



## COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

### Commonwealth Recorder's Office

Guma' Hustisia, Imwal Aweewe, House of Justice

P.O. Box 502165, Saipan, MP 96950

Phone: (670) 236-9830 | Email: [CRO@nmijudiciary.com](mailto:CRO@nmijudiciary.com)

### Commonwealth Recorder's Office Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Disclaimer:** The information provided below does not and should not be construed as legal advice. Instead, this FAQs are for general informational purposes only. Further, the FAQ may not constitute the most up-to-date information. Readers should contact their lawyer to receive advice on any particular legal matter.

- **Question (“Q”). What is a title search? And who conducts the title search?**
  - Answer (“A”). A title search is a process of examining the public record on the history of a piece of property to determine legal ownership. It also determines whether there are any liens, encumbrances, easements or other issues affecting land interest.
  - A. A title search is conducted by a title researcher and/or a title company. The Recorder's Office does not provide a title search.
  
- **Q. Can you give me the title to my property, and can you tell me if the title is clear?**
  - A. No, the Recorder's Office does not give title. Title describes a person's right to legal ownership and use of a property, often in the form of a deed.
  - A. The Recorder's Office does not determine clear title. Such determination is made by conducting a title search performed by a title company or an attorney.
  
- **Q. What is a deed of reconveyance?**
  - A. A deed of reconveyance is a document that shows transfer of a property's title from lender to borrower. Generally, such document is issued after the mortgage has been paid in full.
  
- **Q. Can I get the original recorded document from the Recorder's Office?**
  - A. No, the Recorder's Office does not keep original documents. The original documents are returned to the filer after recording. However, you can obtain a copy of the recorded document.
  
- **Q. Can you tell me what liens I have on my property or if a specific lien has been released?**
  - A. No, the Recorder's Office does not provide such information. We can only verify what has been recorded. If the search is extensive, you

will be asked to come in and search the records yourself or have a title company do it.

- **Q. How do I file or remove a lien? How do I change the name on a legal document?**
  - A. An attorney will be the best source to assist you in filing liens or getting a lien removed from a property.
  
- **Q. How do I change a name on a legal document?**
  - A. An attorney or title company can help you to add or remove a name from a piece of property.
  
- **Q. Where can I get the legal forms for deeds, liens, etc.?**
  - A. It is best to contact a title company and/or legal resource. The Recorder's Office does not prepare documents or have forms for such purposes. Also, please note there is no notary at the Recorder's Office.
  
- **Q. Can I request for a copy of a birth or death certificate?**
  - A. Records for births and deaths are not available in our Office. They are available from the [Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation – Health and Vital Statistics Office](#).
  
- **Q. Why do I need to stand in line when recording a document?**
  - A. The Recorder's Office takes customers on a first come, first served basis.
  
- **Q. What are the fees for recording?**
  - A. Please see the [NMI Judiciary Fee Schedule](#).
  
- **Q. Will the Recorder's office help me prepare a new deed or give me advice on how to prepare a Legal document?**
  - A. The Recorder and staff are not attorneys and therefore cannot give legal advice. The responsibility of the Recorder's Office is to record legal documents, ensure they meet the standards set by the Commonwealth Recorder's Act of 2020 and the NMI Judiciary E-Recording Rules, and make them accessible to the public. The Recorder and staff assist the public in locating recorded documents and will provide a copy of the document when requested.
  
- **Q. What are your hours and where are you located?**
  - A. The Commonwealth Recorder's Office is located at the Guma' Hustisia, Imwal Aweewe, House of Justice, first floor, door two, between 8:00 am and 12:00 pm and temporarily at the Marianas Business Plaza, second floor, Suite 204, between 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm. The afternoon schedule is arranged by appointment only.

- A. CRO customers on Rota can receive assistance from Judiciary staff at the Centron Hustisia in Sinapalo between 7:30 am and 4:30 pm.
  - A. CRO customers on Tinian can receive assistance from Judiciary staff at the Kotten Tinian in San Jose between 7:30 am and 4:30 pm.
- **Q. How do I make a request to be married by a Judge or Justice?**
  - A. You may contact the Recorder's Office and provide the information below. Please note that the Recorder's Office only receives the request and provides it to the Judges/Justices' chambers for confirmation.
    - Name of Party A
    - Name of Party B
    - Requested date of marriage
    - Requested time of marriage
    - Requested location of marriage
    - Preferred Judge or Justice (if any)
    - Contact information
- **Q. Where do I record my Application for Marriage License and Record of Marriage?**
  - A. Once the Marriage License and Record of Marriage have been completed with all the required information and signatures, you may record it with the Recorder's Office. Please verify all the information before recording it.
- **Q. How do I amend my marriage record?**
  - A. Once a marriage license has been recorded, any amendments to the document can only be made through the court. You can retrieve the "Petition to Amend/Correct Marriage Certificate" form from [NMIJudiciary.gov/court-forms](http://NMIJudiciary.gov/court-forms) and file it to amend the record. Or you can contact the Family Court Division to request the form, and they will provide assistance and further instructions. The Recorder does not have the authority to amend marriage records. Please verify all the information on your marriage license before recording it to avoid the fees and process for an amendment.
- **Q. Can you let me know which document is valid?**
  - A. The Recorder and staff do not determine the validity of a document. You will need to seek interpretation from a title company or an attorney.
- **Q. Can I record a power of attorney?**
  - A. While the Commonwealth Recorder's Office previously permitted the recordation of various legal documents, including power of attorney, on January 19, 2021, the Commonwealth Recorder's Act of 2020 was signed into law. In response to this Act, on June 16, 2021,

the Commonwealth Supreme Court adopted the NMI Judiciary Rules of Electronic Recordation, which outlines the types of documents the Commonwealth Recorder's Office will accept moving forward. Documents such as general power of attorney will no longer be accepted for recordation at the CRO. For a list of the types of documents that may be recorded with the CRO, please refer to the NMI Judiciary Rules of Electronic Recordation. The document may be found at [cnmilaw.org](http://cnmilaw.org).

