

# Vital Statistics by Residence

## 1. General Definition and Background Information:

Vital statistics by residence are those events that take place to residents of a particular geographic area (state, county, municipality), regardless of where the event occurred. For example, there were 123 births to residents of County A in 2007. For reporting deaths, the residence of the decedent is used. For reporting births and fetal deaths, the residence of the mother is used.

## 2. Common Usage (Purposes) in Vital Statistics:

Reporting of vital statistics by residence is considered the standard or default for general data dissemination since it provides direct health status indicators for residents of a particular geographic area and, therefore, usually provides the most effective application for public health program needs. For example, since it is important to target pregnant mothers to obtain adequate prenatal care, birth outcome data by residence of the mother provides valuable information for focusing public health efforts by maternal and child health programs. The same can be said about deaths by residence. Public health programs need to identify areas with high mortality rates among residents so they can plan more effective outreach and prevention for the various behaviors that directly affect those rates – nutrition, exercise, screening, etc. Use of vital statistics by residence is usually the most appropriate for public health program purposes as well as for identifying health status indicators of a particular population. However, reporting of vital statistics by place of occurrence instead of by residence may be more appropriate for certain types of events, analysis or reports. For example, deaths due to motor vehicle accidents by place of occurrence can help target traffic problem areas. (For more information, see Vital Statistics by Occurrence.)

## 3. Examples of Use (NCHS):

[National Vital Statistics System – Birth Data](#)

[Mortality Data from the National Vital Statistics System](#)

## 4. References and Links:

[US. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. \*Technical Appendix from Vital Statistics of the United States 2003 Natality; Hyattsville, Maryland: September 2005\* \(see pages 11-12 and 60\)](#)

## 5. Technical Notes:

- All vital records registration areas in the United States participate in interstate exchange of birth and death records. Copies of records for births and deaths that occurred in a registration area to residents of another registration area or state are provided to the residents' registration area to include in their resident databases. However, due to resource limitations not all resident events may be exchanged or included in a state's database. This can be problematic for small counties or for a small number of events such as infant deaths.
- Resident occurrences are also sometimes used to report vital statistics. These are events that occur in a particular geographic area to residents of the same geographic area. For example, there were 445 births in 2007 that occurred in County B to mothers who were

also residents of County B. This type of information can be used for special public health program needs, such as a statewide breastfeeding effort that targets only residents who delivered in a hospital located in-state. The initial program contact is made in the hospital immediately after birth and follow-up is conducted at the mother's residence after discharge.

- Incorrect reporting of actual residence for vital records may occur due to use of post office or mailing address for residence assignment. Post office or mailing addresses can be different than actual residence, particularly in urbanized areas. Not only can birth counts be affected by these errors but neonatal death figures by residence should also be closely scrutinized for incorrect residence reporting since incorrect assignment of only one or two of these types of deaths can significantly affect a neonatal (or infant) mortality rate. Some registration areas request both a mailing address and actual municipality of residence to try to avoid these types of errors.