

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Citizen Registration Law

Adopted by Decision No. 102 of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly on November 26, 1997

Amended by Decree No. 160 of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly on November 19, 1998

Amended by Decree No. 1676 of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly on July 24, 2000

Amended by Decree No. 835 of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly on May 11, 2010

Amended by Decree No. 750 of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly on October 27, 2015

Amended by Decree No. 1245 of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly on August 10, 2016

Amended by Decree No. 351 of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly on July 7, 2020

Amended by Decree No. 1656 of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly on June 11, 2024

Chapter 1: Basics of Citizen Registration Law

Article 1 (Mission of Citizen Registration Law)

The Citizen Registration Law of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea establishes strict systems and orders for citizen identity registration and issuance of identity certificates to protect citizens' rights and interests and contribute to social stability and order.

Article 2 (Definition of Terms)

Citizen registration refers to the activities of state institutions that register the identity and changes in status of citizens of the Republic, such as birth, adoption, annulment of adoption, marriage, divorce, residence, departure, and death, and issue birth certificates, citizen certificates, or Pyongyang citizen certificates and temporary certificates (hereinafter referred to as identity certificates).

Article 3 (Principle of Convenience for Citizens)

The state simplifies procedures in citizen registration work and thoroughly implements the people's perspective to maximize convenience for citizens.

Article 4 (Principle of Objectivity and Comprehensiveness in Citizen Registration)

The state registers the identity and changes in status of all citizens based on objectively confirmed data and accurately issues identity certificates accordingly.

Article 5 (Principle of Speed, Accuracy, and Safety in Citizen Registration)

The state actively promotes informatization, modernization, and technologization of citizen registration work to ensure speed, accuracy, and safety of registration data.

Article 6 (Scope of Application of the Law)

This law applies to citizens of the Republic living in the territory of the Republic and other countries. Foreign citizens who wish to stay or reside in the territory of the Republic are subject to the Entry and Exit Law of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Article 7 (Guidance on Citizen Registration Work)

The central social safety guidance institution uniformly guides citizen registration work. It must establish strict discipline and regularly grasp and guide citizen registration work.

Chapter 2: Identity Registration

Article 8 (Identity Registration Institution)

Identity registration is carried out by social safety institutions. For citizens of the Republic living in other countries, identity registration is carried out by diplomatic and consular representative institutions of the Republic.

Article 9 (Obligation of Citizen Identity Registration)

Citizens must register their identity and changes in status with social safety institutions as stipulated by this law. Citizens who do not register their identity with social safety institutions cannot receive legal protection accordingly.

Article 10 (Reasons for Identity Registration)

Citizen identity registration is carried out in the following cases:

1. Birth
2. Adoption or annulment of adoption of minors

3. Marriage or divorce
4. Change of residence
5. Acquisition or change of occupation
6. Incorrect registration of identity data
7. Death
8. Other reasons requiring changes in identity registration data

Article 11 (Application for Identity Registration)

Citizens must apply for registration with the social safety institution in their residential area in cases specified in Article 10 of this law. Applications for identity registration can be made electronically or in writing. The application must specify the name, gender, date of birth, place of birth, residence, ethnicity, and reason for application.

Article 12 (Receipt and Registration of Identity Registration Applications)

Upon receiving an application for identity registration, the social safety institution must verify the accuracy of the contents and attached documents and register them in the resident registration ledger.

Article 13 (Birth Registration)

Birth registration must be carried out when a citizen is born. The application for birth registration must be made by the parents or guardians within 15 working days from the date of birth.

Article 14 (Adoption and Annulment of Adoption Registration)

Citizens who wish to adopt or annul the adoption of a child must obtain approval from the resident administrative institution and register the adoption or annulment within one month. The application for adoption registration must be accompanied by the approval document from the resident administrative institution and a photo of the child to be adopted. The application for annulment of adoption must be accompanied by the approval document from the resident administrative institution or a copy of the court's judgment.

Article 15 (Marriage Registration)

Citizens who wish to marry must register their marriage. The application for marriage registration must be made jointly by the couple within 15 working days from the start of their marital life. Marriage registration for citizens marrying foreign citizens is subject to the regulations on marriage between citizens of our country and foreign citizens.

Article 16 (Divorce Registration)

Citizens whose divorce is approved by a court judgment must register their divorce. The application for divorce registration must be accompanied by a copy of the divorce judgment and the notification of confirmation of the divorce judgment. Divorce registration cannot be carried out if three months have passed since the confirmation of the divorce judgment.

