

Completing Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP) forms

Helpful hints for hospital and birthing facility staff

Many mistakes made on AOP forms are easily avoidable and can be eliminated by taking a few moments to check for accuracy and completeness before walking away from the mother's room. Following these helpful hints will reduce the number of invalid forms and help the Center for Health Statistics add the father's name on the birth record as quickly as possible.

- 1. Use the correct form.** Only forms dated after 01/16 should be used. All AOP forms dated prior to 01/16 should be shredded. The old forms do not comply with new law and cannot be used as backups.

There are two versions of the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity form: one that can only be completed at a hospital or licensed birthing facility (45-31) and one that can be completed at any time after the birth occurs (45-21).

- Use form 45-31 when completed and signed in a hospital or licensed birthing facility, in front of a facility witness. **The 45-31 form may only be used while the mother is a patient of the facility where she gave birth, and within 5 days from the date of birth.**
 - Form 45-21 should only be used when completed outside a hospital or birthing facility or longer than 5 days after the date of birth. The 45-21 form must be signed before a notary.
- 2. Ensure parents have listened to the Rights and Responsibilities.** Parents who are signing the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity (45-31) form must listen to the Rights and Responsibilities found on the back of the form.
 - 3. Ensure parents meet all criteria.** Parents must meet all criteria specified at the top of the form.
 - 4. Check names on the AOP and make sure they match the names on the birth record.** The child's, mother's and father's names on the AOP form must exactly match the names on the birth record. Putting different parent names on the AOP form will not change the names on the birth record.
 - 5. Check for alterations.** It is best not change or alter information on forms. If necessary, minor corrections can be made by crossing out information and writing in

different information and initialing the change. Only the person filling out their own section may make corrections to their information. Dates that appear to be overwritten will be rejected unless the change is initialed by the person signing that section. Please remember this is a legal form and it cannot be altered once it is filled out. Remind parents that the form must be completed again if they make mistakes.

- 6. Handwrite names and dates in acknowledgement sections.** Parents must print their own names, sign their own names, and enter the date in their own handwriting in the acknowledgment section of the forms. Signature dates should never be typed.
- 7. Match signature and witness dates.** The hospital witness names and dates may be different for the mother and the father, but the “Date signed” and “Date witnessed” must be the same for the Mother and her witness, and the same for the Father and his witness.
- 8. Handwrite names and dates in witness sections.** Hospital witnesses must sign and print their own names, and enter the date witnessed in their own handwriting.
- 9. Send the form.** Hospitals and licensed birthing facilities are required to send the AOP form within 14 days of the birth. Please send completed paternity forms to the Center for Health Statistics office as soon as you can. The sooner we get the form, the faster we are able to register the birth record.

The Center for Health Statistics provides postage-paid envelopes for mailing the forms. To order envelopes and forms, complete the order form available on our website at <http://bit.ly/form45-43> and fax it to 971-673-1201.

If you are in need of additional assistance or would like training regarding the process of filling out this paperwork or filing with the vital records office, please call the Paternity Specialist at 971-673-1155, or the Vital Records Field Liaison at 971-673-1166. If either you or the family has questions regarding child support or other issues relating to child support, contact your local state Division of Child Support office. Collect calls are accepted when calling child support offices.

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