or commits adultery, if the husband is impotent, or if the couple is not compatible. Usually the families of the couple try to reconcile any conflicts before they lead to divorce. If this is not possible, the marriage is considered over once the party requesting the divorce presents the family of their husband/wife with drinks and then move to a registrar of marriages for dissolution.

The families involved grants the divorce after all efforts made to reconcile the couple have failed.

#### **Steps**

1. One of the parties will bring a case (wife is infertile or commits adultery, if the husband is impotent, or if the couple is not compatible) before the elders of the family or community
2. Both parties are invited with their families
3. The petitioner is requested to provide evidence or reasons for the divorce

4. If both parties finally agree to the dissolution of the marriage, the party requesting the divorce presents the family of their husband/wife with drinks as evidence for the dissolution of the marriage and then move to a registrar of marriages for dissolution.
5. Notice of the dissolution has to be provide to the registrar within three months of end of marriage
6. Parties and their parents must submit a statutory declaration that the marriage was dissolved according to customary law.
7. A certificate to that effect will be issued by the marriage registrar

### 5.2.2 SOPs for Divorce of Ordinance marriage

There is only one ground for dissolution of a marriage under the Marriage Ordinance, that is, the marriage has broken down beyond reconciliation. It is only the Courts that can grant divorce to Ordinance/Monogamous marriage. After the Courts, have granted divorce, it is considered as having been registered as there are no records maintained at the various stages of the process.

#### Steps

1. Petitioner files a suit
2. The Court then serves the respondent with the suit.
3. Respondent has eight days within which to file his/her response or an appearance.
4. Petitioner is then served with the response, and is expected on receipt to file for a day for the hearing of the case.
5. Judge then determines the case. If a divorce is granted.
6. The judgment that is given is considered as a certificate.

### 5.2.3 SOPs for Divorce of Mohammedan marriage

#### Steps

1. Divorce register signed by
  - a. bridegroom,
  - b. bride's *wali*
  - c. the Priest
  - d. two witnesses
2. Registration should be done within one month of the date of the divorce

## CHAPTER 6

### 6.1 Accessing Vital Registration Data from the CRVS system

This chapter deals with data storage, transmission and usage and accessed in the CRVS system. It also shows the steps to obtain data from four key institutions in the CRVS system and the procedures to obtaining data from a future CRVS web-portal

### 6.2 Data storage, transmission and usage in the CRVS system

The CRVS system generates a lot of data from its operations. Information on the processes through which the captured Data are transmitted from the community level through the district and regional levels before getting to the Head Offices of the generating institutions is therefore very important if maximum benefit is to be derived from the data.

Figs... in annex shows the Business Process Maps of birth, death marriage and divorce registration from the community level to the Head Offices of the mandated institutions in Accra.

The maps show the beginning of the registration process indicating what the informant is expected to do at the various levels of registration (informant, mobile registration, district, region and national). The maps also show what documentation is required at what level and the decision to take based on documentation. Furthermore, what validation is conducted at the various levels, and type of database (paper or electronic) kept at that level. Finally, data sharing among stakeholders is also shown.

Currently, there are unconnected national databases for each key institution. Most databases are fed in manually with data on pen drives, CDs from the source of compilation. For births and deaths registration data, electronic copies of the data are captured at the regional levels and submitted to the Central Registry in Accra. The BDR is also piloting data transmission through the *mbirth* registration programme. The CoD data is transmitted electronically through the DHIMS2 to GHS Headquarters. Marriage registration data is mostly manual. Returns from the District Courts, MMDAs and Churches are not forthcoming. Similarly, divorce registration data are sent-in manually at the end of the month from the regions and districts to the Statistics Unit of the Judicial Service.

### 6.3 Accessing CRVS Data from GSS

In general, the GSS collects, processes, analyzes and disseminates various types of data obtained from Surveys, Censuses and Administrative sources. Civil Registration data from administrative sources have not been of the quality expected. The level of coverage of registered Births and Deaths and CoD for example is low and with lots of missing information. Marriage and Divorce data have not been any better. As a result, such data are normally not published by the GSS. The GSS however, fills up this gap with surveys and censuses data on births, deaths, marriages and divorce, which ideally should be used to validate these administrative data source.

