



## ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

# PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR AGENCY NAME SELECTION GUIDELINES

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## PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR AGENCY NAME SELECTION

In starting up a private investigator agency, the first thing you will need to do is get approval of your agency name through the Licensing Unit. Securing your agency name with the Arizona Corporation Commission and/or a trade name through the Arizona Secretary of State's office does not guarantee your name with the Licensing Unit. The Licensing Unit's standards for name approval are much more stringent. The Licensing Unit must consider other factors before approving your agency name. We have sole proprietor agencies and partnerships that are not required to register with the Arizona Corporation Commission and/or Secretary of State's office. The general purpose of restricting similar names is to avoid confusion to the public. This confusion can cause complaints and misinformation being provided to the public.

To avoid confusion, the following guidelines should be used.

## CHOOSING A NAME FOR YOUR PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR AGENCY

The business name rule expressed below and the method the Licensing Unit uses to approve names is not a difficult process. We strongly encourage you to receive approval of a name through the Licensing Unit **BEFORE** seeking this through the [Arizona Corporation Commission](#) and/or [Arizona Secretary of State](#) as our standards of approval are much more stringent. To be approved for an agency name all you have to do is the following:

- A. Review the information below.
- B. Choose at least three (3) potential names for your agency, in the order of preference, that you would like to use.
- C. Call the Licensing Unit at (602) 223-2361 to see if your proposed agency name is available.

### Private Investigator Agency

#### Arizona Administrative Code R13-2-208 Business and Employee Names

- A. The Department shall not grant a license to an agency with a name that includes the words "United States," "Federal," "State of Arizona" or a name that associates the business with any governmental or law enforcement agency. The Department shall not grant a license to an individual or partnership that has a name with the word "corporation," "corp.," "incorporated," "inc.," or "L.L.C." unless corporate or limited liability corporation papers have been filed with the Corporation Commission. The Department shall not approve a new business name that is similar to a business name of a currently licensed firm.
- B. An agency licensee and the licensee's associates and employees shall do business and present themselves under the name used on the licensee's application and the associate's or employee's identification card.
- C. An agency licensee shall do all business under the name and address that is on file with the Department and noted on the license. The licensee shall include its name and license number on all letterhead and business cards, advertising, contracts entered into with clients, and agency correspondence.

## Private Investigator Agency Name Guidelines

The general purpose of restricting similar names is to avoid confusion between the different private investigator agencies to the general public. It is also possible that the general public might confuse private investigator agencies with state and federal law enforcement. Confusion has caused complaints and misinformation to the public. To avoid confusion, the following guidelines should be used when selecting an agency name.

- 1) **Banned words:** The following words **MUST NOT** be part of an agency name.

Examples:

- |                            |              |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| a) United States           | g) Patrolman |
| b) Federal                 | h) Deputy    |
| c) State of Arizona        | i) Marshall  |
| d) Bureau of Investigation | j) Agent     |
| e) Police                  | k) Sheriff   |
| f) Officer                 |              |

- 2) **Name Similarities:** Names that are so similar that it would cause confusion to the general public are **NOT** available.

Examples:

- a) "Professional Investigations" is **NOT** distinguishable from "Professionalism Investigations"
- b) "Operational P.I. Agency" is **NOT** distinguishable from "Operation PI Agency"
- c) "Sunny Arizona Enterprise" is **NOT** distinguishable from "Sunny Arizona Enterprises"
- d) "Desert Southwest P.I. Services" is **NOT** distinguishable from "Desert SW PI Services" or "Desert Southwestern P.I. Services"

- 3) **Entity identifiers or endings:** Words and abbreviations that are required to identify the type of business entity are disregarded when considering name availability and do **NOT** qualify a name as distinguishable. This includes abbreviated forms of the identifiers as well as foreign language equivalents. Thus, names otherwise identical except for the presence of any of the following words or abbreviations shall not be considered distinguishable:

Examples:

