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Policy FAQs

Q: What is VRIRSA?

A: VRIRSA is the Vital Records Image Redaction and Statewide Access system. The system was designed and will be implemented pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 247 (Chap. 914, Stats. of 2002). Among other things, SB 247 established specific requirements for persons authorized to obtain certified copies of birth and death records. Those who are unable to meet the requirements for regular certified copies may only obtain informational copies that are marked "INFORMATIONAL, NOT A VAILD DOCUMENT TO ESTABLISH IDENTITY." SB 247 requires that the informational copies be printed from the statewide database and be electronically redacted to remove any signatures.

Q: Can a county choose to not participate in VRIRSA?

A: No. Participation is mandatory. SB 247 requires that informational copies be printed only from the statewide database. "Local registrars and county recorders shall not issue informational copies from any source other than the statewide database prepared by the State Registrar" (Health and Safety Code, Section 103526(f)). The only exceptions to this requirement are for records that pre-date the current automation efforts.

Q: What years will be available in VRIRSA?

A: Initially, only birth certificates from 1985 to the present and death certificates from 1996 to the present will be available through VRIRSA. The State is in the process of digitizing all back records and will announce the release of the records as soon are they are available in VRIRSA. These records are being processed in yearly batches and will be released on a flow basis.

Q: How soon will recent birth and death records be available in VRIRSA?

A: Current birth and death records are processed as quickly as possible once they reach the State office. Typically, there is a 30 to 90-day delay before new records are added to the production imaging system. This timeframe will be different for each county depending on a number of factors, including the number of records submitted, local processing times for shipping records to the State office, and participation in the State's automated birth and death registration systems.

Q: How long will it take to retrieve a document from VRIRSA?

A: Depending on various scenarios determines how long you will need to wait for your requested document. Let's take a look at these scenarios:

1) If.your requested document is already in the VRIRSA database and there are no issues or system problems then you should receive your document within an hour.
2) If.your requested document is already in the VRIRSA database and there are issues or system problems then we will try to correct the anomaly so that you can receive your document within 8 hours.
3) If your requested document is not in the VRIRSA database but is in the State's Image Repository System (FileNet) and does not need physical intervention (QA or Manual Redaction) then you should receive your document within 2 hours.
4) If your requested document is in the States Image Repository System but requires physical intervention then you should receive your document within 24 hours, unless it is the Thursday before Furlough Friday we will try to accommodate your request no later than close of business..

5) If a document is not in the State's Image Repository System and not in the VRIRSA database then it will take time to research to find out where this document is located or if it exists at the State at all. See "How soon will recent birth and death records be available in VRIRSA?" section for normal processing timeframe.

6) Although contingencies do exist it is unclear what they may be but we will try to resolve so that the Counties can retrieve their requested document within 24 hours.

Q: What if a recent record is not found in VRIRSA but is located in a County's records, can the record be issued by the County?

A: If county staff cannot locate a record in VRIRSA but have a copy in their own office and the date of event (date of birth or date of death) for the requested record is less than 61 days from the date of request, the county may issue the record.

Q: What if a record is not found in VRIRSA but is located in a County's records?

A: If county staff cannot locate a record in VRIRSA but have a copy in their own office, a query must be made to the State Office of Vital Records to establish the validity of the record before a copy may be issued. This is best done through use of the helpdesk ticketing system in VRIRSA. By law, all informational copies of birth and death certificates must be printed from VRIRSA. The only exceptions are for records that pre-date the current automation efforts or records that, for some reason, are not found in the State's database although they have been registered locally.

Q: Do we need to redact records that come from the County but are not issued out of VRIRSA?

A: Manual redaction is not required for records that predate the range of records currently in VRIRSA. However, informational copies must still contain the legend "INFORMATIONAL, NOT A VAILD DOCUMENT TO ESTABLISH IDENTITY."

Q: How do we report fees for certificates issued out of VRIRSA?

A: Continue reporting and remitting fees to the State in the usual manner. VRIRSA will not replace the established fee reporting process currently in place.

Q: Who do I contact if I have additional questions or need help using VRIRSA?

A: Please contact the VRIRSA support staff:

- by email at VRIRSASupport@cdph.ca.gov
- by phone at (916) 322-2306
- through the VRIRSA application, by creating a Help Desk ticket.

When you contacting us please include a brief description of your issue or request in your message. The support desk will be available from Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm (excluding State holidays and Furlough Fridays).

Q: When should I contact the VRIRSA Support Team, using email verses a phone call and/or Help Desk Ticket?

A: The best approach to contact the VRIRSA Support Team depends upon the type of question or issue. Refer to the table below as a guide in contacting the VRIRSA Support Team. When contacting the

VRIRSA Support Team be sure to provide a brief description of the issue to assist the team with trouble-shooting.

VRIRSA SUPPORT TEAM CONTACT GUIDELINES		
	ISSUE	**CONTACT MODE**
1.	**PASSWORD ISSUES** • Help in changing password • Reset password • Unlock record	Phone or email Email Email
2.	**MISSING RECORD(S)** • Contact Policy or VRIRSA to bring record into VRIRSA with identifying information	Email
3.	**IMPROPER DISPLAY OF DOCUMENT** • Blank document • Missing information from document • Image does not show • Redaction not working properly, email document	Phone or email Phone or email Phone Email
4.	**DATA ENTRY ERROR** • Misspellings in meta data fields in the Workflow screen • Incorrect County	Email Email
5.	**JAVA RUNTIME MESSAGE** • May receive a Java message, email message	Email
6.	**SLOW CONNECTION** • Slow to display search result • Takes a long time to log into VRIRSA	Phone Phone
7.	**NO CONNECTION TO VRIRSA** • May receive a “No Connection Found” message, email message	Phone or email
8.	**MINI REFRESHER COURSE IN HOW TO USE VRIRSA** • May try to open document in incorrect manner	Phone or email
9.	**DOCUMENT STATUS SHOWS LOW OR MEDIUM CONFIDENCE** • Person waiting at counter for document • Haven’t received document for more than 24 hours	Phone Phone or email

System FAQs

Q: What are the minimum system requirements?