The GSS has a Data Centre that addresses the data needs of government, development partners, researchers etc. Therefore, in addition to the collection of administrative data, the GSS utilizes

survey data to supplement its data collection. Data request can be made via on-line or personal means.

### 6.3.1 Accessing the GSS website

The GSS web-site is [www.statsghana.gov.gh](http://www.statsghana.gov.gh). Major sections on the site include statistics, databases and SDGs. Sub sections under statistics are economics, social and demography, censuses and surveys and data request. Also on the site are the databases of CountryStat Ghana, National Data Archive, Ghanainfo and IMIS. There are also links to web-sites or related institutions and web-sites where further information can be found. Microdata/dataset request can be initiated from the GSS website.

### 6.3.2 SOPs for Requesting Data on-line

Scenarios for requesting Data on-line

- i. Send an email with details of data request  
or
- ii. Download data request forms, complete and send via e- mail  
or
- iii. Personal submission/Walk in

The Client begins by expressing his request, in writing to the GS. The letter could be a hard copy or scanned electronic copy and should include:

#### **Steps**

1. Details of client/institution requesting the data
2. Reason data is being requested (eg research purpose, production of report, monitoring, academic etc)
3. Data variables required
4. Period of coverage for the data indicating:
  - o Specific area
  - o Disaggregation by year, month or sex
  - o Geographical coverage: whole country, regional, district etc)
5. Request is received at Resource and Data Center (Data Service Unit)
6. If the requested data or information can be found from reports or datasets at the GSS web-site, the client is assisted to obtain it.

*It should be noted that the data to be provided are only in aggregated form as by law the GSS is not permitted to provide individual level data.*

### 6.3.3 SOPs for requesting for Customized Data

#### **Steps**

1. Client completes application form and sends to DSU or GS for approval
2. Request is send to the appropriate Directorate through the GS or DSU if cleared
3. DSU follows up to ensure data is processed
4. DSU prepares an invoice if the data generated is to be paid for.

*(Note not all data request are paid for)*

5. Client is notified to make payment of prescribed fee
6. Requested data is released when prescribed fees are paid.

***If requested data is not available at GSS: The DSU provides links to possible institutions that may have the requested data.***

#### Accessing microdata/dataset

#### **Steps**

1. Enter [www.statsghana.gov.gh](http://www.statsghana.gov.gh) in browser
2. Click on data request
3. Click on download
4. Select choice of dataset
5. Follow the direction/prompts

#### Accessing Electronic Data

#### **Steps**

1. Enter [www.statsghana.gov.gh](http://www.statsghana.gov.gh)
2. Click on sector of choice of data (economic, demographic etc)
3. Click on data to download and save or
4. Click on publications
5. Click on publication of choice to download and save

## 6.4 Accessing Data from the BDR system

There is no on-line access. Request is made manually or walk-in request

### Steps

1. Client completes application form or submits a request letter to the Registrar or through the Client Service Unit (CSU) for approval
2. Request is send to the Statistics Unit through the Registrar or CSU if cleared
3. CSU follows up to ensure data is processed
4. CSU prepares an invoice if the data generated is to be paid for and notifies Client when to pick data.
5. CSU releases data to client when prescribed fees are paid.

*(Note: Not all data request is paid for)*

## 6.5 Accessing Marriage Data from the RGD

There is no on-line access. Request is made manually or walk-in request

### Steps

1. Write to the Registrar General indicating specific data needed and purpose of request
2. Request is approved and sent to the Statistics Unit of the Marriage Department
3. If requested data is available, data is produced and requestor notified for collection
4. If requested data is not available requestor is notified according.

## 6.6 Accessing COD Data from the GHS

There is no on-line access. Request is made manually or walk-in request

Detailed COD is obtained from the GHS (PPME Unit). COD data produced by the BDR is on registrations that have been done on COD.

### Steps

1. Write to the Director of PPME indicating specific data needed and purpose of request or complete request forms at the PPME
2. Request is approved and sent to the Statistics Unit
3. If requested data is available, data is produced and requestor notified for collection
4. If requested data is not available requestor is notified according.