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| a) Corporation               | k) Limited Company                          |
| b) Company                   | l) LLC                                      |
| c) Incorporated              | m) LC                                       |
| d) Limited                   | n) Registered Limited Liability Partnership |
| e) Co.                       | o) LLP                                      |
| f) Ltd.                      | p) Professional Corporation                 |
| g) Corp.                     | q) Professional Service Corporation         |
| h) Inc.                      | r) PLLC                                     |
| i) Limited Partnership       | s) PLC                                      |
| j) Limited Liability Company |   |
| t) Professional Association  |   |

Examples:

- i) All Night Company
  - ii) All Night Company, Inc.
  - iii) All Night Corporation
  - iv) All Night LLC
  - v) All Night Limited Partnership
- u) A name may **NOT** be comprised only of identifiers listed above.

Examples:

- i) Limited Liability Company
- ii) PLLC Incorporated Co.

- iii) Professional Association Corporation
  - v) Foreign corporations: “Words or abbreviations of like import in another language”  
Examples:
    - i) “Los Gatos S.A., Inc.” Is **NOT** distinguishable from “Lost Gatos Inc.”
- 4) And: “&” and “And” are **NOT** distinguishable. Agency names otherwise identical except for the presence of “and” or the ampersand symbol (&) or just a space between words will not be considered distinguishable.  
Examples:
  - a) “Rain & Sun Investigations” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Rain and Sun Investigations”
  - b) “Len & Company, Inc.” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Len and Company, Inc.”
- 5) Articles: Articles of speech (a, an, the) do **NOT** make a name distinguishable.  
Examples:
  - a) “Universe Finders” is **NOT** distinguishable from “The Universe Finders”
  - b) “The Fly on the Wall agency” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Fly on the Wall agency”
  - c) “A Hawk Eye Group” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Hawk Eye Group”
- 6) Possessives: The possessive form of a word is **NOT** distinguishable from the plural.  
Examples:
  - a) “Steven’s General P.I. Agency” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Stevens General P.I Agency”
  - b) “Walter’s Tracer Group” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Walter Tracer Group”
  - c) “JB’s Security and Investigations” is **NOT** distinguishable from “JBs Security and Investigations”
- 7) Marks of punctuation and differences in the use of special characters and all other marks of punctuation appearing in agency names are disregarded when considering name availability and do not qualify an agency name as being distinguishable. These characters will not appear as part of the agency name.  
Examples:

a) quotation marks (“”)	l) degree (°)
b) period (.)	m) ellipsis (...)
c) semicolon (;)	n) comma (,)
d) exclamation (!)	o) brackets ([ [ , { }, <>)
e) apostrophe (’)	p) underscore (_)
f) back slash (\)	q) carrot (^)
g) pipe ( )	r) colon (:)
h) question mark (?)	s) accent (ˆ)
i) parenthesis ( )	t) dotted line (—)
j) forward slash (/)	u) asterisk (*)
k) hyphen (-)	
v) greater/less than (< >) or any other special characters.	

Examples
  - i) “ADC Search Team” is **NOT** distinguishable from “A.D.C. Search Team”
  - ii) “Reliable Eyes” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Reliable: Eyes”
  - iii) “Bob’s Polygraph Service” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Bobs Security”
  - iv) Let’s Investigate It” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Let’s Investigate It!”
- 8) Roman and Arabic numbers are **NOT** distinguishable from words representing the numbers.  
Examples:
  - a) “Two Guys Searching” is **NOT** distinguishable from “2 Guys searching”
  - b) “Best Investigative Agency #3” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Best Investigative Agency No. Three”
  - c) “Second Alert” is **NOT** distinguishable from “2nd Alert”
  - d) “Brian’s One to One Agency” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Brian’s 1-2-1 Agency”
  - e) “Mark 4 Private” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Mark IV Private”

