

Consumer Alert

It has come to our attention that an online vital records ordering website has been acting as a middle man between customers and VitalChek, an approved credit card company authorized by state vital records offices to accept orders for vital records on behalf of the states. On checking the website of Express Vitals on June 28, 2012, we found that the website is advertising itself as an online service for ordering birth certificates.

The website, ExpressVitals.com, accepts orders from customers without proof of identity and places the order for them into the VitalChek system. Express Vitals utilizes data warehouse software to retrieve customer information and pass VitalChek's applicant identity authentication process. It appears that Express Vitals' staff also signs the electronic signature box as though they were the applicant, which is a violation of Missouri law. The pricing page on Express Vitals' website misrepresents the Bureau of Vital Record's pricing by indicating Missouri Vital Records has an administrative fee of \$24.50, on line birth certificate processing as \$49.00 and free delivery being available for Missouri. Missouri fees for birth certificates are \$15.00 for a certified copy. There is no administrative fee for the Bureau of Vital Records. However, customers that use VitalChek's services are charged \$11.25 for the use of a credit card. Delivery is arranged by VitalChek with UPS for expedited service. UPS charges \$17.50 for this service.

Some states have received complaints regarding Express Vitals' misrepresentation of state procedures and fees. It is recommended that consumers contact a state's vital records office to obtain ordering information before using the Express Vitals website.