



MELISSA WILK

ALAMEDA COUNTY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER/CLERK-RECORDER

October 2021 Newsletter

Message from Melissa

Dear Alameda County,

As your Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder, I enjoy having the opportunity to share the many ways in which our agency serves the Alameda County community. One of the most frequent responses I receive when recounting some of the things we do to help our citizens is, "Your office does all of that?" To which I proudly reply, "We sure do!"

It is my pleasure to include some helpful guidance on how my Office and our staff serve you every day, including:

- Where to direct your call if you have questions about your upcoming property tax bill;
- How to obtain a death certificate after the passing of a loved one; and
- Tips for business owners on how to register or renew their Fictitious Business Names.



In This Issue

- Property Tax Statements & Our Tax Analysis Unit
- Death Certificates
- Online Services
- Registering Fictitious Business Names
- Bay Area Manufacturing Week
- Questions for the Office
- Community Spotlight

Also, you may have noticed that our most recent newsletters have included snapshots of the talented people who work at our agency. This is something you'll continue to see in this and future issues. I am so proud to highlight their work, achievements, and dedication to serving you.

Lastly, as our communities continue to plan for more public events, please [let me know](#) so that my staff and I can attend! We love being out in the community, and so feel free to [email me](#) about any upcoming festivities we can help you celebrate.

All the best,

Melissa Wilk

Property Tax Statements are in the Mail
Our Tax Analysis Unit is Here to Help



Meet our Tax Analysis Unit. *Left to right:* Christina Wong, Yasmin Bahrani, May Truong, Vania Chen, Trina Caballero, Ariana Yu, Christina Chen, Gustavo Lozano.

The Auditor-Controller's Tax Analysis Unit is responsible for applying the 1% general levy and applicable voter-approved debt service rates (such as from school bond measures) to all property tax assessments in Alameda County. The Tax Analysis Unit also collects fixed charges and special assessments (such as city library services and sewer services) from the various districts that you see on your tax bill. So if you have questions about your property tax rate or the apportionment of your property taxes, please call us at (510) 272-6564 and we'll be happy to help you. We're available Monday through Friday 8:30am-5pm.

At times, the County may need to adjust your previous tax bill, and you may be entitled to a refund. This typically happens after the County Assessor or Assessment Appeals Board determines that your property should have been valued lower. If this happens, the County and the Auditor-Controller's Tax Analysis Unit will be happy to assist you. Our refund service is provided directly to property owners at **no cost!**

For more information regarding:

- Who to contact about your property tax statements, [click here](#).
- Real property tax refunds issued by our Tax Analysis Division, [click here](#).
- How to look-up your refund status, [click here](#).



Coming Soon:
**Your 2021-22 Property
Tax Statements**

Watch your mailbox! The County has started mailing out property

For Questions on:

- Refunds
- Tax bill corrections
- Tax rates
- Debt service rates

Call the Auditor-Controller (Tax Analysis Unit) at (510) 272-6564

For Questions on:

- Property values
- Exemptions
- Change of ownership
- New construction

Call the Assessor at (510) 272-3787

For Questions on:

- Paying your tax bill
- Replacement of tax bills
- Late charges

tax statements for the 2021-22 tax year. Have a question? Give us a call!

• Delinquent tax bills
Call the Treasurer/Tax Collector at
(510) 272-6800

Death Certificates: *What Are They and Why Are They Important?*

If you are dealing with the passing of a loved one, there are a number of issues that will most likely require the issuance of a death certificate. A death certificate is an official document that declares the date, location and cause of a person's death.

You may need a death certificate in order to close bank accounts, transfer ownership of property, file insurance claims, and retain the services of burial or cremation providers.

Who can obtain a death certificate?

A close family member of the deceased can obtain an unrestricted copy of the death certificate. Examples include the decedent's child, parent or legal guardian, spouse or domestic partner, sibling, grandchild, or grandparent.

Qualified non-family members can also obtain an unrestricted copy of the death certificate. Some typical examples include funeral parlor directors, attorneys representing the decedent's estate, and law enforcement officers conducting official business.

Anyone can obtain an informational copy as death certificates are public record.

What is the difference between an unrestricted and an informational copy of a death certificate?

Unrestricted copies can only be issued to the people named above or authorized by California Health & Safety Code Sec. 7100.