- 9) Word spacing or combining: a proposed agency name is deemed to **NOT** be distinguishable because of the addition or subtraction of spaces.  
Examples:
- a) "Tri City Investigation" is **NOT** distinguishable from "Tricity Investigation"
  - b) "Top Co" is **NOT** distinguishable from "TopCo"
  - c) "Hilltop Watchers" is **NOT** distinguishable from "Hill Top Watchers"
  - d) "Outbound Concepts" is **NOT** distinguishable form "Out Bound Concepts"
  - e) "Northwest Security Services" is **NOT** distinguishable from "North West Security"
- 10) The use of upper and lower case of letters within an agency name are disregarded when considering name availability. Thus, names otherwise identical except for difference in the use of upper and lower case shall **NOT** be considered distinguishable.  
Examples:
- a) "Azsec" is **NOT** distinguishable from "AZSEC"
  - b) "NW Investigators" is **NOT** distinguishable from "nw investigators"
- 11) False implication of Government Affiliation: The name may not be one that might falsely imply governmental affiliation, local, state, or federal or any subdivision thereof without authorization to register such a name.  
Examples:
- a) "Arizona State Investigative and Protective Services" **COULD IMPLY** the agency is associated with the State of Arizona.
  - b) "I.R.S. Investigation Group" **COULD IMPLY** the agency is associated with the Internal Revenue Service.
  - c) "BLM Park Security Services" **COULD IMPLY** the agency is associated with the Bureau of Land Management.
  - d) "Tucson City Agency" **COULD IMPLY** the agency is associated with City of Tucson
- 12) World-wide web prefix (www) or suffix (.com, .org, .net, etc.): The addition of a worldwide web prefix or suffix is **NOT** distinguishable.  
Examples:
- a) "myinvestigativeyco.com" is **NOT** distinguishable from "myinvestigativeco.org"
  - b) "www.securitywatch.com" is **NOT** distinguishable from "http://securitywatch.org"
  - c) "RooseveltAreaAgency.org" is **NOT** distinguishable from "Roosevelt Area Agency"
- 13) Abbreviations: Abbreviations and unabbreviated versions of the same words are **NOT** distinguishable.  
Examples:
- a) "The Wizard of AZ Services" is **NOT** distinguishable from "The Wizard of Arizona Services"
  - b) "Mister Investigator" is **NOT** distinguishable from "Mr. Investigator"
  - c) "St. Matthew's Researchers" is **NOT** distinguishable from "Saint Matthew's Researchers"
  - d) "Mt. Bradshaw Associates" is **NOT** distinguishable from "Mount Bradshaw Associates"
  - e) "I See You Technology" is **NOT** distinguishable from "I See You Tech", "I see you Tec", or "I See You Tek"
- 14) Different spellings of proper names are **NOT** distinguishable.  
Examples:
- a) "Bird Services" is **NOT** distinguishable from "Byrd Services" or "Burd Services"
  - b) "Smith Security Watch" is **NOT** distinguishable from "Smyth Security Watch" or "Smythe Security Watch"
  - c) "Kelly CO" is **NOT** distinguishable from "Kelley Co" or "Kellie CO"
- 15) Unique or Improper Spelling: A proposed agency name is **NOT** distinguishable from a currently licensed agency if the unique, archaic, or improper spelling of a word or words makes up the difference.  
Examples:
- a) "B-4 the Fall Home Watch" is **NOT** distinguishable from "B4 the Fall Home Watch" or "Before the Fall Home Watch"

- b) “Kwik Konstruction Researchers” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Quick Construction REsearchers” or Qwik Construction Researchers”
  - c) “Brown Dog Agency” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Brown Dawg Agency”
- 16) The following letters and specific symbols are **NOT** converted to the word/number equivalent and are **NOT** distinguishable: A-Z, %, \$, @, #, +, =  
Examples:
- a) “\$ Store Service” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Dollar Store Service”
  - b) “Security + Investigation” is **NOT** distinguishable from “Security Plus Investigation”
  - c) “@Home Watchers” is **NOT** distinguishable from “At Home Watchers”
- 17) Grossly offensive, obscene or names that have an illegal connotation: Names that contain words, phrases or references that are clearly derogatory to a particular group of people such as gender, ethnic group, religious group, race, etc., are commonly understood to have a profane meaning or usage, or that in appropriately promote abusive or unlawful activity will **NOT** be acceptable.