Article 17 (Departure and Residence Registration)

Citizens who wish to change their residence must register their departure and residence within 15 working days. The application for departure and residence registration must be accompanied by the relevant documents.

Article 18 (Temporary Residence Registration)

Citizens who wish to temporarily reside in another city (district) or county for more than three months must register their departure and temporary residence within 15 working days. The application for temporary residence must be accompanied by the relevant documents.

Article 19 (Occupation Change Registration)

Citizens who acquire a new occupation or change their occupation must register the change in occupation. The application for occupation change registration must be accompanied by the relevant documents.

Article 20 (Identity Change Registration)

Citizens who need to change their date of birth, place of birth, surname, or gender must apply to the social safety institution for changes in identity registration data. The application for identity change registration must be accompanied by the relevant documents. In the case of gender change, a document from the legal medical institution must be attached.

Article 21 (Death Registration)

Death registration must be carried out when a citizen dies. The application for death registration must be made by the family or relatives of the deceased within 15 working days from the date of death. If the deceased has no family or relatives, the institution, enterprise, or organization to which the deceased belonged must make the application.

Article 22 (Management of Identity Registration Data)

Social safety institutions must promptly and accurately update the identity registration data base, manage it uniformly and safely, and preserve it permanently.

Article 23 (Prohibition of Illegal Registration, Change, and Deletion)

Citizen registration personnel must not register identity data inaccurately, change or delete registered identity data arbitrarily, or accept money or goods for registration.

Article 24 (Prohibition of Illegal Viewing and Copying of Identity Registration Data)

Citizen registration personnel must not allow unauthorized persons to view or copy identity registration data.

Article 25 (Confidentiality of Identity Registration Data)

Citizen registration personnel must not disclose identity data learned during the registration process.

Article 26 (Payment of Fees)

Citizens who apply for identity registration (including application for issuance of identity certificates) must pay the prescribed fees. The application of fees is subject to fee regulations.

Article 27 (Provision of Conditions for Citizen Registration Work)

Institutions, enterprises, and organizations, including resident administrative institutions, health institutions, and military mobilization institutions, must regularly send data on changes in citizens' identity, such as birth, death, and occupation change, to social safety institutions and promptly verify related documents.

Chapter 3: Issuance of Identity Certificates

Article 28 (Issuing Institution for Identity Certificates)

Birth certificates, citizen certificates (Pyongyang citizen certificates), and temporary certificates are issued by social safety institutions in the name of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Article 29 (Issuance Targets for Birth Certificates and Citizen Certificates (Pyongyang Citizen Certificates))

The targets for issuance of birth certificates and citizen certificates (Pyongyang citizen certificates) are as follows:

1. Birth certificates are issued to citizens under 17 years old.

2. Citizen certificates (Pyongyang citizen certificates) are issued to citizens over 17 years old (those who have completed the general 12-year compulsory education).
3. Birth certificates or citizen certificates (Pyongyang citizen certificates) are issued according to the age criteria in items 1 and 2 to citizens returning from other countries, newly acquiring Republic nationality, completing military service, recovering from mental illness, or released from correctional facilities.

Article 30 (Reissuance Targets for Identity Certificates)

Citizen certificates (Pyongyang citizen certificates) are reissued to citizens whose identity data has changed due to adoption, annulment of adoption, marriage, divorce, residence, or death of a spouse, or who have damaged or lost their identity certificates, or who have had their citizen certificates (Pyongyang citizen certificates) for more than 10 years.

Article 31 (Issuance Targets for Temporary Certificates)

Temporary certificates are issued to citizens who temporarily reside in another city (district) or county for more than three months or to citizens over 17 years old during the issuance period of citizen certificates (Pyongyang citizen certificates).

Article 32 (Issuance of Birth Certificates)

Birth certificates are issued based on the birth registration application submitted by the parents or guardians of the citizen. The social safety institution that receives and registers the birth registration application must issue the birth certificate within 15 working days.

Article 33 (Issuance of Citizen Certificates (Pyongyang Citizen Certificates))

Citizen certificates (Pyongyang citizen certificates) are issued based on the application for issuance of citizen certificates (Pyongyang citizen certificates). Citizens over 17 years old who have completed the general 12-year compulsory education must submit the application for issuance of citizen certificates (Pyongyang citizen certificates) to the social safety institution within 15 working days. The social safety institution that receives the application must verify its accuracy and issue the citizen certificate within two months and the Pyongyang citizen certificate within one month.

