

Actual Pennsylvania Name Change Law

TITLE 54. NAMES

CHAPTER 7. JUDICIAL CHANGE OF NAME

§ 701. Court approval required for change of name.

(a) General rule.- It shall be unlawful for any person to assume a name different from the name by which such person is and has been known, unless such change in name is made pursuant to proceedings in court as provided by this chapter.

(b) Informal change of name. Notwithstanding subsection (a), a person may at any time adopt and use any name if such name is used consistently, non-fraudulently and exclusively.

§ 702. Change by order of court.

The court of common pleas of any county may by order change the name of any person resident in the county.

§ 703. Effect on children.

(a) General rule.- Whenever an order is made under this chapter changing the surname of anyone who is at the time thereof the parent of a minor child or adopted minor child, then under the care of such parent, the new surname of such parent shall, unless otherwise ordered by the court, thereafter be borne likewise by such minor child.

(b) Further change on attaining majority.-Any minor child whose surname has been changed pursuant to subsection (a) upon attaining majority shall also be entitled to the benefits of section 702 (relating to change by order of court).

§ 704. Divorced person may resume prior name.

(a) General rule.- Any person who is divorced from the bonds of matrimony may resume any prior surname used by him or her by filing a written notice to such effect in the office of the clerk of the court in which the decree of divorce was entered, showing the caption and docket number of the proceeding in divorce.

(b) Foreign decrees.-Where a divorced person has been the subject of a decree of divorce granted in a foreign jurisdiction, a certified copy of such foreign divorce decree may be filed with the clerk of the court of common pleas of the county where the person resides and, thereafter, the notice specified in subsection (a) may be filed with reference to such decree.

§ 705. Penalty for violation of chapter.

Any person violating the provisions of this chapter for purpose of avoiding payment of taxes or other debts commits a summary offense.

§ 706. Change of name of individual.

(a) Petition for change of name.-Any person desiring to change his or her name shall file a petition in the court of common pleas of the county in which he or she shall reside, setting forth such desire and intention and the reason therefor, together with the residence of petitioner, and his or her residence or residences for and during five years prior thereto. Where the petitioner is a married person, the other spouse may join as a party petitioner, in which event, upon compliance with the provisions of this section, said spouse shall also be entitled to the benefits hereof. The court shall, thereupon, enter an order directing that notice be given of the filing of said petition and of the day set for the hearing thereon, which hearing shall be not less than one month or more than three months after the filing of said petition, and said notice shall be:

(1) Published in two newspapers of general circulation in said county or county contiguous thereto, one of which publications may be in the official paper for the publication of legal notices in said county.

(2) Given to any nonpetitioning parent of a child whose name may be affected by the proceedings.

(b) Court hearing and decree.-At the hearing of said petition, any person having lawful objection to the change of name may appear and be heard. If the court be satisfied after said hearing that there is no lawful objection to the granting of the prayer of said petition, a decree may be entered by said court changing the name as prayed for, if at said hearing the petitioner or petitioners shall present to the court proof of publication of said notice as required by the order, together with official searches of the proper offices of the county wherein petitioner or petitioners reside and of any other county wherein petitioner or petitioners may have resided within five years of the filing of his or her petition for change of name, or a certificate in lieu thereof given by a corporation authorized by law to make such searches, showing that there are no judgments or decrees of record or any other matter of like character against said petitioner or petitioners.