

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
Pursuant to P.A. 114 of 2009
Section 418(2)
Process Maintained with MDCH to Obtain Birth Certificates

The Department of Community Health (DCH) and the Department of Corrections (DOC) agreed on a process which allows prisoners through a central point of contact within the DOC and the DCH to obtain copies of their birth certificates. A Director's Office Memorandum was issued on May 1, 2008. On May 16, 2008 instructions for processing birth certificate applications were issued to all Wardens and Regional Business Managers. Following is a general synopsis of how the process is completed.

Prisoners arriving at the reception centers are asked whether they have birth certificates, driver's licenses, social security cards, etc. and advised the Department will store these documents for them during their incarceration. If they do not have a birth certificate, staff assists the prisoner in completing an application for obtaining one through the DCH's Vital Records Division. The Department loans prisoners the funds for the applications if they do not have sufficient funds in their account (\$26 in most cases).

The staff member who assists the prisoner with the application for a birth certificate sends the completed application to the Central Records Division in Jackson for processing to the DCH. The functions for this position include verification of true identity through comparison with available records, i.e., LEIN and DOC files. The applications are batched and sent to the central point at DCH for processing.

A central position was established in the DOC to work with the DCH Vital Records Division to verify any information provided to DCH as well as coordinate any questions between prisoners, DOC and DCH staff.

In addition to inquiries for identification and assistance with applications at reception centers, DOC staff question the prisoner again at the time of the Parole Eligibility Report which occurs approximately 7 months before the minimum release date. Staff assists with the application process and the Department loans funds for this purpose. The Parole and Commutation Board is advised as part of the parole eligibility reporting process whether the prisoner has obtained his or her birth certificate and other identification.