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## INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Health

### **Changes to Name Act help keep people safe**

VICTORIA – Legislative changes are now in effect that will prevent dangerous persons convicted of serious Criminal Code offences from legally changing their names.

The amendments, which came into effect on Sept. 1, 2024, demonstrate the Province’s commitment to make sure people cannot hide behind a name change to avoid accountability for their crime. The changes also increase transparency, so people, especially those who are disproportionately more likely to be victimized by crime, feel safer in their communities.

The Name Amendment Act (No. 2), 2024 requires all applicants for a legal change of name in British Columbia aged 12 years and older to have a criminal-record check. This requirement must be met within 30 days before a change-of-name application is filed with the Vital Statistics Agency.

The Name Act now prohibits a legal change of name for a person who has been:

- convicted of a prescribed offence as established in the Name Regulation;
- found to be a dangerous offender;
- found to be a long-term offender; or
- found not criminally responsible for an offence due to a mental disorder, and the act or omission that formed the basis of the offence charged was an offence prescribed in the Name Regulation.

People have many legitimate reasons for wanting to change their legal names and there are important reasons to protect people’s privacy when they do this. However, going forward, the requirement for applicants to obtain criminal-record checks will protect people who are victims of crimes and abuse, rather than perpetrators of it.

### **Learn More:**

To read about amendments to the Name Act, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/legal-changes-of-name/legal-change-of-name-application>

### **Contact:**

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