

# CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS IN GUAM

Guam is the largest island in Micronesia. It lies south of Northern Mariana Islands, east of Philippines, north of Federated States of Micronesia and west of Marshall Islands.



Land area  
(km<sup>2</sup>)  
**541**

2020 mid-year  
population estimate  
**176,700**

Population growth  
rate (%)  
**0.9**



Pacific  
Community  
Communauté  
du Pacifique



Pacific CRVS  
supported by Brisbane Accord Group

unicef   
for every child

## OVERVIEW

This civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) country profile for Guam is part of a series of country profiles for the Pacific Island region. The CRVS profiles consolidate knowledge shared by countries on the status of their CRVS systems in the recent past, including through government websites, published reports, media releases and presentations, and direct engagement between the authors of these profiles and in-country civil registration offices and health information offices. The objective of these CRVS country profiles is to provide a living resource (updated every 2-3 years) and quick reference point on the status and developments in CRVS systems in the Pacific Island region. The profiles provide an overview of the legislative, organisational and management frameworks of CRVS systems, registration processes, levels of completeness of birth and death registration, and the most recent developments towards improving CRVS systems. Whilst civil registration covers many vital events, these profiles focus on the registration of births and deaths, and collation of cause of death information. It is envisaged that these country profiles will serve as a fundamental tool in advocating for further investment in strengthening the coverage and completeness of CRVS systems across the Pacific Island region.

## SOURCE OF BIRTH AND DEATH DATA

The source of figures in Table 1 (births) and Table 2 (deaths) is outlined below each table, with the full citation given in the Reference section at the end of the document. All figures were obtained from published sources or through direct contact with in-country civil registration offices and health information offices. The date figures were obtained through direct in-country contact is stated below the tables, and indicates when those figures were extracted from in-country databases.

## SUGGESTED CITATION

Pacific Community and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 2021. Civil registration and vital statistics in Guam. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact the Statistics for Development Division (SDD) – Pacific Community at: [contact-sdd@spc.int](mailto:contact-sdd@spc.int); <https://sdd.spc.int/>

## CRVS LEGISLATION, ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

### *Current legal framework governing birth and death registration*

The recording and registration of births and deaths is governed by the Guam Administrative Rules and Regulations (GAR), Title 26. Public Health and Social Services, Division 1, Chapter 2: Vital Statistics (1972); and Chapter 2: Vital Statistics (1992).

### *Agencies responsible for birth and death recording and registration*

Civil registration functions are the responsibility of the Office of Vital Statistics, which is under the Department of Public Health and Social Services. Medical birth and death forms are scanned and electronically sent to the National Center for Health Statistics, CDC, in USA for medical coding (birth and death coding). Medical coding results are electronically returned to Guam for analysis and reporting to the Guam government and other stakeholders.

## REPORTING AND REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS

### *Recording births at health facilities and registering births at the civil registry*

Almost all births in Guam occur in a health facility. When a birth occurs, the mother completes an interview sheet, which collates demographic information about the child and its parents. This information is entered into STEVE-er (electronic database) at the health facility. A hard copy of the birth notification form (referred to under the law as a birth certificate) is printed and delivered to the Office of Vital Statistics. Parents are required to present at the Office of Vital Statistics to validate the information on the certificate and to sign it, after which the registration process is considered complete. A scanned copy of the birth certificate is sent to the National Center for Health Statistics in mainland USA, and the original copy is stored at the Office of Vital Statistics.

### *Timeframes and costs*

The law requires that the birth of every child in Guam is registered within ten days of the birth.

Standard, on-time birth registration	no charge
Birth certificate printed	5.00 (USD)

### *Tasks that require a birth certificate and incentives (financial or other) for completing the birth registration process*

A birth certificate is required for issuance of a passport, enrolment in school, and to apply for a Medicaid card, which each child born in Guam is entitled to.

### *Registration process for births occurring overseas*

It is uncommon for pregnant women who reside in Guam to travel overseas for the purpose of delivering their baby. Overseas births registered in Guam are usually because of adoption. In these instances, the registrar is required to prepare and register a 'Certificate of Foreign Birth' for a person born in a foreign country who is not a citizen of the United States.

## REPORTING AND REGISTRATION OF DEATHS

### *Recording deaths at health facilities and registering deaths at the civil registry*

When a death occurs in a health facility, the attending medical physician or the chief medical examiner is required by law to complete the death certificate, which is signed off by the chief medical examiner. The mortician the family hires collects the death certificate from the chief medical examiner and delivers it the Vital Statistics Office. The family is required to present at the office to validate the information on the death certificate and to sign it, after which the registration process is considered complete. A scanned copy of the death certificate is sent to the National Center for Health Statistics in mainland USA, and the original copy is stored at the Office of Vital Statistics. The law requires that the mayor of the area reports deaths that occur outside a health facility to the Office of Vital Statistics on a prescribed form.

### Timeframes and costs

The law requires that deaths in Guam are registered within ten days of the event.

Standard, on-time death registration	no charge
Death certificate printed	5.00 (USD)

### Tasks that require a death certificate and incentives (financial or other) for completing the death registration process

A death certificate is required for inheritance of land, property and estates of deceased persons.

