

Marital Name Changes

Marriage has traditionally been a time when women take their husband's family name. In recent times this tradition has been altered with some women keeping their own family name, or by couples adopting a hyphenated name such as Smith-Jones. A few couples have chosen to adopt a new family name, or the husband has taken the wife's last name. Here are the answers to frequently asked questions about marital name changes.

How do I change my name by marriage?

Minnesota Statute 517.08 subd. 1a. (9) requires that the application for a marriage license list the full names the bride and groom will use after the marriage. You change your name by listing your new name on the license application. When the marriage license is issued by the county it will show the name change, but the change does not take effect until the time of marriage. Special conditions apply if an applicant has a felony conviction.

Can both the Bride and Groom change their names?

The wording of Minnesota Statute 517.08 subd. 1a. (9) has been interpreted differently in each county in the Twin City area. Some counties, only allow the couple to adopt one or both of their two last names. Some counties, including Anoka, Ramsey, and Washington County, allow a couple to choose an altogether different name. Before you buy your marriage license in a county be sure that your choice of names is acceptable. A marriage license can be purchased in any county in Minnesota and the ceremony can then be performed anywhere in the State. Shop around until your proposed name change is acceptable; and then purchase your license in that county.

How do I prove that my name has been changed?

On the day of your marriage ceremony, Judge Armstrong will give you two signed copies of the marriage license. These uncertified "souvenir" copies may be sufficient for many transactions. After the marriage ceremony Judge Armstrong is required to mail or deliver the original signed marriage certificate to the county from which it was purchased. Approximately two to three weeks after the date of marriage, the county will mail a certified copy of the marriage certificate to the address listed on the application. This certified copy has a certification stamp and a raised seal. You can obtain additional certified copies at any time from any county in Minnesota for a fee. A certified copy is all that is legally required as proof of your new name.

Who should I inform about my name change?

Government Agencies

- Social Security Administration - call 1-800-772-1213 - or the web site is www.ssa.gov - and request an application for change of name, or download the form at www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.html. There is no charge to obtain a Social Security card in your new name. The Social Security Administration will automatically inform the IRS and the Minnesota Department of Revenue. You may receive official looking correspondence asking you to pay \$15.00 to \$30.00 to change your name for Social Security. *These are private companies offering a service you can already obtain for free.*
- Department of Public Safety, Driver and Vehicle Services Division - to change your driver's license and vehicle title registration.
- Voter registration – you must re-register - obtain a registration card at your city or county government center.
- Passport - submit a passport amendment form DSP-19. This form can be downloaded at travel.state.gov/name_change.html
- Post Office – Stop by your local post office to update their record for your name and address, or do it on the web at www.moversguide.com

Banking, Financial and Pension

- Bank and other institutions for loans, checking, and savings accounts.
- Credit card and other charge accounts.
- Pension, retirement funds, military retirement, and the Veterans Administration.

Personal Records

- Employer, Labor Union.
- Amend your will - this should also be done because you are now married.
- Life, automobile, medical and other insurance providers.

- Doctors, dentists, pharmacies and hospitals may need to amend their records so future insurance claims can be properly processed with your insurance carriers.

Memberships and Organizations

- Update records at colleges and universities, social, religious, and other organizations.