An informational copy contains the same information as an unrestricted copy, but will have a legend across the face with the statement, "Informational. Not a valid document to establish identity." An informational copy may not be sufficient as a legal instrument to close the decedent's estate.

How do I obtain a death certificate?

You can obtain a copy of a death certificate for someone who passed away in Alameda



Alameda County Public Health Department needs to be used in another country, you may need to have it authenticated. The Clerk-Recorder's Office is able to authenticate the certificate for a fee of \$12.

How long does it take to obtain a copy of the death certificate?

We usually obtain access to death certificates within 4-6 weeks of the decedent's passing in Alameda County. Death certificates are generally available from the Alameda County Public Health Department before we have access to them.

If the date of death occurred prior to the year 2000, the search may take longer because death certificates were not electronically filed until that time in California.

What should I do after obtaining a copy of the death certificate?

Check to make sure all of the information on the certificate is correct! People usually seek out death certificates to settle their legal and financial affairs and the accuracy of the information on the death certificate may be important for what you are seeking to accomplish.

If there is a mistake on the certificate, you need to contact the proper entity to get the information amended to obtain a new and corrected death certificate. This could include the deceased's physician, hospice/hospital, funeral director, or [State Department of Public Health](#). The Clerk-

County [online here](#). We will also be glad to assist you in person at our Clerk-Recorder's Office located at 1106 Madison Street in Oakland. The fee for each copy is \$23.

We are unable to provide death certificates for deaths that occurred in other counties.

You may also obtain death certificates from the Alameda County Public Health Department. You can reach them by phone at (510) 267-8071. Please note that if a death certificate obtained from the

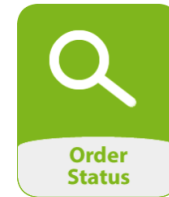
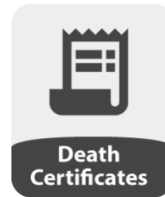
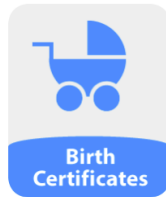
Recorder's Office is not authorized to amend any part of the death certificate.

Who can I contact if I have further questions?

- Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office: (510) 272-6362
- Alameda County Department of Public Health: (510) 267-8071
- California Department of Public Health, Customer Service Unit: by email at AmendVR@cdph.ca.gov or telephone at (916) 445-2684.

SAVE TIME AND ORDER ONLINE

Need your birth, marriage, or death certificate? Save yourself time and order online! Select our *pick-up option* and we can turn around your order in **1-2 business days**. Click below to get started.



When to Register and Renew Your Fictitious Business Name



Helpful Hints for Alameda County's Business owners

Did you know there are over 61,000 businesses operating in Alameda County?

Read below for a helpful guide on:

- *How to register a Fictitious Business Name (FBN)*
- *What to know before registering your FBN*
- *How to renew your FBN*

Why do I need to register a Fictitious Business Name (FBN)?

A Fictitious Business Name gives business owners an inexpensive method of gaining the legal right to operate in a name other than their own. If your business operates under a non-registered Fictitious Business Name, then you, as the owner, may not be able to sign any contracts or make any enforceable agreements on behalf of your business.

In certain cases, it may not be necessary to register a Fictitious Business Name if your business name includes your last name. Consult your attorney to find out whether you

need to register an FBN for your business.

How much does it cost to register an FBN?

The filing fee is \$40 for one business name and one owner. An additional fee of \$7 is charged for each additional owner or Fictitious Business name listed on the same statement.

What should I know before registering my business?

The complete address of the business and of each registrant must be clearly printed on the application statement. Post office boxes are **not** acceptable. The statement must be signed by the registrant (stamped or digital signatures are not acceptable). If more than one owner is listed on the form, only one owner/registrant must sign the form. If the business is being conducted by a corporation or a limited liability corporation (L.L.C.), an officer of the corporation must sign the statement and include their title. If the fictitious business name includes Corporation, Corp., Incorporated, INC., Limited Liability Company, LLP, or L.L.C., the registrant must also submit a state endorsed copy of the articles of incorporation or articles of organization for the business.

How can I get started?

We'll be happy to help you in-person at our Clerk-Recorder's Office or by mail. [Click here](#) for more information on how to obtain our services. You can also call us at (510) 272-6362.

How often do I need to renew my FBN?

You must renew your FBN every five years so long as you operate your business in Alameda County. If your business is registered with our Clerk-Recorder's Office, we will send a reminder to renew your registration within 90 days of the FBN's expiration date to the business address written in the application statement.

