

A FREE DOWNLOAD FROM ULC.ORG



**The Universal Life Church Monastery's**  
**GUIDE TO CHANGING YOUR NAME**

*The ULC Monastery staff highly encourages its ministers to forward the following information to couples whose weddings they perform. The wedding itself is only an early step for couples as they get ready to start their new lives together, and the process of changing names is a significant component of the post-honeymoon adjustments that every pair of newlyweds must make. Newly-married couples will greatly appreciate any help Universal Life Church ministers can offer to them in this regard; the tips and checklists provided below will surely help make their lives easier.*

### **Background on Name Changes**

There are no federal or state legal requirements that force a newlywed to assume their spouse's name after the marriage ceremony. However, many couples choose to assume their partner's name or to combine their last names after exchanging marriage vows. In order to change your last name, you will need a certified copy of your marriage certificate from the clerk's office in the county where you were married.

### **Preparing to Change Your Name**



Because some organizations and governmental agencies will require a notarized copy of your marriage certificate, it is best to obtain two or more official copies for your records. If you do not automatically receive copies of your notarized marriage license in the mail shortly after the wedding, you may wish to call the clerk's office where your marriage license was filed and request that copies of this license be sent to you expeditiously so

that you can begin the process of legally taking your spouse's name.

It is best to wait until after your honeymoon to legally update your name because many travel documents, including your passport, and any plane tickets purchased prior to your wedding, will be in your single or maiden name. You do not want the wedding to go well and then be barred from entering the country where you have planned the honeymoon of your dreams! Changing your legal name on your passport usually takes up to six weeks after you send the appropriate documentation into the passport agency, including a certified copy of your marriage certificate.

### **Whom to Contact – Government Agencies**

One of the first agencies with which to file a change of name application is the United States Social Security Administration. This application is known as the Social Security

#5 form, which shows a change of marital status or name. It is recommended that you file this form promptly after your honeymoon, so that your records reflect your married name and/or status for the current tax year. Rest assured that your Social Security number will not change, only the name on your card. You should receive your new social security card within two weeks if you mail in the aforementioned form.

Even if you do not take your spouse's name, it is advisable to file the Social Security #5 form anyway in order to indicate a change in marital status. A visit to your local Social Security office may be all that is necessary. The agent may only look at a copy of your marriage certificate and return the original copy to you, but please be aware that the representative may keep a copy of the certificate for the agency's records.



The U.S. Department of Immigration and Naturalization is another governmental agency that requires you to file an updated name form rather quickly after the wedding.

### ***Whom to Contact – Banks, Insurance Companies, Etc.***

Updating your name promptly on your driver's license and on any insurance policies, including your life and accidental death insurance policies, is very important. Most of these agencies will require a copy of your official marriage certificate and a copy of your new social security card in order to update your policies.

It is also very important to quickly update your name on your bank accounts and any debit or credit cards attached to them. Most banks will require you to furnish a copy of your updated driver's license and your notarized marriage certificate when you are changing your name. Additionally, you will want to order a set of checks with your new name. Do keep in mind that there may be a number of bank fees associated with requesting new debit cards, credit cards and checks.

If you are taking your spouse's name after the wedding, or if you are combining your name with your spouse's last name, you will want to send a number of other organizations and agencies your new information. In addition to Social Security, DMV, INS and your banks, you will also want to change your name on vehicle titles and registrations, car insurance policies, health insurance policies, forms at your doctor's office and so on.

It is not necessary to change your name on club rosters, health club memberships and other recreational and professional organizations, but you may find it to be beneficial to do so over time.

### ***Additional Name Change Guides***



If changing your name on all of the above forms and accounts feels overwhelming, there are a number of name change kits available online for a nominal fee that will guide you through the process. These kits include:

**Bride Kit** - “Free Name Change Kit for Brides”

**The Name Change Kit** - in-depth software and book guides for name changes

### ***Final Checklist***

Remember to change your name with your local post office, mortgage company and the voter registration bureau in your area. You may also want to update your name on any real estate holdings you may have as well as leases, real estate loans, investment accounts and wills. It is also recommended that you change your name on previous medical records. Of course, don't forget to tell your employer to change your name for payroll purposes.