A: The VRIRSA system is compatible with:

- Windows 2000, XP, or Vista
- Internet Explorer 6 or higher
- Internet Access (Dial-up not recommended because it would be too slow)

*Note: If you are unsure how to check for these items on your office personal computer (PC), contact your office Information Technology (IT) help desk support to verify for you.

Q: How should I setup my office PC Internet Browser configurations?

A: Your Internet Browser configurations should be setup to:

- Allow pop-ups for the VRIRSA site for program functionality.
- Allow ActiveX download (when printing documents for the first time). This enables the applet for the image viewer to download and display the document.
- Allow usage of Java

*Note: If you are unsure how to check for these items on your office PC, contact your office IT help desk support to verify and setup for you.

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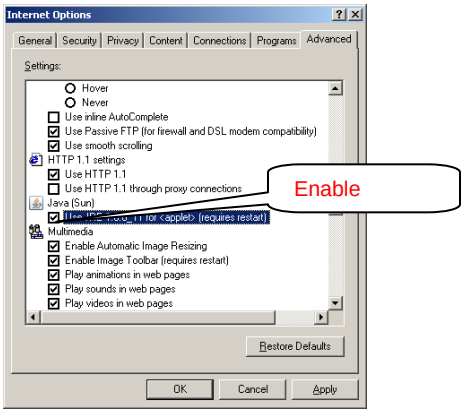


Q: What Java Runtime Environment (JRE) version should I have on my office PC?

A: Version 1.42 or newer.

Q: Where can I get the Java Runtime Environment (JRE) to download on to my office PC?

A: Please coordinate with your office IT help desk support. JRE can be downloaded at the following link: http://java.com/en/download/manual.jsp

Q: How can I get VRIRSA system training?

A: VRIRSA computer-based on line training (CBT) can be downloaded from the following VRIRSA web site:
http://www.cdph.ca.gov/data/informatics/tech/Pages/VRIRSA.aspx
Please click the above link and go to 'VRIRSA Online Training (CBT)'.

Q: How can I check the status of the VRIRSA system?

A: The VRIRSA landing page (a.k.a. VRIRSA logon page) displays the current status of the VRIRSA system. Broadcast messages are displayed in the box area on this page.

Q: What is a VTN?

A: VTN is an acronym used in the VRIRSA system which stands for VRIRSA Transaction Number (VTN). This is a unique identification number used for document tracking purposes. Refer to page 9 of the User Manual for more information.

Q: Will I see all of my records if I search by name?

A: You can use any of the name fields to perform a search. It will retrieve all records that are tied to the Sate File Number (SFN). If there was a court ordered name change and you only searched for the name that is on the original record, not the amendment; it will find the amendment as well. No need to know the LRN or SFN as in the past.

Q: Can I use the old California code to do a search?

A: Old California codes have a '04' after the certificate type of "1" for birth and "3" for death. On old certificates that has this code in the SFN area it will automatically be changed to "05" on the search field. Ex: Enter 1041975123456 on the SFN field for a search, when the record is found you will notice that it was changed to 1051975123456.

Q: How do I submit a VRIRSA document request?

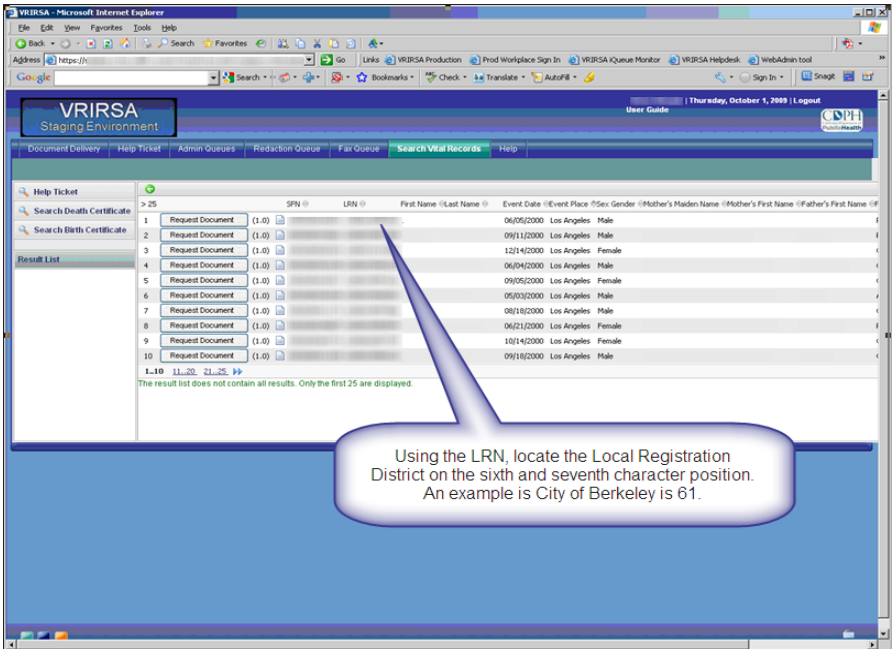
A: After you have completed your search and found the record that matches the client's search criteria, press the "Request Document" button located on the same line as your matching search criteria and click the button once. This will submit the selected document for redaction.