## 6.7 Accessing Divorce Data from the Judicial Service

There is no on-line access. Request is made manually or walk-in request

### **Steps**

1. Write to the Judicial Secretary of the Judicial Service indicating specific Divorce data needed and purpose of request
2. Request is approved and sent to the Statistics Unit of the Judicial Service where data on Divorce is compiled
3. If requested data is available, data is produced and requestor notified for collection
4. If requested data is not available requestor is notified according

## Chapter 7

### 7.1 The CRVS Web-Portal

The CRVS web portal is where all CRVS SOPs from key CRVS institutions (BDR, GSS, RGD, and JS) can be found online. This is a specially designed website that serves as a single point of access to all CRVS SOPs. This chapter provides a step by step approach to accessing the portal and vital statistical data through links to the portal in a uniform manner. The information available at the site can be accessed through linkages with the following agencies; GSS, MOH, RGD, BDR, Judicial Service, and other MMDA's.

### 7.2 Accessing the CRVS web-portal

The website address will be [www.crvs.gov.gh](http://www.crvs.gov.gh)

### 7.3 Accessing Data from the CRVS Web Page

Vital statistics information materials handled by the web page through linkages with the respective web pages or web sites include:

- Ministry of Health web site: National documents/reports produced by Ministry of Health, e.g. like National strategies, National policies, emerging epidemics, current events, weekly epidemiologic newsletters, reports, any reports on health issues that require urgent dissemination. Also, handles information on medicines, financing, equipment and health supplies
- Births and Deaths web page: Births and Deaths statistics.
- Ghana Statistical Service web page: Vital Statistics, Social and Economic Statistics etc
- Registrar Generals Department web-page: Marriage and Divorce information
- Judicial Service web-page: Divorce procedures and statistics
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development web page: Statistics on births, deaths marriages, divorces.

When a “user” of CRVS data/ information wishes to access any information from the web pages, these are the steps that should be followed:

#### **Steps:**

1. Type [www.crvs.gov.gh](http://www.crvs.gov.gh) in the browser window to access the CRVS web site on the internet.
2. Click the “Data Access” link to access the desired web page. There is a linkage to the GHS, GSS, BDR, MLGRD, Judicial Service and RGD web sites.
3. Once on the web page, click onto the category of data that you wish to access.
4. Data is now displayed and is ready to be either printed or saved onto a flash drive or CD

## 7.4 Accessing Specialized Data

Requestors will complete a Data Request and Use Agreement Form, available for download at (<http://www.crvs.gov.gh>). The Data Request and Use Agreement Form, once completed, can be e-mailed to this address: [request@crvs.gov.gh](mailto:request@crvs.gov.gh).

### Steps

1. The person seeking the data from the various agencies begins by expressing interest by requesting from the agency in writing.
2. After being granted permission from the agency (through an authority note/letter granting permission to access data) the person requesting then presents the authority letter to the in-charge of the information unit.
3. The person responsible for giving out data, records the details of the person in a register/form and then the data request is processed.
4. After the data, has been processed, the data requested is given to the person/institution.

**Publication Policy:** The various Data providing institutions have the responsibility to review data as and when necessary for accuracy and relevance purposes. As part of the Data Request and Use Agreement, the data requestor will be asked to agree to a Publication Policy as follows:

1. The purpose for the data requested.
2. The Description of data requested.
3. Any dissemination of the data should include proper acknowledgement of the data providing institutions.

### Sanctions to violation of User Agreement

*Failure to follow the Data Use Agreement:* If users inadvertently violate the User Agreement, corrective action should be taken as soon as infractions are discovered. If users willfully violate the Data Use Agreement, the data providing institution will revoke current and future access to further information request.

*Fraudulent Use of Data:* Should the data providing institutions discover an attempt to publish data obtained fraudulently or become aware of any breach of the Data Use Agreement, immediate steps will be taken to secure the breach or end the violation. This may include discontinuing the user's data access and/or reporting the violation, and reporting data abuse/misconduct to the violator's institution and/or relevant professional organizations.



