



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC  
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY

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President's Office

No. 21/PO

**DECREE**  
*of the*  
**PRESIDENT**  
*of the*  
**LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

**On the Promulgation of the Law on Family Registration**

Pursuant to Article 53, point 1 of the Constitution of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; and

Pursuant to Resolution No. 03/PSA, dated 30 December 1991, of the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the second legislature of the People's Supreme Assembly regarding the adoption of the Law on Family Registration.

**The President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic  
Decrees That:**

- Article 1.** The Law on Family Registration is hereby promulgated.
- Article 2.** This decree shall enter into force on the date it is signed.

Vientiane, 6 April 1992  
President of the Lao People's  
Democratic Republic

*[Seal & Signature]*

Kaysone PHOMVIHAN



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC  
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY

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People's Supreme Assembly

No. 03/PSA  
30 December 1991

## **FAMILY REGISTRATION LAW**

### **Chapter 1 General Principles**

#### **Article 1. Function of the Family Registration Law**

The Family Registration Law has the function to define regulations relating to the registration of family books, births, disappearances, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, acknowledgments of paternity, changes in first name or surname, changes in residence, and the building or dismantling of homes, in order to facilitate State agencies in their administration of citizens and to ensure security and public order.

#### **Article 2. Family Registration**

Family registration shall be conducted at the district family registration office. After [a person] has received a certificate of family registration, [that person] must notify his village head.

Resident aliens, foreign individuals and apatrids<sup>1</sup> who are in the Lao People's Democratic Republic must adhere to this law.

#### **Article 3. Applications for Family Registration**

Applications for family registration shall be filed with a district family registration official, with the village head being responsible [for such filing]. The application must state a purpose and reason and must be signed by the applicant.

The filing of an application for family registration shall adhere to the regulations regarding family registration, which the relevant agency has issued.

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<sup>1</sup> Readers may wish to refer to the Law on Lao Nationality for the distinction between aliens, apatrids (i.e. persons unable to certify their nationality and foreign individuals).

**Article 4. Regulations for Family Registration and Family Registration Book**

Family registration must be made in the presence of family registration officials and must be recorded in the family registration book and, thereafter, the applicant and the family registration official [must] together sign the registration book.

After having registered a family, the family registration official must issue a certificate to the relevant individual to hold as evidence.

Modifications to family registration, cancellations of family registration, the form of the certificate of family registration, and regulations and time schedules for the maintenance of the family registration book shall adhere to the regulations of the relevant agency.

**Article 5. Modifications, Cancellations and Objections to Family Registration**

If it appears that a family registration is incorrect, the concerned individual is entitled to make a claim against the family registration official where that person resides.

In the event that a family registration official does not consider [the claim] according to the request, the concerned individual has the right to make a claim in court.

If it appears that a family registration is incorrect, a person who has related rights and interests is entitled to object to that registration.

If there is any objection to a family registration, paragraphs 1 and 2 of this article shall apply.

If a family registration official is of the view that the family registration is incorrect, it can be modified or cancelled. If the person requesting the registration does not agree, then the matter shall be submitted to a court for adjudication.

**Article 6. Fees for Family Registration**

The registration of family books, births, disappearances, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, acknowledgments of paternity, changes in residence and changes in first name and surname shall be subject to fees as provided in the regulations.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Types of Family Registration**

#### **Article 7. Family Book Registration**

The district family registration official must make a family registration for each house within the area of his authority and must hand over a family registration book to the head of each household for its safekeeping.

Each village head must have a record book of family books.

It is prohibited to allow any person other than a district family registration official to change, amend, or modify a family registration book.

#### **Article 8. Building or Dismantling Houses**

To facilitate administration, individuals who build or dismantle their own houses must notify the village head from the date of building or dismantling.

#### **Article 9. Registration of Births**

When a child is born in one's home, the head of household or a representative is to notify the village head.

