



FROM COUNSEL

A Preventive Law Service of The Office of The Judge Advocate General
Keeping You Informed On Personal Legal Affairs

Name Change & Official Army Personnel Records

Generally:

In theory, any person can change his or her name simply by using the new name instead of the old. You may certainly “go by” your desired name before you complete the process of officially changing it, but in reality, you will find it impossible to conduct any official business under a name without identification - which means an “official” name change.

The good news is that officially changing your name is a straightforward process. The best place to start looking for instructions and forms is on your local state or county court website. If you are a Soldier, you may also be able to do it through your home of record.

Most states have simplified the process so you will not need an attorney. That said, you are always welcome to make an appointment at Legal Assistance should you run into problems.

Once you have your paperwork, start spreading the word! It can be easy to overlook an important entity you should notify. Here is a list of some potentially important ones:

- Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)
- Schools (yours and your children’s)
- Post office (via change of address form)
- Department of Motor Vehicles
- Social Security Administration
- Department of Records or Vital Statistics (issuers of birth certificates)
- Banks and Other Financial Institutions
- Creditors and Debtors
- Telephone and Utility Companies
- Internal Revenue Service
- State Taxing Authority
- Insurance Agencies
- Registrar of Voters
- Passport Office
- Veterans Administration
- Your doctor(s) and/or hospital
- Public Assistance

A good additional resource is FindLaw (<http://www.findlaw.com/>). Search for “name change.”

Official Army Records:

Paragraph 5-4, Army Regulation 600-8-104, *Military Personnel Information Management/Records*, outlines Army procedure and documentation requirements (e.g., marriage certificate or divorce decree, court order) for changing a Soldier's name in official Army records due to a legal name change. Army regulations are available online at the Army Publishing Directorate website, www.apd.army.mil. Use the drop-down menu for Publications -> Administrative -> Army Regulations.

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