## Ghana - Death in a Health Facility (Pre-Registration) As-Is Process

Lack of understanding of process

Religious beliefs determine when persons should be buried resulting in late or no registration

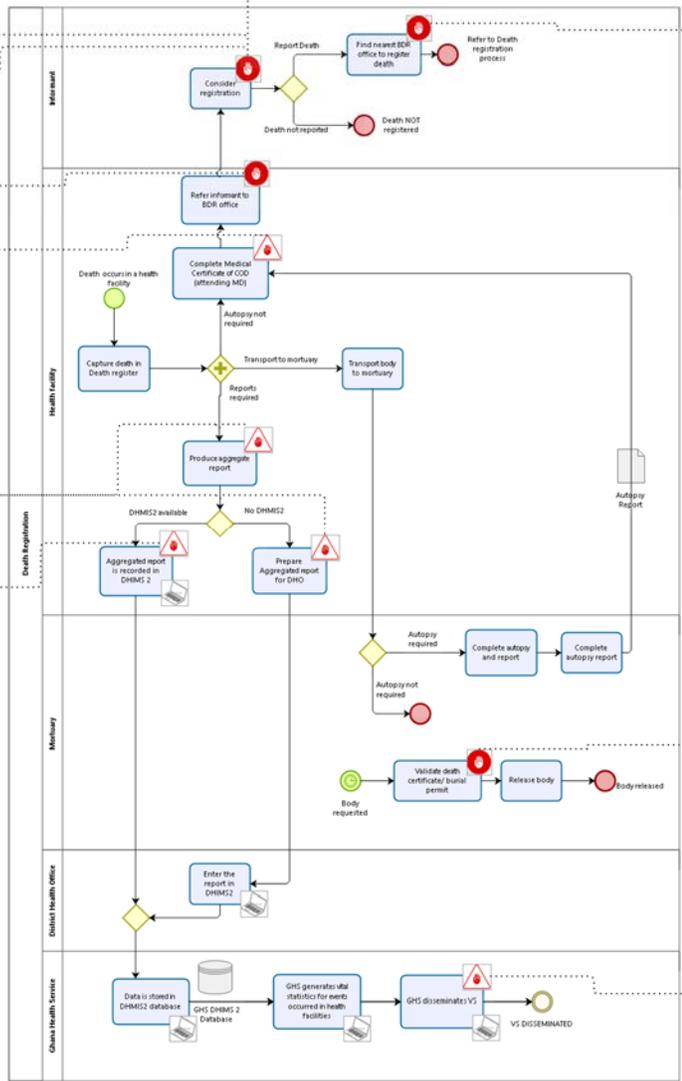
Death is a sensitive topic which requires courtesy. As a result, informants may not report a death

Staff not motivated to refer the informants to BDR

Delays in receiving autopsy report

Manual collation time consuming and introduces to data quality issues

Manual and repetitive data entry time consuming



Limited Access to BDR office results in queues

- LEGAL FRAMEWORK**
1. Registration of Births and Deaths, Act 301 (The classification of the dead is based on the certification of a medical practitioner or the coroner)
  2. Registration of Births and Deaths Regulation (LI 653 of 1970)
  3. Standard Operating procedures and Instructions for completing the new computerized Deaths and deaths, 2009
  4. Coroner's Act 1960
  5. Statistical Service Law -1985 (PNDC/L 135)

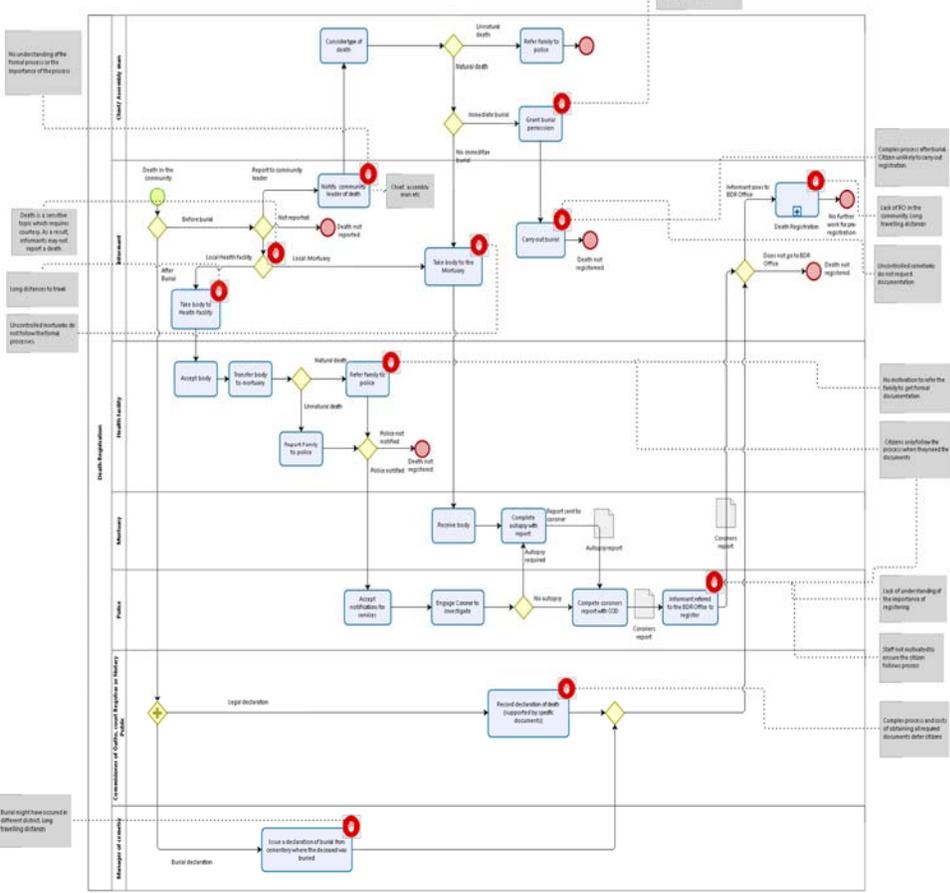
- MAIN DOCUMENTS**
- Death registration report Form 8
  - Coroner's report
  - Medical certificate of cause of death
  - Burial permit
  - Death certificate
  - Register of deaths
  - Mortuary registration cards



