



INFORMATION SERIES

Topic: Marriage and Divorce Record Searches

There has been a recurring question among our matchmaking clients:

How can you check whether a client is / has been married or divorced?

The simple answer is: if someone wants to hide the information, you may never know. Here are the reasons why:

- There is no central database of marriage and divorce records in the United States.
- Many states consider these vital records confidential and they restrict access to this information.
- These records are often maintained at the county level, so you must know the exact county and state in which you want to search.
- International marriages and divorces are often not registered within a state (but if they are registered, the information would be held at the U.S. Department of State).
- The turnaround for vital records research can take months to complete.

If you are determined to research a person's marital / divorce status, there are ways that you can try to get this done:

- Although states and counties will not release certified copies of vital records, they will often issue uncertified copies or verifications.
- Services like VitalChek (www.vitalcheck.com) are available to assist in submitting your search request, although it can be costly and they may not be able to return search results if the information is restricted.
- Vital records may be restricted, but county / civil court records are public. You can search court records for divorce decrees, but you will need to know in which county to search.
- Some credit reporting agencies may indicate a spouse, but this information may not be reliable.
- Hire a private investigator.

There are background screening providers who claim that they can verify marital status. Please investigate these services thoroughly and request that they provide the source of the information and guarantee the result.

Thank you to our clients for presenting this issue. We at Verify-ED appreciate the opportunity to provide answers so that you can, in turn, inform your clients.

Please review our website for a list of states that will release vital record verifications (www.verify-ed.com/vitalrecords.pdf). If you would like to conduct a marriage or divorce record search, please contact Joelle Hinds-Ware (jware@verify-ed.com or 866-213-3477 ext 4) for assistance.

Verify-ED is a full-service background screening company with custom packages and pricing for members of the Matchmaking Institute (www.matchmakinginstitute.com).

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