What happens if I do not renew my FBN?

If your FBN expires, it can be claimed and registered by another entity.

Will I need the help of an outside vendor to register or renew my FBN?

We often receive questions from Alameda County business owners who receive solicitations from vendors to help renew their FBNs. These notices often arrive in their mail within six months of their FBN's expiration date and sometimes charge hundreds of dollars for their services. For most business owners, it is more efficient and cost effective to renew their FBNs by engaging the Clerk-Recorder's services directly, either in-person or by mail.

Celebrating Bay Area Manufacturing Week

Melissa Wilk Visits with Berkeley Beer Manufacturer Rare Barrel

From October 1-8, cities all over the Bay Area have been spotlighting the diverse and innovative manufacturers in our region. As part of the initiative, the City of Berkeley Office of Economic Development partnered



with The Rare Barrel Brewery to offer a fascinating glimpse into Berkeley's flourishing craft beer brewing industry.

The Rare Barrel co-founder, Alex Wallash, invited community members, including Alameda County Auditor-Controller Melissa Wilk, for a tour and tasting at its West Berkeley facility featuring their award-winning sour beer. Setting up shop in 2012, Wallash pointed to a specific reason why he chose to open the brewery in Berkeley.

"Operating an urban city brewery is not easy. But Berkeley's temperature hovers around 50-70 degrees year-round, which is the ideal climate for fermenting beer," said Wallash. In fact, the East Bay's many unique and diverse microclimates has made it a burgeoning hot spot for beer brewers in Berkeley as well as winemakers in Livermore.

Also participating in the tour and tasting was Berkeley City Councilmember Terry Taplin, whose West Berkeley district has become the new epicenter of the region's craft beer movement.

Besides Rare Barrel, Councilmember Taplin's district alone is home to 120 manufacturers. These and other manufacturers located in the city of Berkeley support more than 2,500 jobs in the city. In total, the Bay Area's manufacturers support more 300,000 jobs in the region.



[Click here](#) to learn more about The Rare Barrel. (Pictured above from Left to Right: Berkeley Councilmember Terry Taplin, Office of Economic Development's Chief Strategist Elizabeth Redman Cleveland, Alameda Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Melissa Wilk, and Rare Barrel Co-Founders Alex Wallash and Brad Goodwin.)

QUESTIONS FOR OUR OFFICE? Contact Melissa!

Are there upcoming community events that you would like us to attend? Do you have a question or topic you would like to address in a future newsletter?

[Email](#) Melissa Wilk or follow her on [Twitter](#) to let her know what questions we can answer and how we can support your efforts.



Community Spotlight: Healthy Living Festival, United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County

On September 30, the United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County (USOAC) celebrated their 18th Annual

Healthy Living Festival at the Oakland Zoo. In past years, this event has attracted hundreds of community members engaging in festivities inside the Oakland Zoo. This year due to the pandemic, the organization had planned for a smaller, drive-through celebration for 750 participants on the zoo's parking lot.



(Above: Volunteers with Auditor-Controller Melissa Wilk and Supervisor Nate Miley)

However, to everyone's pleasant surprise, things didn't quite work out that way.

"More than 1,400 people registered for this year's Healthy Living Festival," said Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley. As a long-time USOAC member, Supervisor Miley has been a key leader and organizer of USOAC's popular annual festival.

Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Melissa Wilk, members of her staff, and dozens of volunteers helped to distribute hundreds of free, highly nutritious meals and swag bags. Participants also had the opportunity to receive free COVID-19 vaccinations, COVID-19 tests, and flu vaccinations.

"This is such a wonderful event for our seniors, and every year it seems to get bigger and better," said Melissa Wilk. "I'm so proud that the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder's Office could once again support USOAC and Supervisor Miley."



The USOAC is a grassroots, multi-ethnic, intergenerational nonprofit organization focused on issues that impact Alameda County seniors and their allies. For more than 35 years, the USOAC has helped to empower older adults throughout Alameda County by serving as a catalyst for a positive change and contributing to the betterment of senior citizens and the broader community. [Learn more about the USOAC here.](#)

STAY IN TOUCH

Keep up-to-date on important information from the Office of the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder by following Melissa on Twitter ([@MelissaWilkACCR](#)).

If this email was forwarded to you, subscribe to our newsletter by emailing us at ACCR.info@acgov.org.



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