Bodies are released without formal documentation

Statistics are not being disseminated without DCO approval. No legal requirement to disseminate VVS

# Ghana - Death in a Community (Pre-Registration) As-Is Process



- LEGAL FRAMEWORK**
- Registration of Births and Deaths Act 307 (The classification of the dead is based on the verification of a particular of the cause)
  - Registration of Births and Deaths Regulation 143 of 1975
  - Standard Operating procedures and instructions for completing the new computerized Deaths and Deaths, 2019
  - Coroners Act 1960
  - Statistical Service Law - 1965 (PNCL 17)

- MAIN DOCUMENTS**
- Death registration report form B
  - Coroner's report
  - Medical certificate of cause of death
  - Burial permit
  - Death certificate
  - Register of deaths
  - Mortuary registration cards

- Supporting documents for legal declaration**
- Medical certificate of cause of death
  - Coroner's Certificate together with Police Report
  - Affidavits from a high court sworn by the head of an and another sworn jointly by Head and two principal members of the family of the deceased
  - Witnesses from the police station who attended the burial service
  - Witnesses from the person who gave the grain space
  - If the deceased lived in a rented house/apartment, the owner should provide a sworn affidavit



Complete person's report form B  
Death registration work for pre-registration

Lack of BDR in the community long waiting list/none

Unrecorded burials do not record documentation

No motivation to refer the family to perform documentation

Citizens outflow the process when they need the documents

Lack of understanding of the importance of registering

Staff not enthusiastic across the other sub-process

Complete person's report form B of obtaining incomplete documents before citizens

No understanding of the formal process or the importance of the process

Death is a sensitive issue which requires courtesy. As a result, informants do not report a death

