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## Challenges with the

Whether for marriage or another reason, it may be an issue mostly faced by women, but some men do it too: Changing their last name.

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Mar. 12, 2013



Whether for marriage or another reason, it may be an issue mostly faced by women, but some men do it too: Changing their last name.

According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), more than 2 million couples are married each year, and the subject of a name change is usually considered by at least one of them, if not both. Whether assuming their spouse's surname or going with the hyphenated combination, this means that millions of people change their names each year.

And with a little over 1 million divorces each year, many people also choose to revert

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Security Administration (SSA) before you file your taxes. The NAEA is made up of professional tax preparers that receive credentials from the IRS.

“If the computers at the [IRS](#) can't match the name on your return with the one the Social Security Administration has for you, the [IRS](#) may not know you filed a return and any refund you may be entitled to could be delayed.”

Whether taking a spouse's surname, hyphenating both of the couple's names, or legally changing a name via a court action, these actions need to be reported to the SSA as soon as possible, especially before filing taxes, the group recommends. This includes women who choose to go back to their maiden name after a divorce.

Also, don't forget to report any name changes of children that may have been a part of the divorced family, or newly adopted children, the NAEA advises.

Americans can register lawful name changes online at the SSA website, [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov), by clicking on the “Useful Links” button, and the site will walk users through the process. Proper documentation, such as proof of identification, marriage certificates, divorce decrees, court rulings, naturalization certificates, etc, will be required.

Other advice from the NAEA:

- Complete an application for a Social Security card (Form SS-5) and mail or bring that, along with the necessary documents, to your local SSA office. The SSA website allows you to search for an office in your area by zip code. If you have trouble finding the information on [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov), use the search function to look for “application SS-5.” Any mailed documents will be returned to you along with a receipt and your new card should arrive within 10 days.
- If you have adopted children who don't have Social Security numbers, you'll need to apply for an Adoption Taxpayer Identification Number. You can find this application, Form W-7A, on the IRS website, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

- To be certain you don't make errors on your tax returns, or overlook any

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