

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR NAME CHANGE

Questions can arise while you are looking for the content that you need. The following are common questions that have often been posed to our office.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR CHANGING/CONFORMING A NAME?

A person desiring to change/conform his or her name must be a resident of Hamilton County for at least 60 days prior to the filing of an application, with this Court.

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR CHANGING/CONFORMING A NAME?

- a. Obtain appropriate forms from the Probate Court. Complete the forms and file with the Probate Court and pay court costs. At the time of filing, a case number will be assigned and a hearing date will be set, if required.
- b. If a hearing is not required, you will receive your Court Order Changing/Conforming Name the same day you file the Application to Change/Conform Name.
- c. A certified copy of the birth certificate shall be presented to the Probate Court with the Application to Change/Conform Name of a Minor and Conform Name of Adult.
- d. If publication is required, your legal ad will be placed in a newspaper of general circulation in Hamilton County at least thirty (30) days prior to the hearing.
- e. Government Issued Documents are required for the conforming name. The conformed name must be one of the names used on at least one of the Government Issued Documents. Examples of these government issued documents are:
 - Passport
 - State Issued ID
 - Military Records
 - Social Security Card
 - Children's Birth Certificates
 - Death Records
 - Census Records
 - Marriage License Records

A CITIZEN’S GUIDE TO COMMUNICATING WITH THE JUDGE AND MAGISTRATES

Why can’t I communicate directly with the judge or magistrate on my case?

If the matters are contested, judges and magistrates are not allowed to communicate with individual parties. This is what the law calls an *ex-parte* communication (this is when a judge or magistrate only communicates with an individual party, on their own, without the knowledge of all parties to a case). In order to keep the court process as fair, equal and as transparent as possible, *ex-parte* communication is strictly forbidden. It is unfair for the court to share information without all of the parties present.

You cannot email the judge or magistrate, as the email is considered an *ex-parte* communication. In addition, emails are not pleadings (motions.) You cannot write a personal letter to the judge or magistrate as this may be considered an *ex-parte* communication.

How can I speak to the judge or magistrate on my case?

Typically, to speak to the judge or magistrate on your case, you must file a written motion with the court explaining what you want the court to do and all motions become part of the public record. You also have to send a copy of whatever you file to the other parties, or their attorney if they are represented by an attorney (this is called “service”). A motion is not considered an *ex-parte* communication because all parties are officially notified. You may be required to pay a filing fee when you file your written motion. Please note, there is no fee if you wish to speak to the magistrate in an uncontested matter, on their assigned walk-in days.

I’ve heard there’s always a magistrate on duty to hear arguments immediately – what does that mean?

There is a magistrate on duty every business day. The on-duty magistrate may answer generic procedural questions. The on-duty magistrate may also discuss matters in an uncontested case. For all other matters, the on-duty magistrate is prohibited from speaking with you. To address the court for these matters, you must file a written motion. The on-duty magistrate will set the matter for hearing before the magistrate assigned on your case or the judge.

What if I need to tell the judge or magistrate something I don’t want the other party to know about?

Unfortunately, you cannot withhold information from another party to your case. In order to keep the case fair to everyone involved, as soon as you tell the judge or magistrate something, you must also tell the other parties. All sides must have an opportunity to respond to the information that you have shared with the court.