

New Names Law – Family Code Section 306.5

Effective January 1, 2010

How do I change my name after marriage?

California law allows each person who obtains a marriage license to decide to change either their middle or last name, or both names. When you apply for a marriage license, there is a place for you to provide your new middle and/or last name to be used after your get married.

What are my options if I want to change my middle name?

Each person may adopt any of the following middle names:

1. You can use your current last name or the last name of the person you are marrying;
2. You can use the last name you were given at birth or the last name given at birth of the person you are marrying;
3. You can hyphenate your current middle name with your last name or hyphenate your current middle name with the last name of the person you are marrying; or
4. You can hyphenate your current middle name with your last name given at birth or hyphenate your current middle name with the last name given at birth of the person you are marrying.

What are my options if I want to change my last name?

Each person may adopt any of the following last names:

1. You can use the current last name of either person getting married;
2. You can use the last name given at birth for either person getting married;
3. You can combine into a single last name all or a portion of your current last names or your last names given at birth of each person getting married; or
4. You can hyphenate the two last names.

Can I change my first name when I get married?

No. The first name of the each person getting married may not be changed on the marriage license.

Can I change my name after I get my marriage license?

Social Security and the Department of Motor Vehicles will ***not*** allow a person to change their name using the marriage certificate unless the new name is shown in the new name fields. These agencies require you to get a court order to change your name after marriage.

If you have questions regarding whether you should or should not list your new name on your marriage license application, we suggest you consult with an attorney prior to applying for the marriage license.

Examples – Part 1

Abby Nicole Walker (last name on birth certificate is Smith)

James David Jones (name on birth certificate is same as current name)

Options for Abby's new <u>middle</u> names	
Option #	Choices
1	Jones
	Walker
2	Smith
3	Nicole-Walker
	Nicole-Jones
4	Nicole-Smith

Options for Abby's new <u>last</u> names	
Option #	Choices
1	Jones
	Walker
2	Smith
3	Walkerjones
	Joneswalker
	Walones
	Jolker
	This list goes on.....
4	Jones-Walker
	Walker-Jones

Examples – Part 2

Abby Nicole Walker (last name on birth certificate is Smith)

James David Jones (name on birth certificate is same as current name)

Options for James' new <u>middle</u> names	
Option #	Choices
1	Jones
	Walker
2	Smith
3	David-Walker
	David-Jones
4	David-Smith

Options for James' new <u>last</u> names	
Option #	Choices
1	Jones
	Walker
2	Smith
3	Walkerjones
	Joneswalker
	Walones
	Jolker
	This list goes on.....
4	Jones-Walker
	Walker-Jones