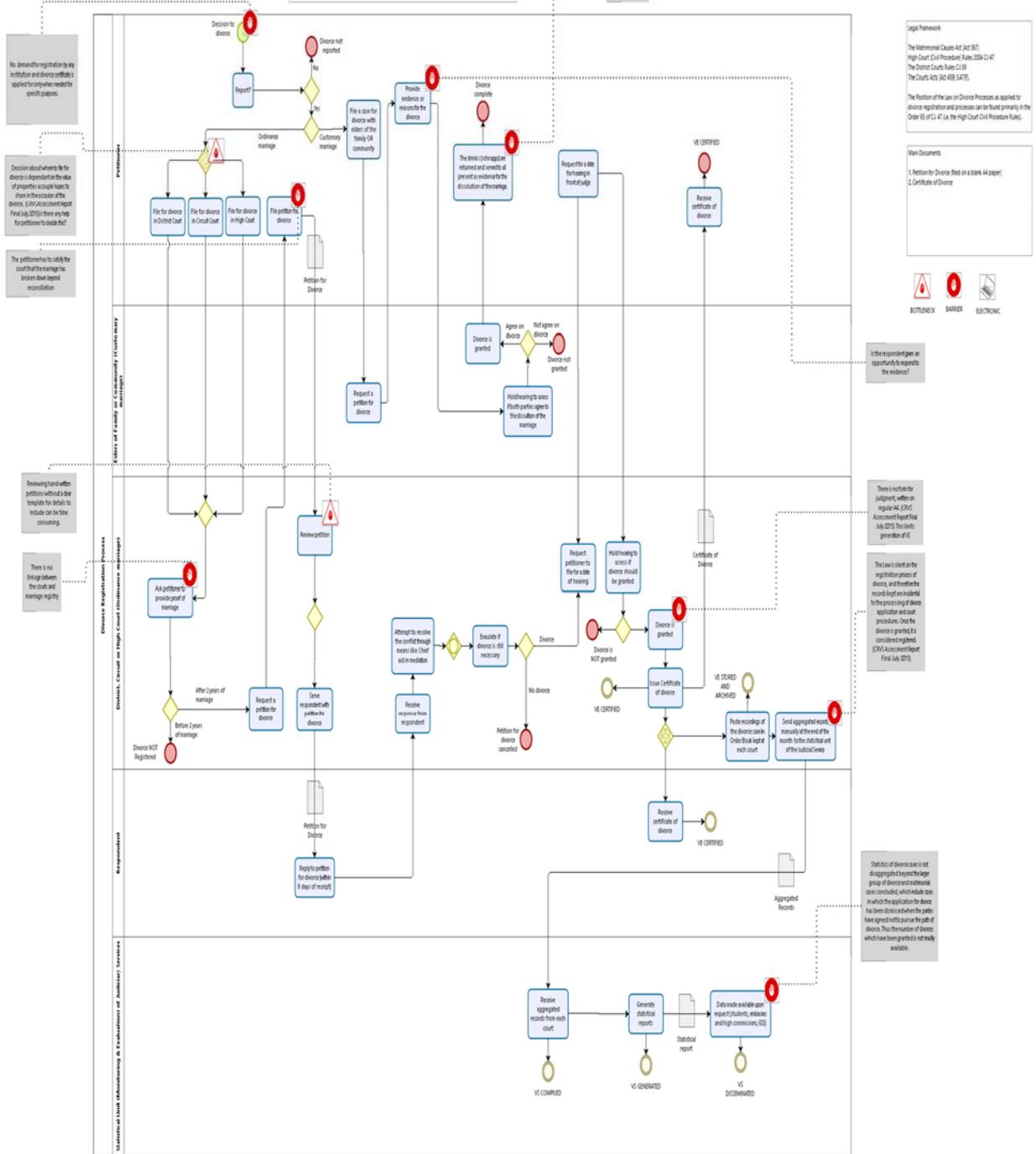
Long distance to travel

Unrecorded burials do not follow traditional practices

Burial rights have occurred in different districts. Long waiting list/none



# Ghana Divorce Registration As-Is Process

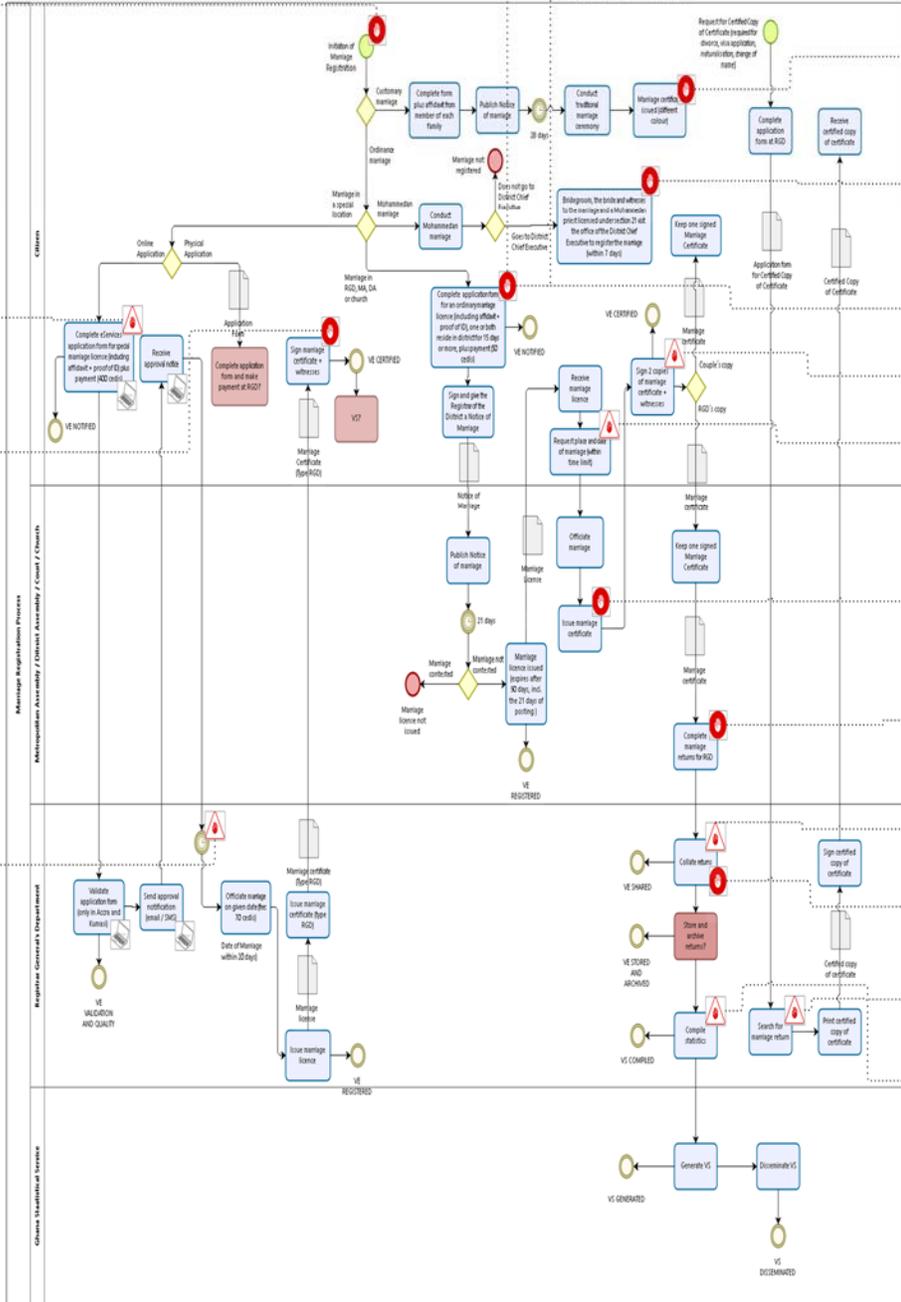


# Ghana - Marriage Registration As-Is Process

Very little public knowledge about how and why to register a marriage

High cost of online application for marriage in a specification could be a deterrent for many citizens to register

Special license is only used by RGD, MA and DA. How do citizens in the rest of the country access the service?



What is considered as a marriage? (It's anyone who takes away their shirt from their chest)

Process is not well understood. Marriage license can be obtained at Metropolitan Assembly / District Assembly / Church but often church option is not well known.

- LEGAL FRAMEWORK**
1. Marriage Act 1984 (Act 103)
  2. PDCC, 2013 of 1991 (Customary Marriage)
  3. Part one of the Marriage Act, Sections 1 to 18, Section 7 of Cap 127 (Customary Marriage)
  4. Marriage of Mohammedans Ordinance 1967

- MAIN DOCUMENTS**
1. Application Form
  2. Notice of Marriage
  3. Marriage Certificate (Customary Marriage)
  4. Marriage Certificate (Customary Marriage)
  5. Certified Copy of Certificate

No reporting process to RGD

This flow is considered not feasible or responsible. Muslims and need a witness. People are not aware with Law is applied to the part region.

Only 130 of 16 districts are mandated to issue marriage and issue register's certificate

Time consuming to sign 2 copies of marriage certificates

From who to sign and date of marriage requested?

Marriage certificate books are bought by the Metropolitan Assembly. Unauthorized parties - certificates are not authentic. No indication of where have been printed.

Returns often not completed. This is because given marriage certificate are bought (single)

Back log of returns speed into Metropolitan Assembly. Data are not being compiled to keep track of performance within the system.

Not required and not done consistently

Compiling statistics is a very time consuming process if done manually

Potentially time consuming if this is done manually. There are considerations with Judiciary Services?

