

NAMES FORMAT UNDER PHILIPPINE LAWS

The Philippines has its own Naming Convention that shall be followed by all its citizens.

The said format of names of Philippine citizens must be followed in all Philippine documents including in their Philippine passport. The following Philippine laws shall apply:

On surnames:

- Title XIII Use of Surname, Article 364 and 370 of [Republic Act \(RA\) No. 386 or The Civil Code of the Philippines](#), to wit:

“Art. 364. Legitimate and legitimated children shall principally use the surname of the father.

“Art. 370. A married woman may use:

- (1) Her maiden first name and surname and add her husband's surname, or
- (2) Her maiden first name and her husband's surname or
- (3) Her husband's full name, but prefixing a word indicating that she is his wife, such as "Mrs."

Note that for married Philippine women who wish to affix the surname of the husband as her married surname, the format will be the maiden surname first followed by the surname of the husband. The format “Maiden Surname – Married Surname” is allowed.

Once the married surname has been used in a Philippine document, however, any subsequent change or amendment to it cannot be done without an order from a competent court.

- Title XIII Use of Surname, Article 376 of RA 386 states that, “No person can change his name or surname without judicial authority.” Thus, reversion to maiden surname to the maiden name would require a judicial authority / court order from the Philippine Court.

On first name (given names) or nickname

- Section 4 of [RA 9048](#), as follows:

"SECTION 4. Grounds for Change of First Name or Nickname. – The petition for change of first name or nickname may be allowed in any of the following cases:

1. The petitioner finds the first name or nickname to be ridiculous, tainted with dishonor or extremely difficult to write or pronounce.

2. The new first name or nickname has been habitually and continuously used by the petitioner and he has been publicly known by that by that first name or nickname in the community: or
3. The change will avoid confusion."

Grounds for the change

The Philippine Supreme Court enumerated the following valid grounds or reasons to validly ask the court for a change of name:

"A person can effect a change of name under Rule 103 (CHANGE OF NAME) using valid and meritorious grounds including: (a) when the name is ridiculous, dishonorable or extremely difficult to write or pronounce; (b) when the change results as a legal consequence such as legitimation; (c) when the change will avoid confusion; (d) when one has continuously used and been known since childhood by a Filipino name, and was unaware of alien parentage; (e) a sincere desire to adopt a Filipino name to erase signs of former alienage, all in good faith and without prejudicing anybody; and (f) when the surname causes embarrassment and there is no showing that the desired change of name was for a fraudulent purpose or that the change of name would prejudice public interest. Respondents reason for changing his name cannot be considered as one of, or analogous to, recognized grounds, however."

Concerned clients intending to make change/s on their names / surnames, not falling within the clerical correction of names under [RA No. 9048](#) as amended by [RA 10172](#) should seek the services of a lawyer in the Philippines to lodge a petition for special proceedings in a competent Philippine Court. The competent Philippine Court would assess if the grounds cited in the petition are meritorious.

For corrections of clerical error in the civil registry records, please click here. ([Correction of Entries in the Civil Registry](#)).