Note: Clicking the button more than once will submit that many more requests, so just click once.

The following question is only applicable to Alameda and Los Angeles counties and their jurisdictional Local Registration District (LRD). The ability for a county recorder to directly request a local registrar's record(s) became available October 2009.

Q: How does an Alameda or Los Angeles County Recorder user submit and retrieve a birth or death document within their jurisdictional LRD?

A: Perform a search by entering all of the essential search criteria; select your jurisdictional county from the event place drop-down list on the birth or death certificate search screen. To recognize an LRD document from the result list, look at the sixth and seventh character on the Local Registration Number (LRN). If the number is 61 then it represents City of Berkeley, 62 represents Long Beach, and 63 represents Pasadena. To retrieve your document, then press the "Request Document" button once to receive a VTN and submit your selection for redaction.

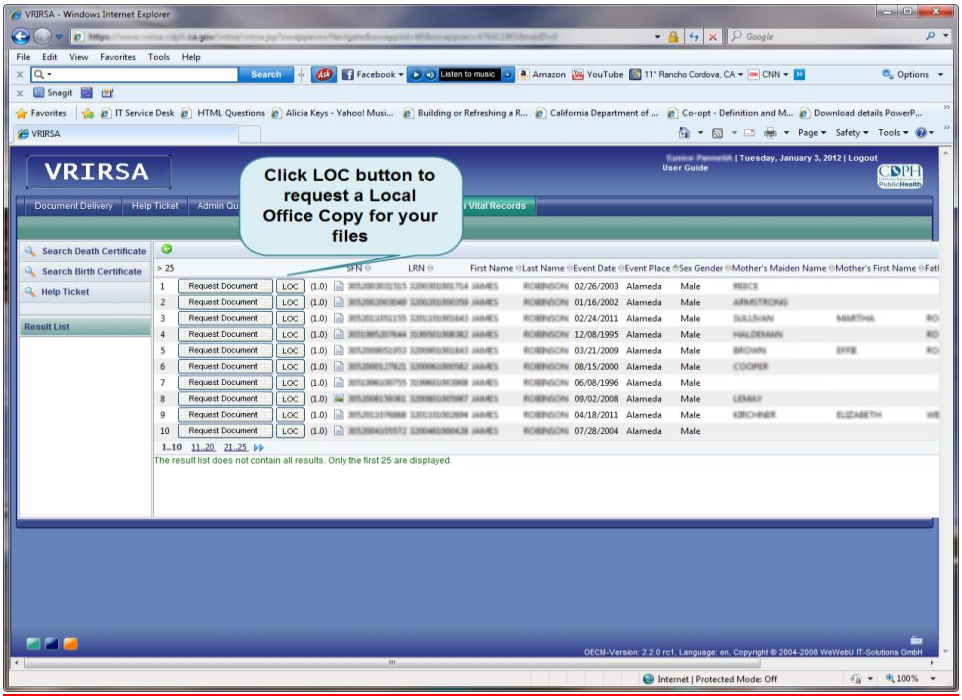


Q: How can I request a document that has an old county code?

A: Perform a search to bring up the document containing the older county code in the LRN with the sixth and seventh character being either the number 60 for Alameda, 70 for Los Angeles, 80 for San Diego, or 90 for San Francisco. You must reside in this jurisdictional county to be able to request your document. To retrieve your document, press the “Request Document” or “LOC” button once to receive a VTN and submit your selection for redaction.

Q: How can I get a Local Office Copy (LOC)?

A: There is no need to contact the State to get a LOC. When you perform your search you will see two buttons to request a document (Request Document and LOC). Click the LOC button then print out your document to place in your files.



Q: How do I complete a VRIRSA document request?

