

# New Numbers for Domestic Violence Victims



**A**nyone 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 may also be helpful.

Although Social Security doesn'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 Social Security number 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 Social Security number;
- Evidence documents establishing your:
  - U.S. citizenship or work-authorized immigration status;
  - Age; and
  - 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 your current immigration document such as 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 your:

- Religious record made before age 5 showing the date of birth;
- U.S. hospital record or birth; or
- U.S. passport.

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*; or
- 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: Social Security 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:

- Employee identification card;
- School identification card;
- Health insurance card (not a Medicare card);
- U.S. military identification card.

Noncitizen: Social Security 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; or
- I-766, *Employment Authorization Card* (EAD, work permit) from DHS.

## 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

You can choose to block electronic access to your Social Security record. When you do this, no one, including you, will be able to get or change your personal information online or through our automated telephone service. If you block access to your record, and then change your mind, you can contact Social Security and ask us to unblock it. Go to [www.socialsecurity.gov/blockaccess](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/blockaccess) to block electronic access to your personal record.

## Contacting Social Security

Visit [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) anytime to apply for benefits, open a **my Social Security** account, find publications, and get answers to frequently asked questions. Or, call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**). We can answer case-specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. Generally, you'll have a shorter wait time if you call after Tuesday. We treat all calls confidentially. We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service, so a second Social Security representative monitors some telephone calls. We can provide general information by automated phone service 24 hours a day. And, remember, our website, [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov), is available to you anytime and anywhere!

National Domestic Violence Hotline  
**1-800-799-SAFE (7233)**  
**(TTY) 1-800-787-3224**