For a child born in other places, the mother or father is to notify the head of the village where that child was born or where notification can be made.

In the event that the father or mother is ailing and unable to make the notification himself or herself, or [in the event that] the mother or father has died, relatives and neighbours where that child was born, or some other individual, can make the notification on their behalf.

The time period for notification of births shall not exceed 30 days from the date the child is born.

Any individual who discovers a newborn and abandoned child shall quickly notify the village head or a police officer in the area where that child was discovered.

When the village head has received notification of a newborn child, he shall issue a birth certificate as evidence in order that the applicant can then register the birth with the family registration official within 30 days from the date that the certificate of birth is received.

## **Article 10. Registration of Disappearances**

Registration of those who have been adjudicated as having disappeared shall be done at the family registration office where the applicant resides within 30 days from the date that the court has issued a decision.

## **Article 11. Registration of Deaths**

If anyone dies in one's home, [the homeowner] must notify the village head.

If anyone discovers a corpse, that person must immediately notify the village head or a police officer where that corpse was discovered.

Any person who treats injured<sup>2</sup> persons or who is a midwife as an occupation must, when an injured person or a newborn child dies, issue a death certificate.

Upon being notified of a death, the village head must issue a death certificate as evidence, except if the cause of death was unclear or the death was due to a dangerous epidemic disease. In such cases, a public health official or a police officer must be urgently notified and the issuance of the death certificate shall be suspended until that official's opinion is received.

After having received a death certificate, the death must be registered with a family registration official within 30 days.

Registration of those who have been adjudicated and declared to be dead shall be done at the family registration office where the applicant resides within 30 days from the date of the court's decision.

## **Article 12. Registration of Marriages**

Marriages shall be registered at the family registration office where the residence of the couple or of either party is, or where the residence of the parents of the couple or of either party is.

Couples seeking to marry one another must make a written application and file it with the family registration official as provided in the paragraph above.

Applications for marriage may not conflict with the Family Law, specifically Article 9 and Article 10. The application must state whether or not either person has had children.

Family registration officials must consider marriage applications [within a period] not to exceed 30 days from the date of receiving the application.

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<sup>2</sup> The Lao term is wider than the English term and includes persons who are ill.

If it appears that the couple meets all of the conditions, the family registration official shall summon the couple to register their marriage in the presence of three witnesses, and will hand over the marriage certificate to the husband and wife [to serve] as evidence. [The family registration official shall] also explain to the couple their rights and obligations arising after the registration of their marriage.

#### **Article 13. Registration of Divorces**

Divorces are registered at the family registration office where the husband and wife reside or where either of them resides according to a court decision.

After a court has issued a divorce decree, the court must issue the final decision in two copies and send one copy to the family registration official to register the divorce and then to issue a divorce certificate to the husband and wife, each receiving one copy.

Before any man or woman so divorced can be registered as newly married, [he or she] must first have obtained a divorce registration certificate.

#### **Article 14. Registration of Adoptions**

Adoptions are registered at the family registration office where the village head issues his approval for the adoption.

After the village head issues his approval for the adoption, it must be sent to the family registration official for registration within 30 days, and thereafter an adoption certificate is to be issued to the adoptive parents.

If an adoption is modified or terminated by a court decision, the family registration officials must change the family registration to comply with the court decision.

#### **Article 15. Registration of Acknowledgments of Paternity**

Acknowledgments of paternity are registered at the family registration office where the child's mother or father resides or where the court issues a decision regarding an acknowledgment of paternity.

The registration of an acknowledgment of paternity must adhere to the court decision or be in compliance with the parents'<sup>3</sup> request or with the request of the father in the event of the mother's death or lack of legal capacity, or in the event that the court has decided to terminate the mother's maternal rights or the mother cannot be located.

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<sup>3</sup> The literal translation is "the father's and mother's".

In registering an acknowledgment of paternity, the family registration official must refer to evidence that substantiates that paternity.