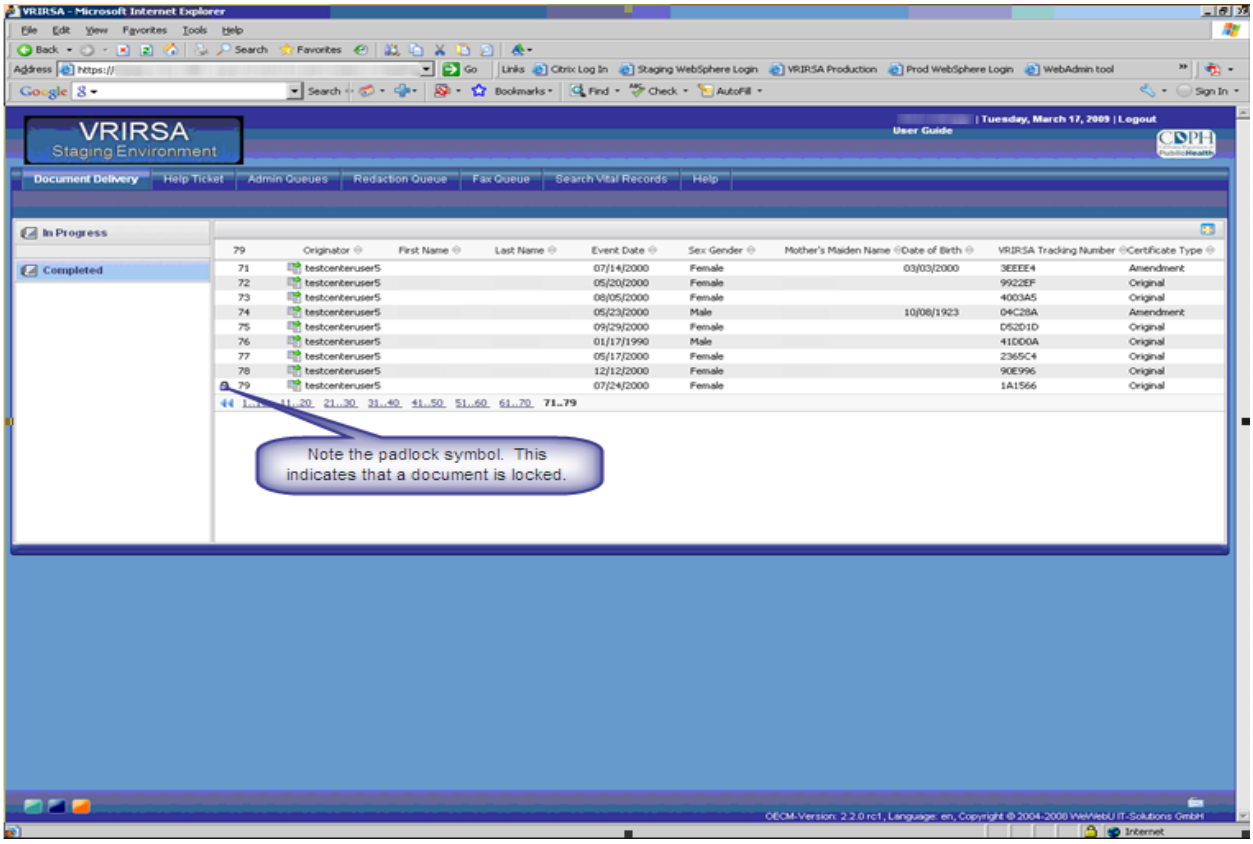
A: Once a document is printed and meets your expectations, accept the document by pressing the “Yes” button. Refer to page 8 of the User Manual for more information.

Q: How do I cancel a VRIRSA document request?

A: If you determine that the VRIRSA document request was made in error or is no longer needed, the request can be canceled by selecting the drop down option of “Cancel” and then clicking on the “Complete” button.

Q: What is a locked document?

A: A document becomes locked when a user exits the VRIRSA system improperly while viewing the document. When a document is locked a padlock symbol appears next to the document as shown in the image below.



Q: How do I unlock a locked document?

A: First you need to determine who locked the document. To do this, click on the padlock symbol of the locked document, this will display the user who has locked the document.

- If you locked the document, you can unlock it by clicking on the padlock symbol to release the document (refer to image below).
- If the document was locked by another user, you can contact;
  - the user to release the document, or contact
  - the support staff at VRIRSASupport@cdph.ca.gov or by phone at (916) 322-2306. When contacting VRIRSA Support, include the VTN (VRIRSA transaction number) of the document and the SFN (State File Number).

