

Name Change

Any person may change his name as long as the change is not for a fraudulent purpose. Reasons for a name change are varied and personal. However, if you want to make it "legal" you will have to go through a court in the U.S. and file a formal petition for name change. You must determine which court has jurisdiction for the name change petition. Generally this is determined by your legal residency. If you are in Germany, you still must go through the appropriate state court. You can represent yourself or you can retain an attorney in the U.S. If you decide to represent yourself, you can write to the Clerk of Court where you want to file your petition and request sample pleadings and requirements.

Prohibited purposes for changing your name:

The name cannot be chosen with fraudulent intent.

You cannot choose a name that is intentionally confusing, such as one with numbers or symbols.

Your name cannot be a racial slur, nor can it contain threatening or obscure words, or words likely to incite violence.

Your name cannot interfere with any trademarked name or with the rights of another (e.g., the name of a famous person employed in a similar field).

Convicted felons generally are unable to change their names.

Can I revert to my maiden name as I go through a divorce?

It is a simple matter, during your divorce proceedings, to request the court to restore your maiden name. The court can include such an order in your divorce decree. If you are divorced and did not get such an order, you must go back to the court where you were divorced and ask for the divorce decree to be amended or file a petition for name change in the appropriate court of your state of residence.

Can I collect government benefits under my new name?

Yes, but with many government benefit programs, like Social Security, require a court order approving the name change or requires the change complies with the applicable state law (such as an administrative procedure).

Does the Army have special requirements for changing my name?

Yes. These requirements are outlined and can be found in Army Regulation 600-8-104 Military Personnel Information Management/ Records, Chapter 6, Section VIII. **HOWEVER CHANGING YOUR NAME WITH THE ARMY IS NOT, BY ITSELF, A LEGAL NAME CHANGE.**

Where can I find more information regarding the laws of my State?

<http://namechangelaw.com/states.htm> Contains information on name change law by state .

<http://www.mylawyer.com/guide.asp?level=1&id=44> Also contains information on name change law by state.

<http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.html> Contains information on changing the name on your Social Security Card.