Article 34 (Issuance of Temporary Certificates)

The social safety institution must issue temporary certificates within 15 working days to citizens who have registered for temporary residence. In urgent cases such as business trips or travel, temporary certificates must be issued immediately.

Article 35 (Reissuance of Identity Certificates)

The social safety institution must reissue identity certificates to citizens who have registered changes in identity due to adoption, annulment of adoption, marriage, divorce, residence, death of a spouse, or identity change. Citizens who have damaged or lost their identity certificates must apply for reissuance. Citizens who have lost their identity certificates must report to the social safety institution and apply for reissuance if the identity certificate is not found within two months. Reissuance of birth certificates and citizen certificates must be completed within two months, and reissuance of Pyongyang citizen certificates must be completed within one month.

Article 36 (Return and Collection of Identity Certificates)

Citizens must return their identity certificates to the social safety institution if they enlist in the Korean People's Army, Social Safety Army, or security agencies, or if they are removed from the Republic's nationality or if the details of the identity certificate change. The social safety institution must collect identity certificates from citizens who have died, received a sentence of forced labor or imprisonment, or have incurable mental illness. However, identity certificates of citizens who received a suspended sentence must not be collected.

Article 37 (Management of Identity Certificates)

Citizens must handle their identity certificates carefully and must not lose or damage them. Citizen certificates (Pyongyang citizen certificates) and temporary certificates must be carried at all times and must not be lent to others.

Article 38 (Prohibition of Forgery and Alteration of Identity Certificates)

Citizens must not forge or alter identity certificates or use forged or altered identity certificates.

Article 39 (Compliance with Issuance Deadlines for Identity Certificates)

The social safety institution that receives applications for issuance or reissuance of identity certificates must comply with the deadlines stipulated by this law unless there are legitimate reasons for delay.

Article 40 (Prohibition of Illegal Issuance of Identity Certificates)

Citizen registration personnel must not issue identity certificates illegally by accepting money or goods or based on personal relationships.

Chapter 4: Legal Responsibilities

Article 41 (Fines)

Individual citizens may be fined between 1,000 and 100,000 won in the following cases:

1. Failure to apply for birth registration or marriage registration within the prescribed period.
2. Failure to carry citizen certificates (Pyongyang citizen certificates) or temporary certificates.
3. Damage to birth certificates, citizen certificates (Pyongyang citizen certificates), or temporary certificates.
4. Failure to register residence within the prescribed period after departure registration.
5. Failure to return identity certificates as required by Article 36, Paragraph 1.

Article 42 (Warnings and Severe Warnings)

Responsible personnel may receive warnings in the following cases:

1. Failure to register identity or issue identity certificates promptly without legitimate reasons.
2. Registration of identity or issuance of identity certificates in violation of prescribed procedures.
3. Acceptance of money or goods during identity registration or issuance of identity certificates.
4. Failure to verify identity registration or issuance of identity certificates promptly without legitimate reasons.
5. Disclosure of secrets learned during the identity registration process.

If the above actions are severe, severe warnings may be issued.

Article 43 (Unpaid Labor Penalty)

Personnel who receive severe warnings for actions specified in Article 42 and repeat such actions may be penalized with unpaid labor for up to three months. If the actions are severe, unpaid labor penalties may exceed three months.

Article 44 (Labor Education Penalty)

Responsible personnel may receive labor education penalties of up to three months in the following cases:

1. Failure to register birth, marriage, or residence for more than one year without legitimate reasons.

2. Use of another person's identity certificate.
3. Use of identity certificates that should have been returned to the social safety institution.
4. Lending identity certificates to others.
5. Forgery or alteration of identity certificates or use of forged or altered identity certificates.

If the above actions are severe, labor education penalties may exceed three months.

Article 45 (Dismissal, Removal, and Discharge Penalty)

Responsible personnel who arbitrarily change or delete identity registration data or violate citizen registration order causing severe consequences may be penalized with dismissal, removal, or discharge based on the severity of the actions.

Article 46 (Criminal Responsibility)

If actions violating this law constitute a crime, responsible personnel may face criminal responsibility according to relevant provisions of the criminal law.

Chapter 5: Supplementary Provisions

Article 47 (Effective Date)

The Citizen Registration Law, amended by Decree No. 1656 of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly on June 11, 2024, will be effective from August 1, 2024.