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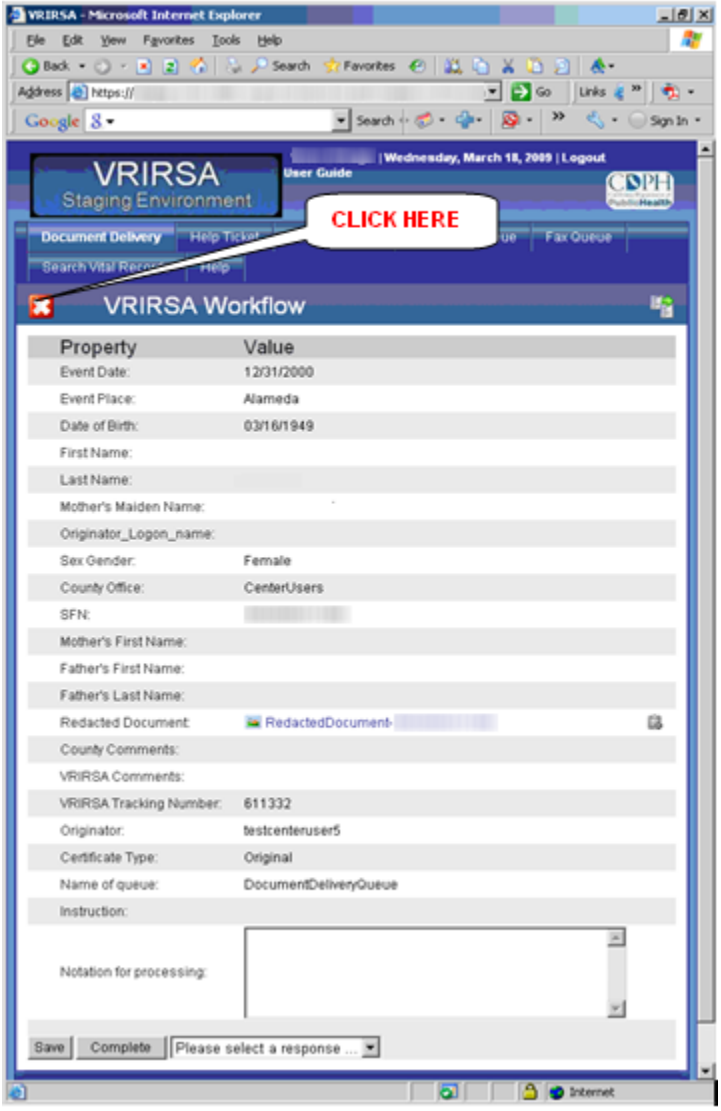
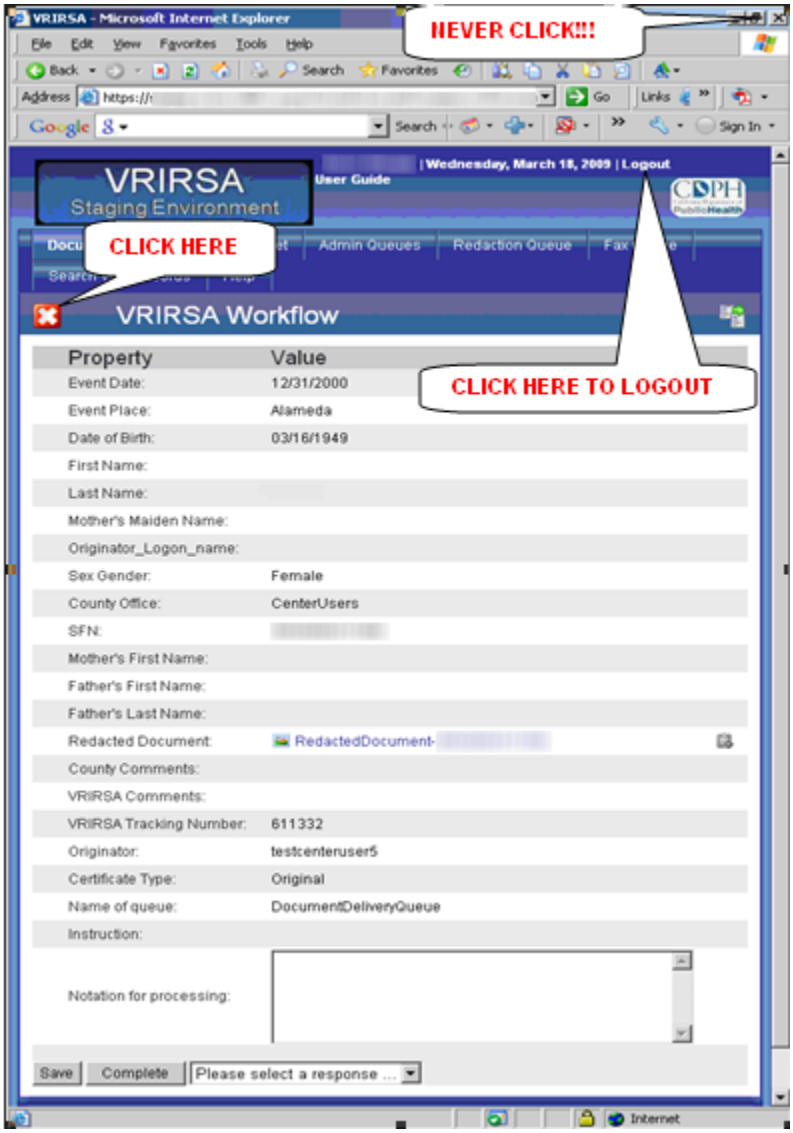


Q: How do I properly exit the VRIRSA system?

A: To properly exit the VRIRSA system, click the Red X button and then click on logout. Never use the exit button on the upper right corner of the browser window to exit the VRIRSA system.



Q: How long will my request remain in the completed queue, if I do not properly exit the VRIRSA system?

A: Completed requests will remain in the completed queue for 2 weeks before being purged from the system.

Q: Does the VRIRSA system produce an overlay or watermark on the certificate with the notation: "Informational, Not a Valid Document to Establish Identity?

A: No, VRIRSA does not produce an overlay or watermark displaying a notation for "Informational-Only" copies—continue using your current process.

Q: If the VRIRSA system is offline and unavailable and a requested record is located in a County's records can we issue an Informational copy?

No. You will need to wait until the VRIRSA system comes back on-line and is available to complete the request. By law, all informational copies of birth and death certificates must be printed from VRIRSA.

However, per clarification provided in the All County Letter 09-08 dated May 22, 2009 “all counties may issue “Informational Copies” from their own local vital records database when:

1) The event year for the requested record is not yet automated and thus, is not included in the years listed on the VRIRSA system login page; or
2) The date of the event (date of birth or date of death) for the requested record is less than 61 days from the date of the request.

Q: Will the VRIRSA system redact an SSN from the Amendment’s “Free Form Area”?

No. You will need to review all printed documents from the VRIRSA system to insure all confidential information is appropriately redacted by the VRIRSA system. If you have questions regarding redaction of the Amendment’s “Free Form Area”, contact your State Policy Analyst.

User Account IDs and Password FAQs

Q: How do I obtain a VRIRSA user account?

A: Visit the VRIRSA Website at (http://www.cdph.ca.gov/data/informatics/tech/Pages/VRIRSA.aspx) and go to the Forms section. Click on the “VRIRSA Account Form” and the “Security Confidentiality Acknowledgement Form” individually and then download the forms to your personal drive. Fill out and obtain signatures on both forms, then either email to VRIRSASupport@cdph.ca.gov or fax to (916) 319-8084.

Once your request for a user account has been reviewed and processed, you will receive an e-mail with instructions on how to activate your account. Be sure to thoroughly follow the instructions to completion. Refer to FAQ: “What steps do I take to set up my VRIRSA user ID and temporary password?”

Q: What are the User Account requirements for use of the VRIRSA system?