**The following items DO make an agency name distinguishable from another name:**

- 1) Key Words: If two or more of the key words are different and are arranged in a different order. A “key word” means any word other than articles, prepositions, conjunctions, or entity identifiers, such as “corporation,” “incorporated,” “company,” etc. The Licensing Unit will determine if key words have been overused, therefore **NOT** distinguishable.  
Examples:
  - a) “Stacey’s Investigations” **IS** distinguishable from “Investigations by Stacey”
  - b) “John’s Security and Investigative Services” **IS** distinguishable from “John’s Investigative and Protection Agency”
  - c) “Twice as Good Research Services” **IS** distinguishable from “”3 Times the Research Service”
  - d) “Universal Special Protection” **IS** distinguishable from “Universal Protection Concepts”
- 2) Foreign language names: Words in a foreign language are not translated into English, but most consist of letters in the Roman alphabet, Arabic numerals (0, 1, 2, 3, etc.), or symbols capable of being readily reproduced by the Licensing Unit.  
Examples:
  - a) “Rio Verde Associates” **IS** distinguishable from “Green River Associates”
  - b) “Evangelical Investigation Services” **IS** distinguishable from “”Evangelico Investigation Services”
  - c) “Paloma Blanca La investigacion” **IS** distinguishable from “White Dove Investigation”
- 3) The use of geographical designations **MAY** make a name distinguishable. The Licensing Unit needs to determine if the geographical designation has been overused, therefore **NOT** distinguishable.  
Examples:
  - a) “Ahwatukee Investigation & Security Services” **IS** distinguishable from “Ahwatukee Guard Service”
  - b) “Arizona Jack of all trades, Inc.” **IS** distinguishable from “Arizona Guard Service”
  - c) “Research Specialist of Peoria” **IS** distinguishable from “Investigators of Peoria” or “Peoria Investigations”
- 4) Names comprised of initials **MAY** be used but must be distinguishable from other agencies that may already be displaying the same initials on their letterhead, business cards, stationery and advertising. The Licensing Unit needs to research current licensed agencies to see if the initials are already in use.  
Examples:
  - a) “AB Associates” **MIGHT** be distinguishable if “Alpha Bravo Associates” or “Arizona’s Best Associates” are not already using these initials.
  - b) “ACE Investigators” **MIGHT** be distinguishable if “Andrew C. Eve’s Investigators” or Arizona Charlie’s

Everyday Investigators” are not already using these initials.

- c) “TKO Personal Research” **MIGHT NOT** be distinguishable from “Technical Knock Out Personal Research”
- d) “T&J’s Guard & Investigation Service” **MIGHT NOT** be distinguishable from “Tamy & Joes Guard & Investigation Service”

- 5) **Doing Business As (DBA) names:** DBA names or trade names **MAY** be used but must follow the same guidelines above. If using a DBA name registered with the Arizona Secretary of State in conjunction with a company name registered with the Arizona Corporation Commission, both names must be listed on all application documents and insurance certificates. The DBA name must be displayed on the: letterhead, business cards and stationery; advertising and contracts with the client.

Examples:

- a) If using Smith’s Personal Services, Inc. DBA Smith’s Services, then Smith’s Services must be displayed on the stationery, advertising and contracts.
- b) If using AJ’s Investigation and Security, LLC (FN) DBA Alan’s Security Service then Alan’s Security Service must be displayed on the stationery, advertising and contracts.
- c) If using Arizona Jack of all Trades, Inc. DBA Jays Security, then Jays Security must be displayed on the stationery, advertising and contracts.

Please contact the Arizona Department of Public Safety Licensing Unit in one of the manners on the first page of this document if you have any questions.