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## GUIDELINES

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### **For Obtaining A Certificate of Foreign Birth: Domestication of Foreign Adoptions**

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Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. §§ 63-9-910 (B) and 44-63-140, the following procedures must be followed in order to obtain a Certificate of Foreign Birth from the State of South Carolina for a child born in a foreign country who was not a United State citizen at birth and whose adoption was finalized in a foreign country.

**Step 1.** Complete and verify a Summons and a Petition.

(a) A Petition styled “Petition For Domestication of Foreign Adoption” must be completed by you (the adoptive parents), or your attorney, who are referred to therein as Petitioner(s). Every blank space within the Petition must be filled out with the correct information.

(b) You, or your attorney, will need to sign and date a Summons and attach that directly on top of the Petition.

(c) The Petition must be verified by completing the Form styled “Verification.” This Verification must be signed by you and notarized. The Verification should be attached to the Petition.

(d) In Richland, Horry, Lexington, Pickens, Greenville, Anderson and Florence counties, you must complete and attach a Family Court Cover Sheet and Certificate of Exemption from Mediation on top of the Summons. The Cover Sheet and Certificate may be obtained from the County Family Court Clerk of Court’s Office.

(e) The following documents must also be attached to the Petition and identified as follows:

PLEASE NOTE: If you do not wish to attach your original foreign documents, then attach certified copies, if available, of those documents, but YOU WILL need to bring the originals of the documents you copied into court with you in order to allow the Judge to inspect their authenticity.)

Exhibit A: A copy of the original Decree of Adoption issued by the foreign country in which the child was adopted and any certified English translation thereof.

Exhibit B: Copies of any and all documentation showing authorization for you to adopt from the foreign country and any English translation thereof.

Permission to adopt is usually issued by a national official, Attorney General, social worker, etc. NOTE: If the foreign country from which the child was adopted did not require specific permission to adopt, attach a verified statement of the foreign country's procedures for adoption and any other documentation verifying their adoption process and any certified English translation thereof.

Exhibit C: Copies of the Immigration and Naturalization Service document(s) (IR 3 or IR 4 Visa) that allowed the child to be brought to the United States from the foreign country.

Exhibit D: If the child has been naturalized, attach a copy of his/her naturalization papers (Certificate of Citizenship or US Passport).

Exhibit E: Copies of any and all other documentation relied upon by the foreign country in the adoption process and any certified English translation thereof.

Exhibit F: A copy of the post foreign adoption report, completed by a Certified Adoption Investigator, which evaluates the adjustment and progress of the child and family since adoption. A list of all Certified Adoption Investigators is available from the South Carolina Department of Social Services at:

Adoptions  
State Office  
South Carolina Department of Social Services  
1535 Confederate Ave., Ext., North Towers Bldg.  
P.O. Box 1520  
Columbia, S.C. 29202-1520  
(803) 898-7561 or 1-800-922-2504

Step 2. File all of the above documents at the Family Court Clerk of Court's Office in the county in which you reside. A filing fee must be paid at the time of filing. In addition, a copy of the above documents must be served on the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control at the following address:

Attn: Staff Counsel for Foreign Adoptions  
Office of the General Counsel  
S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control  
2600 Bull Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Step 3. Once the court order is obtained from the South Carolina Family Court, a Certificate of Adoption (DHEC Form 0671) must be completed by you, or your attorney, and the Family Court Clerk of Court. The Final Order Domesticating the Foreign Adoption, the completed Certificate of Adoption, the appropriate fee, and your current mailing address must be sent to:

Attn: Adoption Clerk  
Division of Vital Registry/Foreign Adoptions  
S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control  
2600 Bull Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Copies of these Guidelines and the forms to be used in these actions may be obtained from any South Carolina County Family Court Clerk of Court's Office or at the Central Office of the Department of Health and Environmental Control. For more information, please contact the office listed below:

Attn: Adoption Clerk  
Division of Vital Registry/Foreign Adoptions  
S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control  
2600 Bull Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
(803) 898-3630