**Article 16. Registration of Changes in First Name and Surname**

Changes in the first name or surname of those who have reached the age of majority are registered at the family registration office where the applicant resides.

The registration of change of first name of a minor child must be applied for by the father or mother of that child.

A change to the surname of both the mother and father shall cause the surname of a minor child to change as well.

If there is a change to the surname of either the mother or the father only, the change [to the surname] of the minor child shall be subject to the agreement of the mother and father. In the event that an agreement cannot be reached, a court decision shall govern.

When the registration of a change of first name or surname involves other types of registration, the family registration official must cancel the old certificate(s) and issue new certificate(s) consistent with the new name and surname.

**Article 17. Registration of Changes in Residence**

When a member of one's family moves to another residence, the head of the household is to notify the village head within 3 days from the date of that move.

For a move of the entire family, advance notice of seven days must be given.

After moving to the new residence, [the family moving] must notify the village head within twenty-four hours from the date of arrival to make a new family registration book.

**Article 18. Collecting, Burying, Cremating or Moving Corpses**

Any person who collects, buries, cremates, or moves a corpse from a house or from the place where death occurred must first receive approval from a village head, except in necessary and urgent cases relating to public safety and security or social welfare of the public, in which case the village head must nevertheless be notified.

The collection, burial, cremation, or movement of the corpse must be done according to the contents of that approval.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Family Registration Organisation**

#### **Article 19. Family Registration Organisation**

The family registration organisation at the central level is subject to the Ministry of the Interior<sup>4</sup>. At the provincial or prefecture level, it is subject to the provincial governor or the prefecture mayor. At the district level, it is subject to the district chief.

Lao diplomatic or consular officials posted abroad whom the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has appointed as responsible for family registration tasks have the duty to conduct various types of registration for Lao nationals abroad in accordance with the laws.

#### **Article 20. Duties of the Family Registration Organisation**

The family registration organisation has the duty to administer citizens and family registration for political and economic [stability], and for security, peace and public order. For the above purposes, the family registration organisation has the duty: to register family registration books, births, disappearances, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, changes of first name and surname, changes in residence, as well as modifications, amendments, and cancellations of family registrations; to issue new certificates in the event that old certificates are lost; to maintain the record of family registration books; to issue family registration certificates; and to monitor and inspect family registrations.

#### **Article 21. Inspection of the Registration of Family Registration Books**

In order to ensure proper administration of the citizenry and of family registration, the registration of family registration books in localities and throughout the country must be inspected, but there must be a governmental order or an order from an agency empowered by the government.

Before there can be an inspection, family registration officials or those so empowered by family registration officials must notify the village head and must present a card or a letter confirming their official status and an order for inspection to the head of the household or his representative.

The head of the household or representative of each household must cooperate with the family registration official entering his home for inspection, must answer questions truthfully, and must also sign the inspection report in order to certify items inspected.

Family registration officials or those empowered by family registration officials must sign such inspection reports.

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<sup>4</sup> This ministry has since been renamed the Ministry of Security.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Measures Against Violators**

#### **Article 22. Measures Against Violators**

Any individual who does not cooperate with family registration officials, such as: does not appear according to a summons, refuses to tell or hides the truth, does not give evidence, obstructs officials, and others<sup>5</sup>, shall be fined from 1,000 Kip to 3,000 Kip or shall be punished according to the Penal Law.

Family registration officials who conduct their undertakings in conflict with the laws shall be punished in accordance with the laws.

This law was adopted by the unanimous decision of the full session of the People's Supreme Assembly in Session No. 7 of the second legislature of the People's Supreme Assembly on 30 December 1991 at 15.30 hours.

Vientiane, 30 December 1991  
President of the People's Supreme  
Assembly

*[Seal and Signature]*

Nouhak PHOUMSAVANH

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<sup>5</sup> The term "and others" is a literal translation and is not subject to further specificity.