

How do you go about changing the name on your social security card?

Bureaucratic processes can be a time-consuming rigmarole these days, but unfortunately, a very necessary one. You certainly don't want to be caught out with the wrong identification details, whether it's your driver's license, passport or Social Security card. Names and details change all the time for a variety of reasons, and it's important you keep this information up-to-date. If the time ever comes to produce your documents and you've neglected to make a vital edit – it could land you in some seriously hot water.

Fortunately, as much as it might be a hassle, changing details is usually pretty straightforward – if you know what you're doing. With this in mind, here's what you need to know when changing the name on your Social Security card.

Preparation is Key

First thing's first, you're going to want to gather all the relevant documents that prove you are who you say you are. This will include evidence that you are a US citizen. At present, only two documents are regarded as being valid for this purpose – your birth certificate or your passport. Remember – copies will not be accepted, so you need to make sure you bring originals.

Non-US residents and foreign-born citizens can use other documents to prove their identity, including a certificate of citizenship and lawful resident card. If in doubt, check with your local Social Security office.

Proving the Change of Details

Once you've got your legal identification sorted, you can't just claim to have changed your name without proof. Or any other change for that matter. You need to be able to provide an original copy of a document that proves your name change. This can be a marriage certificate, divorce certificate, court order or some other legitimate document that is relevant to the change you're making. Once again – no photocopies will be accepted.

Application Forms

You've sorted all your documents, now you need to fill out the application form. You can obtain one directly from your local Social Security Office either by telephone or dropping by in person. The form is also available to download, or it can be completed online and your documents mailed to the relevant department. For peace of mind, however, and since you're using original documents, it's recommended that you go in person to your local office, once you've gathered everything you need and completed the application form.

Find Your Local Social Security Office

Having done the hard part, it's just a matter of handing it all in. Search online to discover the whereabouts of your local Social Security office, then take all your documents along and apply for your name change – or any other change of details you wish to make. Bear in mind that your actual number will never change – that's something you're stuck with for life.

Checklist

It's a very good idea to go over everything one more time before you hand everything in. Mistakes can easily be made and will slow down your application significantly, even if you miss something as simple as signing your name. Take a bit of time to double check and it will save you a lot of grief in the long run. After that, it's just a matter of sitting back and waiting for your shiny new Social Security card. Good luck!