### Registration process for deaths occurring overseas

The Office of Vital Statistics is not required to register deaths that occur outside of Guam's jurisdiction, but death certificates of Guam residents who died in any of the US states and territories are reported to the Office of Vital Statistics by the state and/or territorial registrar for record keeping. Guam residents who died in any foreign country are reported to the Office of Vital Statistics through the Department of State.

## COLLATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF CAUSE OF DEATH

### Process for coding death certificates

The law requires that the medical certification of cause of death is completed and signed within twenty-four hours after the death by the medical physician in charge of the patient's care, except when the patient has received no medical attention within seventy-two hours prior to death, or when inquiry is required in accordance with the Post-Mortem Examination Act (Chapter 81, Title 10, Guam Code Annotated). Certification and coding of causes of death is undertaken in accordance with the International Classification of Diseases (10<sup>th</sup> edition). The 'U.S. Standard Certificate of Death' is used for recording the details of a death and its causes (<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/DEATH11-03final-acc.pdf>).

### Training and resources for cause of death certification and coding

Guam utilises training materials provided by the National Center for Health Statistics for physicians and Vital Statistics staff to improve data quality and reporting timeliness. All medical death certificates are scanned and electronically sent to the National Center for Health Statistics, CDC, in USA to be coded, and then the coded data are sent back to Guam. As mortality coding of death certificates is done remotely in USA, there is no training on ICD mortality coding in Guam.

## COMPLETENESS OF CIVIL REGISTRATION DATA

The completeness of birth and death registration can be estimated by comparing the number of births and deaths in the civil registry with the number of births and deaths recorded by the health system, enumerated during national censuses, and estimated by international agencies. In Guam, records of births and deaths in the health system are the responsibility of the Office of Vital Statistics, which is also responsible for birth and death registration and the issuance of birth and death certificates. Because the same agency is responsible for both functions, the number of births and deaths recorded in health records is the same as those registered through civil registration. For this reason, an estimate of completeness by comparison of the civil registry with health records cannot be undertaken. The registration of births and deaths in Guam is considered to be complete.

Table 1. Completeness of birth registration data

Year	Source of births				Completeness of birth registration		
	Civil Registry <sup>a</sup>	Health <sup>b</sup>	SPC projection <sup>c</sup>	Census <sup>d</sup>	Compared with health	Compared with SPC	Compared with census
2018	3,175	na	3,172	-	na	100%	-
2017	3,292	na	-	-	na	-	-
2016	3,433	na	-	-	na	-	-

2015	3,374	na	-	-	na	-	-
2014	3,396	na	-	-	na	-	-
2013	3,329	na	-	-	na	-	-
2012	3,604	na	-	-	na	-	-
2011	3,298	na	-	-	na	-	-
2010	3,419	na	-	-	na	-	-

Sources: <sup>a</sup>Office of Vital Statistics, Department of Public Health and Social Services, Government of Guam (BoSP 2019). <sup>b</sup>Civil Registry' and 'Health' are the same dataset in Guam. <sup>c</sup>Calculated from 2018 crude birth rate (Pacific Community 2018a) and 2018 population projection (Pacific Community 2018b). <sup>d</sup>The most recent census in 2010 did not ask questions on the annual number of births, and therefore could not be used to estimate the completeness of death registration. na = not applicable. Completeness was calculated by dividing 'Civil Registry' by 'SPC projection'.

Table 2. Completeness of death registration data

Year	Source of deaths				Completeness of death registration		
	Civil Registry <sup>a</sup>	Health <sup>b</sup>	SPC projection <sup>c</sup>	Census <sup>d</sup>	Compared with health	Compared with SPC	Compared with census
2018	1,056	na	971	-	na	109%	-
2017	1,007	na	-	-	na	-	-
2016	1,022	na	-	-	na	-	-
2015	1,009	na	-	-	na	-	-
2014	956	na	-	-	na	-	-
2013	902	na	-	-	na	-	-
2012	894	na	-	-	na	-	-
2011	842	na	-	-	na	-	-
2010	872	na	-	-	na	-	-

Sources: <sup>a</sup>Office of Vital Statistics, Department of Public Health and Social Services, Government of Guam (BoSP 2019). <sup>b</sup>Civil Registry' and 'Health' are the same dataset in Guam. <sup>c</sup>Calculated from 2018 crude death rate (Pacific Community 2018a) and 2018 population projection (Pacific Community 2018b). <sup>d</sup>The most recent census in 2010 did not ask questions on all-age mortality, and therefore could not be used to estimate the completeness of death registration. na = not applicable. Completeness was calculated by dividing 'Civil Registry' by 'SPC projection'.

## PUBLICATION OF CRVS DATA AND REPORTS

The Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans routinely publishes a statistical yearbook, which includes statistics on live births and deaths, among other demographic indicators, based on civil registration data (data provided by the Vital Statistics Office). The most recent publication available is the 2018 Guam Statistical Yearbook, published in 2019.

## REFERENCES

BoSP (Bureau of Statistics and Plans). 2019. 2018 Guam Statistical Yearbook. Office of the Governor. Available at: <http://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/Get/o5r7x>

Pacific Community. 2018a. Pocket statistical summary (*Résumé statistique de poche*) 2018. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. Available at: <http://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/owbuh>

Pacific Community. 2018b. Population estimates and projections. Available at: <https://sdd.spc.int/topic/population-estimates-and-projections>

Pacific Community. 2020. Pocket statistical summary (*Résumé statistique de poche*) 2020. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. Available at: <https://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/vrcao>