

## **How do you get a name change in Ohio?**

In a divorce case, the wife may ask the court to change her last name to her maiden name, and the court may then include the name change in the final divorce decree. Otherwise, there are two ways for someone to legally change their name. First, a person may simply “assume” a new name if it is done for an “honest” purpose and not for fraudulent purposes such as using an alias to avoid creditors or escape prosecution. You can “assume” a new name simply by using that name in all future transactions, relationships, etc.

Second, in Ohio, a person can obtain a court order for a formal change of name by filing an application requesting a name change in the local probate court, getting a hearing date for a hearing on your petition for a name change, and publishing notice of your petition and hearing date in a local newspaper of general circulation once at least 30 days before the hearing on the application, and testifying at the court hearing as to your reasons for requesting the name change. Again, you cannot request and obtain a name change for the purpose of avoiding creditors, evading criminal prosecution or investigation, or for other fraudulent purposes.

If you apply for a name change for your children, you will usually also have to serve a copy of your petition and notice of the hearing date on the other parent or file the other parent’s written consent to the name change. Courts are often reluctant to change the children’s last names over their father’s objections. However, if there are good reasons for doing so, such as making the names of the children and the custodial parent consistent, the court may grant the petition to change the children’s names.

Remember: If you are a victim of domestic violence, change your Social Security number (SSN) before you change your name, and do the same for your children if you are also seeking to change their last names.

For further info, use the Search This Site button on our web site with the term “name change” to get a list of links and documents.