A: To use the VRIRSA system, you must:

1. Be a County Recorder or a Local Registrar.
2. Be an authorized employee by your county (to handle vital records)
3. Complete and Submit the VRIRSA Account form (including Security & Confidentiality form).
4. Receive a VRIRSA user id and temporary password.
5. Immediately change the temporary password.

Q: What steps do I take to setup my VRIRSA user ID and receive a temporary password?

A: After you submit the VRIRSA Account form:

1. VRIRSA Support will review and generate a new user account.
2. An automated email will be generated and sent to you the new user.
   This is a sample of the first message that you will receive.

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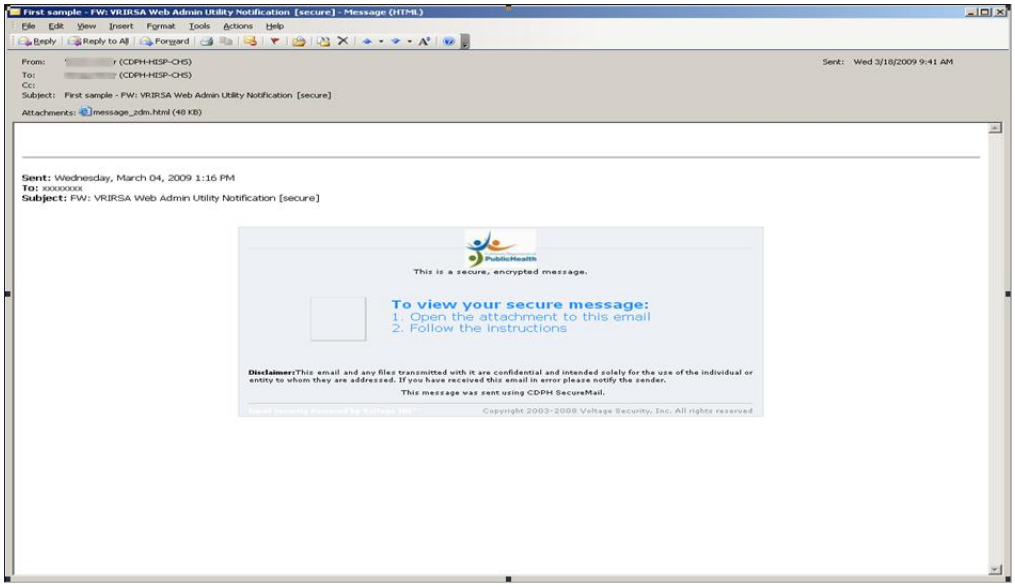
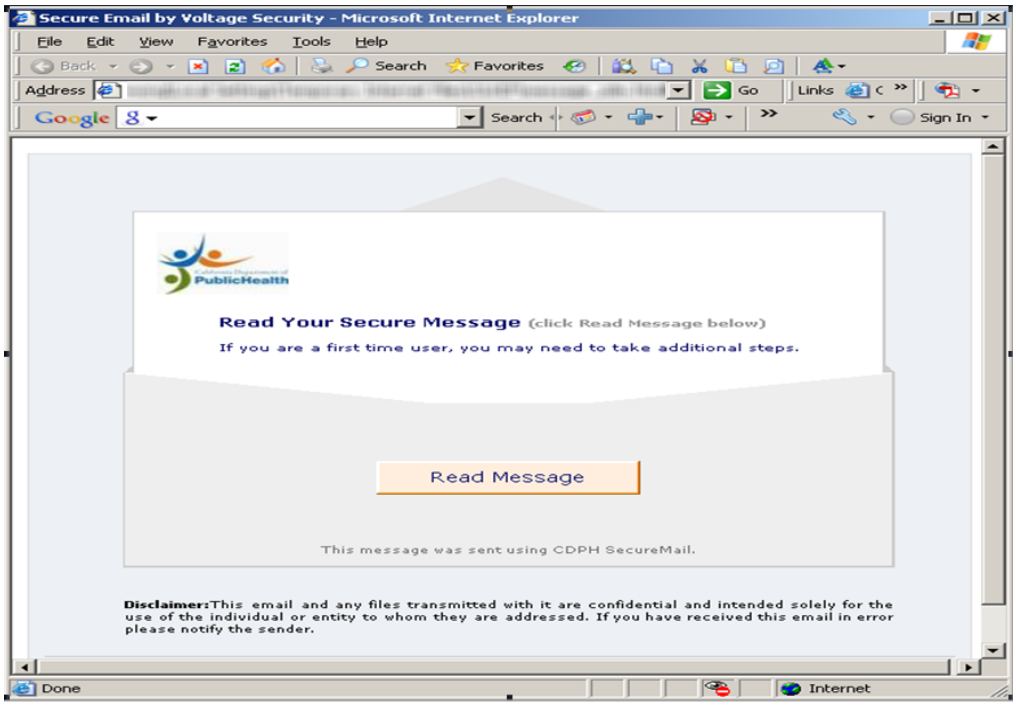


3. Follow the directions, open the attachment, and click on the “Read Message” button.



4. Click the “Read Message” button to generate an automatic email. The following image is the last message you will see before an email with your temporary password is sent to you.

