

Can I Choose Any Name I Want?

There are some restrictions on what you may choose as your new name. Generally, the limits are as follows:

- You cannot choose a name with fraudulent intent -- meaning you intend to do something illegal. For example, you cannot legally change your name to avoid paying debts, keep from getting sued, or get away with a crime.
- You cannot interfere with the rights of others, which generally means choosing the name of a famous person with the intent to mislead. For example, most judges will not approve your renaming yourself George W. Bush or William (Bill) Clinton unless you have a convincing reason not related to the famous politicians.
- You cannot use a name that would be intentionally confusing. This might be a number or punctuation -- for example, "10," "III," or "?."
- You cannot choose a name that is a racial slur.
- You cannot choose a name that could be considered a "fighting word," which includes threatening or obscene words, or words likely to incite violence.

Do I Have to File Forms in Court to Change My Birth Name?

Generally, yes. However, in some states, you can still change your name through use. If you are interested in the usage method to change your name, you can find out whether you can do so in your state or whether your state requires a court order by contacting your local clerk of the court.

How Do I Implement My Name Change?

Whether you have changed your name by usage or by court order, the most important part of accomplishing your name change is to let others know you've taken a new name. Although it may take a little time to contact government agencies and businesses, don't be intimidated by the task—it's a common procedure. Below are some common institutions you will have to notify:

- Department of Records or Vital Statistics (issuers of birth certificates)
- Banks and other financial institutions
- Creditors and debtors
- Telephone and utility companies
- State taxing authority
- Insurance agencies
- Registrar of Voters
- Passport office
- Public assistance (welfare) office
- Veterans Administration

Finally, remember to change your name on other important legal papers—for example, powers of attorney, living wills and contracts.

I Am Getting a Divorce. Can I Resume My Maiden Name?

It is fairly common for a woman to request the resumption of her maiden name when she gets divorced. If you are the plaintiff, the party filing for divorce, then you can request it in your complaint. If you are the defendant, you can respond to the complaint by filing an answer and counterclaim requesting the resumption of your maiden name. The decree of divorce signed by the judge will state that you are allowed to resume the use of your maiden name. Please be sure to check with your state for further guidance.

This handout is for basic information on topic covered as it relates to military personnel stationed in the United Kingdom. It is not intended to take the place of legal advice from a Judge Advocate. There may be important exceptions in some states to the information presented here. Please contact the Legal Office for questions and further information. You may view more information on various legal topics at the Air Force Legal Assistance website found at <https://aflegalassistance.law.af.mil>. Additionally, complete legal worksheets for Wills, Living Wills, Powers of Attorney (General, Special, and for Health Care), and access to the Online Survey are found on the Air Force Legal Assistance website.

Scan Below to Access the:

RAF Mildenhall Legal Office Website
www.mildenhall.af.mil/Info/Legal-Office



Legal Assistance Website
<https://aflegalassistance.law.af.mil>



Legal Assistance Information Series NAME CHANGE



Hours of Operation (Walk-ins)
Notary Public & Powers of Attorney
Monday – Friday: 800-1630 hrs

Legal Assistance
By Appointment Only

100 ARW/JA
APO AE 09459
DSN 314-238-2028
COMM (0)1638-54-2028
E-mail: 100ARW.JAV3@mildenhall.af.mil

Scan Below to Access Our Website
www.mildenhall.af.mil/Info/Legal-Office

