

## 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](http://www.gov.bc.ca/vitalstatistics) and follow the link to “Order Certificates & Copies”.
- Visit any Service BC office.  
[www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations](http://www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations).
- 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 their name. However, if you apply to change your surname, your spouse is entitled to use your new name, if desired.

## CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

All applicants for a legal Change of Name in BC aged 12 years and older are required to obtain a criminal record check. These requirements must be met within 30 days before a legal change of name application is filed with the Vital Statistics Agency. The BC *Name Act*, effective September 1, 2024, prohibits a legal change of name for a person who has been:

- a. convicted of a prescribed offence as established in the *Name Act* Regulation,
- b. declared a dangerous offender,
- c. declared a long-term offender, or,
- d. found not criminally responsible due to a mental disorder.

## SITUATIONS NOT REQUIRING A LEGAL CHANGE OF NAME

After marriage, you may 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 they had immediately before the marriage, the surname they had at birth or by adoption, or assume the surname of their 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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

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:

- All original birth certificate(s) 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 their **most recently issued** immigration or citizenship documentation should be provided. Additionally, 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 the name 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:

- a photocopy of your picture ID.
- All original certificate(s) of marriage, if married in B.C. If married outside of B.C., provide a photocopy only if it shows continuity of the usage of names.

In some cases, the Vital Statistics Agency may also request proof of residency.

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.

## 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 current 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. 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 or marriage. A list of Vital Statistics contacts is available at:

[www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/about/relevant/vscc/organisations](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/about/relevant/vscc/organisations)

If you were born outside of Canada, please contact Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to determine their requirements for updating your record.

## DOCUMENTATION

Canadian birth and B.C. 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.

## 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**.

**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

\$ 27.00 For each child

**Child Only**

\$ 137.00 Name Change Fee

\$ 27.00 For each additional child

**Birth or Marriage Search**

\$ 27.00 If event occurred in B.C. and a certificate is not enclosed

For more information, contact:

### General Inquiries:

250 952-2681 (Victoria)

1 888 876-1633 (within B.C.)

### Mailing Address:

Vital Statistics Agency

Attn: Confidential Services

PO Box 9657 Stn Prov Govt

Victoria BC V8W 9P3

### Website:

[www.gov.bc.ca/vitalstatistics](http://www.gov.bc.ca/vitalstatistics)

### Business Hours are:

Monday to Friday

8:30 am to 4:30 pm (PT)

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

### For locations, visit:

[www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations](http://www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations)

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ELIGIBILITY  
CHILDREN  
ADULTS  
DOCUMENTATION  
CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK  
LIMITATIONS



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

Vital Statistics  
Agency