

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 an informed decision.

To obtain an Application for Change of Name:

- Go to www.gov.bc.ca/vitalstatistics and follow the link to “Order Certificates & Copies”.
- Visit any Service BC office.

Adults (19+) applying without children can apply online at <https://ecos.vs.gov.bc.ca/>.

ELIGIBILITY UNDER THE B.C. NAME ACT

To apply 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 apply on your behalf.

If you are under 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 his/her name. However, 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.

SITUATIONS NOT REQUIRING A LEGAL CHANGE OF NAME

After marriage, you can continue using your own surname, or you can assume 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 assume 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 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.

COMBINED OR HYPHENATED SURNAMES

If you wish to combine or hyphenate surnames, this requires 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 requires a separate legal change of name.

LIMITATIONS

You are free to choose any new name you wish, but the registrar general of Vital Statistics has the right to refuse any application if the 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.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR APPLICATION

If you are only changing the name of a child under the age of 18, you must still provide your information as the parent applicant 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 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 B.C. If married outside B.C., a photocopy should be provided.

The Vital Statistics Agency may also request proof of residency 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, you must have electronic fingerprints taken by a fingerprinting official.

Fingerprinting officials collect a fee for taking fingerprints in addition to the criminal record check fee of \$25.00. Pay the fingerprinting and criminal record check fees directly to the fingerprinting official. Include a **photocopy** of the receipt for your payment for the fingerprinting service with your Application for Change of Name. For information about electronic fingerprinting, visit the RCMP website at: www.rcmp.gc.ca/en/who-can-conduct-criminal-record-check

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 consent of the other parent cannot 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.

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

B.C. birth and marriage certificates sent in with your change of name application are NOT returned. After a change of name these documents are no longer valid pieces of identification. If born outside of B.C., you can obtain new birth certificates by applying to the province in which the birth 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, 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.

FEEES

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**.

Adult (19 years of age and older) **without** dependant child (18 years or younger)

\$ 137.00 Name Change Fee

Adult (19 years of age and older) **with** dependant child (18 years or younger)

\$ 137.00 Name Change Fee

Child Only

\$ 137.00 Name Change Fee

\$ 27.00 For each additional child

Birth or Marriage Search

\$ 27.00 If event occurred in BC and a certificate is not enclosed

For more information, contact:

General Inquiries:
250 952-2681 (Victoria)
1-888-876-1633
Vital Statistics Agency

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

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/vitalstatistics

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

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

For locations, visit www.gov.bc.ca/servicebc

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CHILDREN
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CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK
LIMITATIONS



Vital Statistics
Agency