- **Q. Can I record an affidavit?**

- A. While the Commonwealth Recorder's Office previously permitted the recordation of various legal documents, including affidavits, on January 19, 2021, the Commonwealth Recorder's Act of 2020 was signed into law. In response to this Act, on June 16, 2021, the Commonwealth Supreme Court adopted the NMI Judiciary Rules of Electronic Recordation, which outlines the types of documents the Commonwealth Recorder's Office will accept moving forward. Documents such as affidavits will no longer be accepted for recordation at the CRO. For a list of the types of documents that may be recorded with the CRO, please refer to the NMI Judiciary Rules of Electronic Recordation may be found at [cnmilaw.org](http://cnmilaw.org).

- **Q. Can I record a spousal consent?**

- A. While the Commonwealth Recorder's Office previously permitted the recordation of various legal documents, including spousal consents, on January 19, 2021, the Commonwealth Recorder's Act of 2020 was signed into law. In response to this Act, on June 16, 2021, the Commonwealth Supreme Court adopted the NMI Judiciary Rules of Electronic Recordation, which outlines the types of documents the Commonwealth Recorder's Office will accept moving forward. Documents such as spousal consents will no longer be accepted for recordation at the CRO. For a list of the types of documents that may be recorded with the CRO, please refer to the NMI Judiciary Rules of Electronic Recordation may be found at [cnmilaw.org](http://cnmilaw.org).

- **Q. How can I pay for Recorder's Office fees?**

- A. Recorder's Office fees can only be paid with the Judiciary cashier on Saipan and the Department of Finance-Treasury office on Tinian and Rota.

- **Q. How do I contact the office if I have more questions?**

- A. You may contact the Commonwealth Recorder's Office through the phone numbers and email below.

- Phone Numbers:

- 670-236-9830

- 670-236-9831
- 670-236-9833
- 670-783-4981

▪ Email:

- [CRO@nmijudiciary.com](mailto:CRO@nmijudiciary.com)

• **Q. Where can I retrieve a Certificate of Title?**

- A. The Recorder's Office can provide a Certificate of Title if it has been recorded.

• **Q. Are the indexes organized by lot?**

- A. Documents filed with the Recorder's Office are indexed alphabetically by the names of people, companies, and organizations that have filed the documents and the names of those with whom the transactions described in the documents are being conducted. The name index will list:

- The name of the person or business that conducted the transaction, called the grantor (such as the person selling the piece of property)
- The name of the person or business with whom the transaction was conducted, called the grantee (such as the person buying the property)
- The date the transaction was recorded or filed at the Recorder's Office
- A brief letter-code notation of what kind of transaction it is (such as "DG" for a deed of gift)
- A document number for the transaction, which you use to look up a copy of the actual document (such as a deed of gift)
- A brief description of the property (such as a lot number)

• **Q. Where can I record UCC documents?**

- A. UCC documents can be recorded with the Commonwealth Recorder's Office.

• **Q. Where can I find the latest UCC forms?**

- A. UCC forms are available online at the [NMI Judiciary website – Commonwealth Recorder's Office page](#). If you have trouble retrieving the forms, please contact our office:

▪ Phone Numbers:

- 670-236-9830
- 670-236-9831
- 670-236-9833
- 670-783-4981

▪ Email:

• [CRO@nmijudiciary.com](mailto:CRO@nmijudiciary.com)

- **Q. What is a UCC-1 filing?**
  - A. A UCC-1 financing statement is a legal form that allows a creditor/lender to provide notice of a lien on a debtor's asset to secure a loan.
  
- **Q. Who should file a UCC-1 financing statement?**
  - A. Not every commercial transaction requires a UCC-1 filing. Clearly, if someone pays you cash for your product or service, you need not file a UCC-1 as no debt has been incurred. However, you should file if you engage in a transaction that incurs a debt with some asset as collateral. The order of filing determines the order in which lenders can collect. Accordingly, it is important to correctly file the UCC-1 financing statement timely.
  
- **Q. What is a UCC-2 form?**
  - A. A UCC-2 form is for changes to financing statements. The five types are as follows. The UCC-2 form and instruction can be found on the [Commonwealth Recorder's page on the NMI Judiciary website](#).
    - Continuation
    - Termination
    - Release
    - Assignment
    - Amendment
  
- **Q. What are the instructions for UCC-3?**
  - A. A UCC-3 form is used to request or copies of UCC filings. The UCC-3 form and instruction can be found on the [Commonwealth Recorder's page on the NMI Judiciary website](#).
  
- **Q. How do I find land documents if I don't have any information?**
  - A. The best way to retrieve a land document from the Recorder's Office is to have the information below.
    - File Number
    - File Date
    - Document Type
    - Grantor (s)
    - Grantee (s)
    - Property Description
  - A. The following resources are also available to retrieve information regarding properties in the CNMI.
    - [Department of Public Lands](#)
      - Phone: (670) 234-3751/52/53/54

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- Department of Land and Natural Resources – Division of Land Registration and Survey
  - Phone: 322-9987
  - Email: [dlrs.cnmi@gmail.com](mailto:dlrs.cnmi@gmail.com)
- Title Companies