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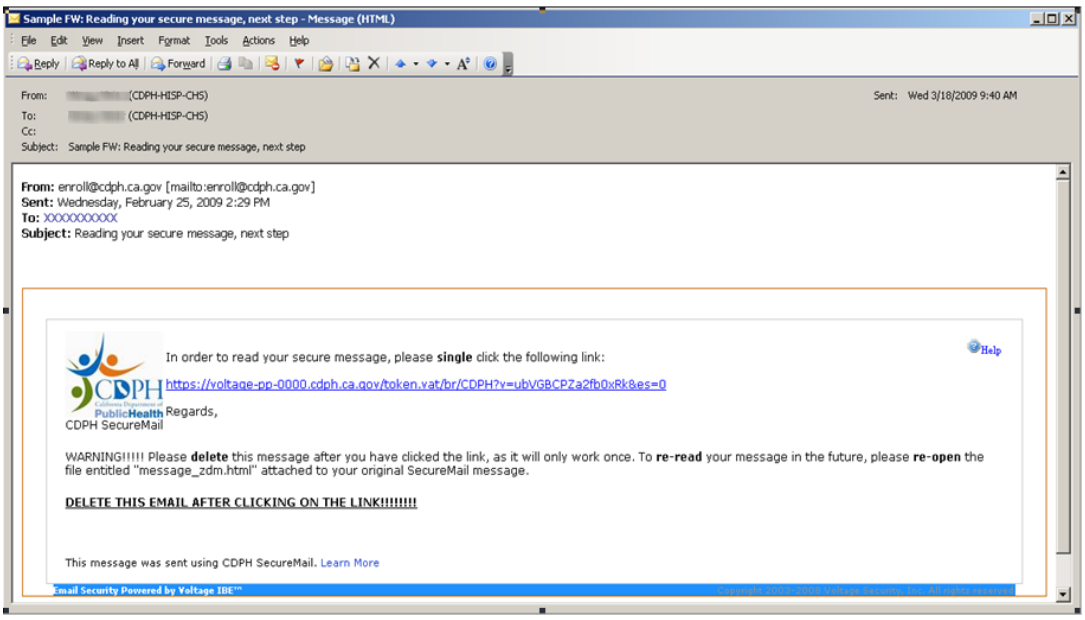
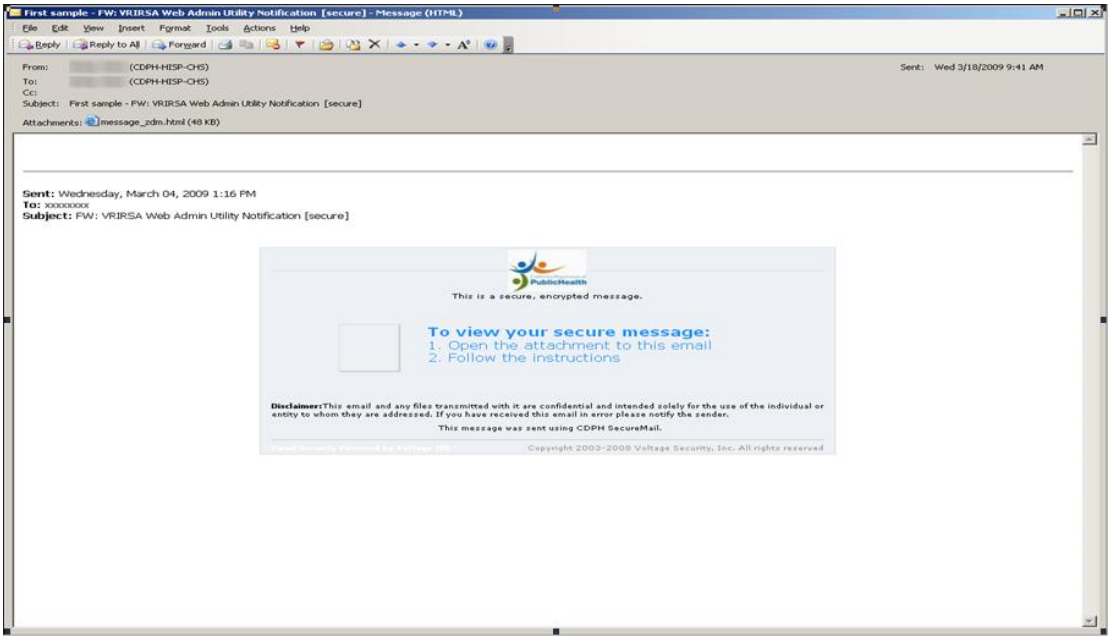


Q: Can I start using the VRIRSA system with my temporary password?

A: No. The VRIRSA system requires that you set a new password before allowing you to use the system.

Q: What is the purpose of my temporary password?

A: The temporary password is only for logging on to change to your new password.



Q: How do I change my password?

A: Go to the VRIRSA Application by entering https://www.vrirsa.cdph.ca.gov/vrirsa on your browser's address line.

