

LEGAL CHANGE OF NAME IN B.C.

Changing your name is an important decision with many consequences for business and personal life. This guide explains the procedures necessary for a legal change of name in British Columbia, as well as the limitations. We hope it will help you make the best decision.

An Application for Change of Name package can be obtained in person from any Vital Statistics office or by accessing our website at www.vs.gov.bc.ca/forms/. Once you have determined that a legal change of name is right for you, a request for the required fingerprinting package may be made to HLTH.CNFORMS@gov.bc.ca. This will be mailed out within 5 business days. Telephone requests may be made by calling the Vital Statistics Agency at **250 952-2681** (Enter *54 at the main directory, and follow the directions to have a form mailed to you), or you may obtain these at a local Service BC office.

ELIGIBILITY UNDER THE B.C. NAME ACT

To make an application to change your name or your child's name, you must be at least 19 years of age. If you are under 19 years of age and wish to change your name, one of your parents must make application on your behalf.

If you are less than 19 years of age but are a parent with custody of your child then you may make application to change your name or your child's name without your parent's consent.

You must have lived in or have had a permanent home in B.C. for at least three months immediately prior to the date of application.

Applications are specific to the person changing their name. If you apply to change your surname, your spouse is entitled to use your new name, if desired.

YOU DON'T NEED A LAWYER

A change of name is applied for through the Vital Statistics Agency, as detailed in this guide.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR APPLICATION

If you are changing only the name of a child under the age of 18, the application form must be completed with the applicant parent's information as the parent is applying on behalf of a minor. Return your application to the Vital Statistics Agency along with:

- original birth certificate of the person whose name is to be changed if that person was born in Canada. If the person was born outside Canada, a certified photocopy of immigration or citizenship documentation should be provided. In addition, proof of parentage must be provided in the form of a certified photocopy of birth records.
- proof of custody and consent of the other natural parent if you are changing your child's name.
- the required fee. The fee paid includes a change of name certificate containing all names changed per the application. **It does not cover the cost of a new birth or marriage certificate.**

If you are changing your own name, also include:

- an original certificate of marriage, if married in Canada. If married outside Canada, a photocopy should be provided.

The Vital Statistics Agency may also request proof of residency or domicile in some cases.

The applicant is required to make a Statutory Declaration. Legislation allows those who are specifically authorized to witness signatures to charge a fee for this service.

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

If you are changing your own name and/or the name of a child who is 18 years of age, your application must be submitted through your local fingerprinting official. As part of the application process, the fingerprinting official will take fingerprints and submit them for the purpose of a criminal record check following completion of the name change. Details of this requirement are explained more fully within the change of name application package.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR BIRTH/MARRIAGE RECORD

If you were born in B.C., the Vital Statistics Agency will automatically change the name on your birth record after your change of name application is processed. We also change your marriage record if you were married in B.C.

If you were born or married elsewhere in Canada, the Vital Statistics Agency sends a Notice of Name Change to your province of birth or marriage. This may, or may not, result in a change of your birth or marriage record. To be sure, you should contact your province of birth.

DOCUMENTATION

Original documents sent in with your change of name application are NOT returned. After a change of name, these documents such as birth and marriage certificates, are no longer valid pieces of identification. To obtain new certificates, apply to the province in which the birth or marriage occurred, using your new name. To prevent delays, send a photocopy of the change of name certificate along with the application and appropriate fees. If you were born or married in B.C. you can apply for new certificates at the same time as you make

application for the change of name. If you wish to apply for new certificates, please ensure that you submit a separate application for each certificate type with the new name(s) recorded within the appropriate field. The application can then be submitted with your change of name application.

LIMITATIONS

You are free to choose any new name you wish, but the Chief Executive Officer of Vital Statistics has the right to refuse any application if the new name will cause confusion or embarrassment. If your application is refused for this reason, the decision can be appealed. For procedures, contact the Vital Statistics Agency.

By law in B.C., you must have a first name and a surname. Any application that results in a person having only one name will be refused.

PARENTAL CONSENT

If you have custody of your child and the consent of the other parent, you may apply to have your child's name changed. The child's written consent is required if they are 12 to 18 years of age.

If a child's surname is being changed to your spouse's surname, your spouse's consent is required.

If consent of the other parent can not be obtained, you may request a Waiver of Consent if your circumstances match those required to obtain a waiver. The applicant is required to make a Statutory Declaration with regard to this application for a waiver of consent.

SITUATIONS NOT REQUIRING A LEGAL CHANGE OF NAME

After marriage, you can choose to continue using your own surname, or you can start using your spouse's surname. This does not constitute a legal change of name under Section 3 of the *Name Act*.

A spouse by marriage may use the surname he or she had immediately before the marriage, the surname he or she had at birth or by adoption, or the surname of his or her spouse by marriage.

Under the above circumstances, individuals who decide to return to their original surname at a later date do not need to apply for a change of name. In the case of a divorce or a person just wanting to revert to a previous name, they can choose: their married surname, their previous married surname or their name at birth or by adoption.

If a person wishes to combine or hyphenate a surname upon marriage, please refer to the next section.

COMBINED OR HYPHENATED SURNAMES

If you wish to combine or hyphenate surnames, this would require a legal change of name. If, at a later date, you wish to revert to your original surname, after you legally changed to a combined or hyphenated surname, this would require a separate legal change of name.

FEES

Applications must be accompanied with the required fee in the form of a **money order** or **certified cheque** payable to the Minister of Finance, or **payment by credit card**.

An additional fee of \$25 is required for each person 18 years and older whose name is being changed. This fee will be forwarded to the RCMP for payment for the criminal record check. Include this fee in the total amount submitted to Vital Statistics. The Agency will submit this fee on your behalf.

Adult (greater than or equal to 19 years of age) **without** dependant child (18 years or younger)

\$ 137.00	Name Change Fee
<u>\$ 25.00</u>	Criminal Record Check Fee*
\$ 162.00	Total Fees

Adult (greater than or equal to 19 years of age) **with** dependant child (18 years or younger)

\$ 137.00	Name Change Fee
\$ 27.00	For Each Child
\$ 25.00	Criminal Record Check Fee* for each adult and 18 year old child

For Child Only:

\$ 137.00	Name Change Fee
\$ 27.00	For each additional child

For Birth or Marriage Search:

\$ 27.00	If event occurred in BC (if certificate not enclosed)
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*Note: Applicants who are changing their own names and/or the name of any child who is 18 years of age may be required to pay an additional payment directly to their local fingerprinting officer for fingerprinting services. Please check with your local fingerprinting officer to determine the cost and their desired method of payment.

For more information please contact:

General Inquiries: 250 952-2681
Vital Statistics Agency

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9657 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9P3

Location:
818 Fort Street
Victoria BC
Fax: 250 952-1829

Web site: <http://www.vs.gov.bc.ca>

Business Hours are:
Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Many Vital Statistics services are also available through Service BC offices in communities throughout British Columbia.



Vital Statistics
Agency

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CHILDREN
ADULTS
DOCUMENTATION
CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK
LIMITATIONS

