

Birth certificates and source documents

Birth Registrations

Under the [Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationships Registration Act 1995](#) (Act) every birth in New Zealand is to be registered with the exception of miscarriages. That means all live-births and still-births must be registered, but that miscarriages cannot be registered. The definitions of birth, still-birth and miscarriage are in section 2 of the Act.

Can I access the original source document?

Source documents (for example, birth notices) relating to birth, death and marriage registrations are held by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department). A person who applies under section 74 of the Act may obtain a **copy** of the source document. Section 75 of the Act (as referred to by section 74) provides the strict conditions under which a copy of a source document may be given. The original source document will sometimes be retained by the Department and for varying lengths of time.

Birth certificate as an identification document

A New Zealand Birth Certificate is an official document containing registered information about a person's birth as at the date of issue. A birth certificate can only be used as evidence that an identity exists. The birth certificate should not be used as the sole form of evidence for asserting an individual's identity, as it does not provide any link to the person presenting it.

Reference number on the back of birth certificates

The paper that is used for the printing of birth certificates has a reference number on the back of it. That reference number is used internally by the Department for operational purposes only and is not used for any other purpose. The reference number is not shared outside the Department with any private organisation or public agency.

Birth Certificates and Bonds

False theories (sometimes known as the Sovereign movement or Freeman of the Land movement) have appeared on the internet that there is a link between New Zealand birth certificates and financial corporations. There is no link between New Zealand birth certificates and financial corporations. Please note that the Department fulfils its obligations under the Births, Deaths, Marriages and Relationships Registration Act 1995.