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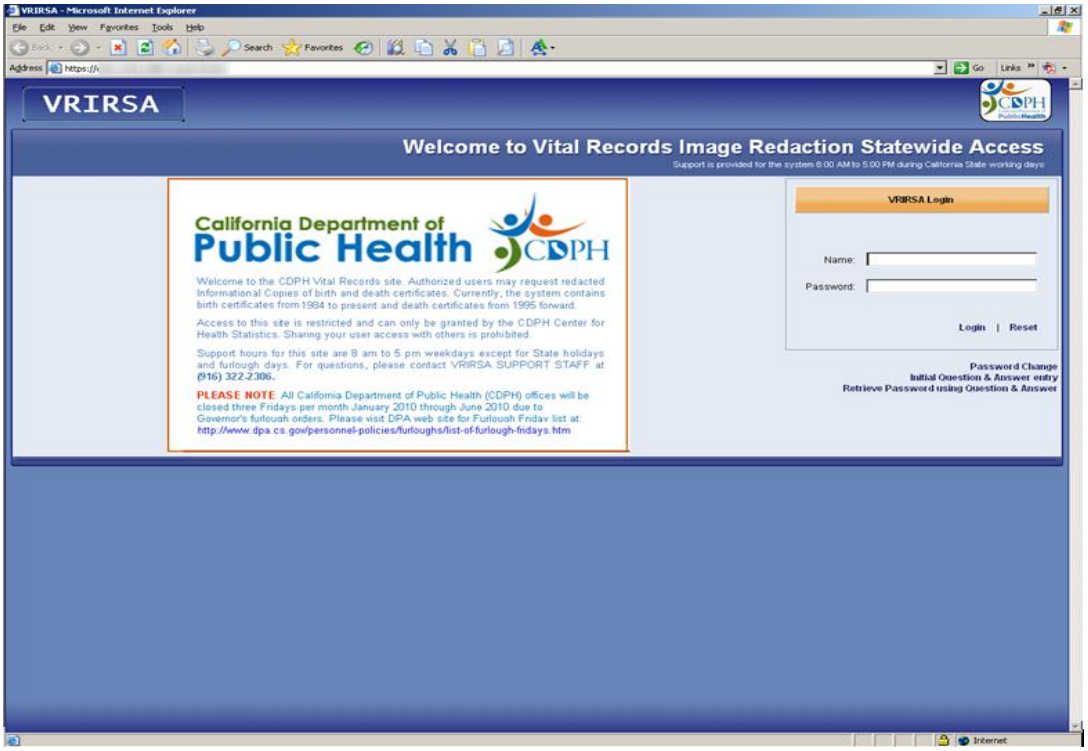
1) Press the 'Password Change' link in the lower right area of the window.



2) The following window opens for you to enter your user ID and temporary password that was e-mailed to you.

3) The top two fields in the 'DHS Internet Service Manager' window is filled in for you. Next enter your temporary password again in the old password field, and enter a new

password then confirm this password. Make sure that when you change your password you use at least 1 uppercase letter, 1 lowercase letter, and 1 numeric character for a total of 8 characters. Press the 'OK' button to complete this function. Now you can use your new password the next time you log into the VRIRSA system.

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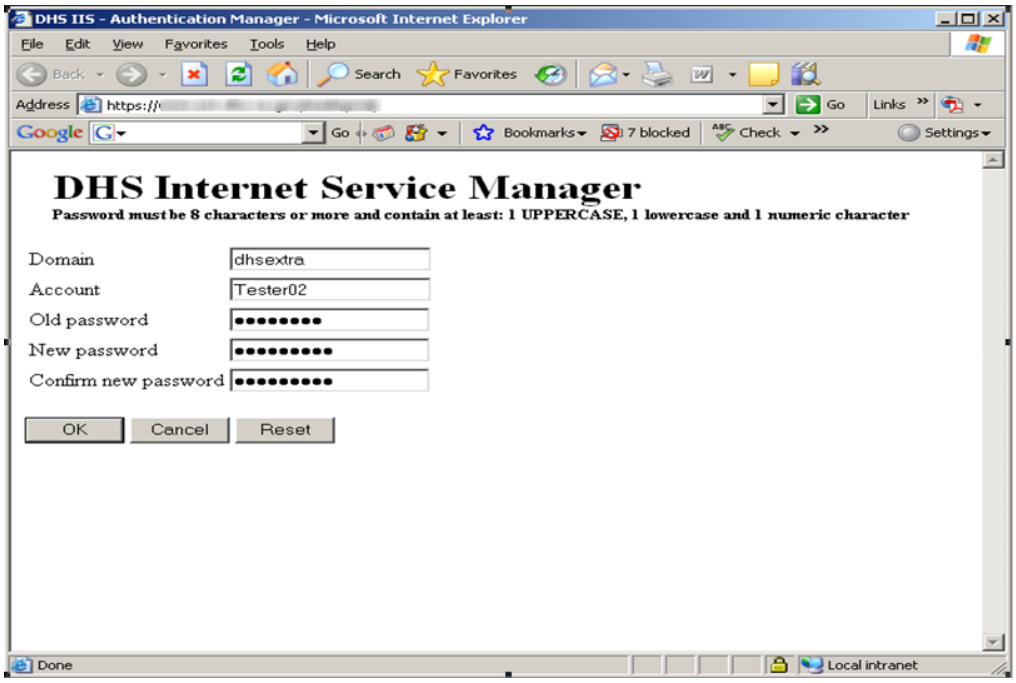

Refer to the following link for more detail on Account and Password policy. http://www.cdph.ca.gov/data/informatics/tech/Documents/CDPH%20ISO%20%20DHCS%20ISO%20Account%20and%20Password%20Policy.pdf)

Q: Who can reset my password if I have an existing account?

A: If you have an existing VRIRSA user account and cannot remember your password, contact VRIRSA support by email at VRIRSASupport@cdph.ca.gov or by phone (916) 322-2306. The VRIRSA support staff will process your request and an automated email with a new temporary password will be mailed to you. When you receive your new temporary password email, follow the instructions to change your temporary password on the VRIRSA system. Refer to topic question in this FAQ: "How do I change my password?"

Q: What happens if my password expires?

A: Your VRIRSA password will expire every 60 days and you will need to update your password. If this happens, refer to topic question in this FAQ: "How do I change my password?".