



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 (B.C.), as well as the limitations. We hope it will help you make the best decision for your personal situation.

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, either a parent or legal guardian must make the application on your behalf. You must have resided in B.C. for three months immediately prior to the date of application or if temporarily out of the province, have a permanent address in B.C. you are expecting to return to in the near future. Proof of residency may be required.

WHEN A LEGAL CHANGE OF NAME IS NOT REQUIRED

After marriage, you can choose to continue using your own surname, or you can start using your spouse's surname. Using your spouse's surname does not represent a legal change of name but is considered a legal assumption of name under Section 3 of the B.C. Name Act.

Where an individual has assumed a spouse's surname and decides to return to their original surname at a later date, they do not need to apply for a legal change of name.

YOU DON'T NEED A LAWYER

A change of name is applied for through the B.C. Vital Statistics Agency, as detailed in this brochure. You will only require the services of a lawyer, notary public, or a commissioner for taking affidavits for witnessing your signature. Legislation allows those who are specifically authorized to witness signatures to charge a fee for this service.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR APPLICATION

If you are changing only the name of a child aged 18 or younger, 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 B.C. Vital Statistics Agency along with:

- The 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 must be provided. In addition, proof of parentage must be provided in the form of a certified photocopy of the birth record. Where these documents are in a language other than English, a certified translation must be provided.
- Proof of custody and consent of the other parent if you are changing your child's name.
- The child's written consent, in the form of a brief letter, is required if they are aged 12 or older. If a child's surname is being changed to your spouse's surname, your spouse's consent is required.

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- All individuals changing their name who are 18 years and older, will be required to submit fingerprints.
- 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 and were married in Canada, you must also include your original certificate of marriage.

WAIVER OF PARENTAL CONSENT

If you have a final custody order for your child and the consent of the other parent, you may apply to have your child's name changed. 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.

These include:

- The person whose consent is required is not recorded on the registration of live birth of the person whose name is to be changed; **or**
- The person whose consent is required is deceased, proven by a copy of a death certificate maintained in the change of name file; **or**
- The person whose consent is required is mentally disordered, as demonstrated by statutory declaration and supporting evidence; **or**
- A person whose consent is required is unreasonably withholding their consent; **or**
- Exceptional circumstances make it unreasonable to seek the consent of the required individual; **or**
- The person whose consent is required cannot be located after a reasonable, diligent and adequate search has been conducted as demonstrated by statutory declaration and supporting evidence.

The applicant is required to make a statutory declaration with regard to this application for a waiver of consent.

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.

COMBINED OR HYPHENATED SURNAMES

If you wish to have a combined or hyphenated surname, this cannot be assumed under Section 3 of the B.C. Name Act and will require a legal change of name. If, at a later date, you wish to revert to your original surname, this will require a new legal change of name.

LIMITATIONS

You are free to choose any new name you wish, however, the chief executive officer of the B.C. Vital Statistics Agency 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 appeal procedures, contact the B.C. 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 HAPPENS TO YOUR IDENTITY RECORDS?

If you were born in B.C., the B.C. 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 British Columbia. If you were born or married in Canada, the B.C. Vital Statistics Agency will forward information about the change to the applicable jurisdiction.

If you were born or married outside of Canada, you will be responsible for notifying the applicable jurisdiction, or Citizenship and Immigration Canada, of your legal change of name. You will need to provide them with either the original or a certified photocopy of your change of name certificate.

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FEES

Applications must be accompanied by the required fees in the form of a money order or 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. The additional fee is forwarded to the RCMP for payment for the criminal record check. Include this fee in the total amount submitted to the B.C. Vital Statistics Agency.

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

\$ 137.00	Name Change fee
\$ 25.00	Criminal Record Check fee
\$ 162.00	Total Fees

Adult (greater than or equal to 19 years of age) changing name **with** dependent child (18 years or younger) also changing name

\$ 137.00	Name Change fee
\$ 27.00	For each additional child
\$ 25.00	Criminal Record Check fee for each adult and 18 year old child

For Child Only Changing Name:

\$ 137.00	Name Change fee
\$ 27.00	For each additional child
\$ 25.00	Criminal Record Check fee for each 18 year old child

For Birth or Marriage Search:

\$ 27.00	If event occurred in B.C. (if certificate not enclosed)
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Once you have determined that a legal change of name is right for you, an application package can be obtained in person from any B.C. Vital Statistics Agency office or Service BC centre, or by accessing our website at www.vs.gov.bc.ca/forms/.

A request for the required fingerprinting package may be sent by email to HLTH.CNFORMS@gov.bc.ca and will be mailed out within five business days. Telephone requests may also be made by calling our toll-free number at **1-888-876-1633** or in Victoria at **250 952-2681** (enter *54 at the main directory, and follow the directions to have a form mailed to you), or by going in person to a local Service BC centre.

Where can I get more information?

**British Columbia
Vital Statistics Agency**

818 Fort St
PO Box 9657 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9P3

General Inquiries: **250 952-2681** (Victoria)
1-888-876-1633 (toll-free in B.C.)

250-605 Robson St
Vancouver BC V6B 5J3

101-1475 Ellis St
Kelowna BC V1Y 2A3

Any Service BC centre in British Columbia

Business hours are:

Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 p.m.

Please note that services at above listed addresses and telephone numbers are available only in English.