

ServiceOntario

Office of the Registrar  
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Bureau du registraire général de  
l'état civil

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To: Ontario Division Registrars and Marriage Licence Issuers

From: Alexandra Schmidt  
Deputy Registrar General

Date: March 25, 2020

Re: Pandemic Planning and Division Registrar Responsibilities

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) characterized the coronavirus (COVID-19) as a pandemic. As the situation continues to evolve, the health and safety of our staff, partners and the public remains our top priority. We would like to assure you that the Office of the Registrar General has contingency plans in place, and we remain ready to respond and adjust our operations. Please know that we are here to support your office during these challenging times.

As part of your municipality's pandemic planning, we would like you to know that we are here to support you so that you are able to continue to fulfil your legal requirements under the Vital Statistics Act and Marriage Act – primarily for registering deaths/stillbirths and issuing burial permits; and for issuing marriage licences.

**Registering Deaths/Stillbirths and Issuing Burial Permits:**

Division registrars may wish to exercise their authority under subsection 38(3) of the Vital Statistics Act and appoint sub-registrars for the issuance of burial permits and assist with fulfilling duties required under the VSA.

You may also wish to consider setting up an appointment system should your office close to the public but remain open for the specific purpose of registering deaths/stillbirths and issuing burial permits. Keeping funeral homes apprised of any changes to your operations will also ensure registrations are processed in a timely manner.

**Issuing Marriage Licences:**

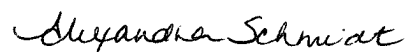
Clerks may wish to exercise their authority under subsection 11(3) of the Marriage Act and appoint deputy issuers to assist them with issuing marriage licences.

As well, we are exploring options with respect to issues that may occur as a result of the three-month validity period for marriage licences.

If your office does plan on closing or there is an unexpected closure, please let us know immediately so that we can work together to adjust our operations as needed.

Thank you in advance for your continued cooperation. If you have any questions or require clarification regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact our dedicated division registrar helpline at: 1-807-343-7431 or Debbie Hyatt, Operations Manager at: [Debbie.Hyatt@ontario.ca](mailto:Debbie.Hyatt@ontario.ca).

Sincerely,



Alexandra Schmidt  
Deputy Registrar General  
Office of the Registrar General