New Social Security Numbers for Domestic Violence Victims

Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence. If you're a victim of family violence, harassment, abuse, or life-endangering situations, Social Security may be able to help you.

Public awareness campaigns stress how important it is for victims to develop safety plans that include gathering personal papers and choosing a safe place to go. Sometimes, the best way to evade an abuser and reduce the risk of further violence may be to relocate and establish a new identity. Following these changes, getting a new Social Security number (SSN) may also be helpful.

Although we don't routinely assign new numbers, we'll do so when evidence shows you are being harassed or abused, or your life is endangered.

Applying for a new number is a big decision. Your ability to interact with federal and state agencies, employers, and others may be affected. Your financial, medical, employment, and other records will be under your former SSN and name (if you change your name). If you expect to change your name, please do so before applying for a new number.

How to apply for a new number

You must apply in person at any Social Security office. We'll help you complete a statement explaining why you need a new number and an application for a new number. In addition, you must present:

- Evidence documenting the harassment, abuse, or life endangerment.
- Your current SSN.
- Evidence documents establishing your:
  - —U.S. citizenship or work-authorized immigration status.
  - —Age.
  - —Identity.
- Evidence of your legal name change if you've changed your name.

Also, we'll need to see documents showing you have custody of any children for whom you're requesting new numbers and documentation proving their U.S. citizenship, ages, and identities.

All documents must be either originals or copies certified by the issuing agency. We can't accept photocopies or notarized copies of documents. We may use one document for two purposes. For example, we may use your U.S. passport as proof of both citizenship and identity. Or, we may use your U.S. birth certificate as proof of age and citizenship. ***However, you must provide at least two separate documents.***

We'll mail your number and card as soon as we have all of your information and have verified your documents with the issuing offices.

Citizenship or immigration status

U.S. citizen: We can accept only certain documents as proof of U.S. citizenship. These include a U.S. birth certificate or a U.S. passport.

Noncitizen: To prove your U.S. immigration status, show us a current immigration document. This may be your I-94, *Arrival/Departure Record*, showing a class of admission permitting work, or your Form I-766, *Employment Authorization Document* (EAD, work permit). If you're an F-1 or M-1 student, you also must show us your I-20, *Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status*. If you're a J-1 or J-2 exchange visitor, show us your DS-2019, *Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status*.

Age

U.S. born: You must present your birth certificate if you have one. If you don't have a birth certificate, we may be able to accept any of the following:

- A religious record made before age five showing the date of birth.
- A U.S. hospital record of birth.
- A U.S. passport or passport card.

Foreign born: You must present your foreign birth certificate if you have it or can get a copy within 10 business days. If you can't get it, we may be able to accept your:

- Foreign passport.
- I-551, *Permanent Resident Card*.
- I-766, Employment Authorization Document (EAD).
- I-94 *Arrival/Departure Record*.

Identity

We can accept only certain documents as proof of identity. An acceptable document must be current (not expired) and show your name, identifying information and preferably a recent photograph.

U.S. citizen: We will ask to see a U.S. driver's license, U.S. state-issued non-driver identification card, or U.S. passport as proof of identity. If you don't have the specific documents we ask for, we'll ask to see other documents, including:

- Certificate of Naturalization.
- Certificate of U.S. Citizenship.
- Employee identification card.
- School identification card.
- Health insurance card (not a Medicare card).
- U.S. military identification card.

Noncitizen: We will ask to see your current U.S. immigration documents. Acceptable immigration documents include your:

- I-551, Permanent Resident Card.
- I-94, Arrival/Departure Record with your unexpired foreign passport.
- I-766, Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

Changing your name on your card

We can accept only a court-order-approved legal name change document that supports your requested name change.

Providing the evidence you need

The best evidence of abuse comes from third parties, such as police or medical personnel, and describes the nature and extent of harassment, abuse, or life endangerment. Other evidence may include court restraining orders and letters from shelters, family members, friends, counselors, or others who have knowledge of the domestic violence or abuse. We'll help you get any additional evidence needed.

Blocking access to your record

If you know your Social Security information has been compromised, you can request to Block Electronic Access. This is done by calling our National 800 number (Toll Free **1-800-772-1213** or TTY number at **1-800-325-0778**). Once requested, any automated telephone and electronic access to your Social Security record will be blocked. No one, including you, will be able to see or change your personal information on the internet or through our automated telephone service. If you have access to your record blocked and then change your mind in the future, you can contact us and ask to unblock it after you prove your identity.

Contacting Social Security

The most convenient way to do business with us from anywhere, on any device, is to visit ***www.ssa.gov***. There are several things you can do online: apply for benefits; get useful information; find publications; and get answers to frequently asked questions.

When you open a personal *my* Social Security account, you have more capabilities. You can review your *Social Security Statement*, verify your earnings, and get estimates of future benefits. You can also print a benefit verification letter, change your direct deposit information, request a replacement Medicare card, get a replacement SSA-1099/1042S, and request a replacement Social Security card (if you have no changes and your state participates).

If you don't have access to the internet, we offer many automated services by telephone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** or at our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**, if you're deaf or hard of hearing.

A member of our staff can answer your call from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We ask for your patience during busy periods since you may experience a high rate of busy signals and longer hold times to speak to us. We look forward to serving you.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

(TTY) 1-800-787-3224

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