

# **Private Investigator Agency Name Availability**

## **Selecting your Private Investigator Agency Name**

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 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:

1. Review the information below.
2. Choose at least three (3) potential names for your agency, in the order of preference, that you would be comfortable using.
3. 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 "United States," "U.S.," "Federal," or "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*
- b. *Federal*
- c. *State of Arizona*
- d. *Bureau of Investigation*
- e. *Police*
- f. *Officer*
- g. *Patrolman*
- h. *Deputy*
- i. *Marshall*
- j. *Agent*
- k. *Sheriff*

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 P.I. Agency"*
- c. *"Sunny Arizona Enterprise" is NOT distinguishable from "Sunny Arizona Enterprises"*
- d. *"Desert Southwest P.I. Services" is NOT distinguishable from "Desert SW P.I. 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:**

- *Corporation*
- *Company*
- *Incorporated*
- *Limited*
- *Co.*
- *Ltd.*
- *Corp.*
- *Inc.*
- *Limited Partnership*
- *Limited Liability Company*
- *Limited Company*
- *LLC*
- *LC*
- *Registered Limited Liability Partnership*
- *LLP*
- *Professional Corporation*
- *Professional Service Corporation*
- *PLLC*
- *PLC*
- *Professional Association*

**Examples:**

- *All night Company*

- *All night Company, Inc.*
  - *All night Corporation*
  - *All night LLC*
  - *All night Limited Partnership*
- A name may NOT be comprised only of identifiers listed above.
    - Examples:
      - *Limited Liability Company*
      - *PLLC Incorporated Co.*
      - *Professional Association Corporation*
  - Foreign corporations: "Words or abbreviations of like import in another language".
    - Example:
      - *"Los Gatos S.A., Inc." is NOT distinguishable from "Los 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:
- *quotation marks ("")*
  - *period (.)*
  - *semicolon (;)*
  - *exclamation (!)*
  - *apostrophe (')*
  - *back slash (\)*
  - *pipe (|)*
  - *question mark (?)*
  - *parenthesis ( )*
  - *forward slash (/)*
  - *hyphen (-)*
  - *degree (°)*
  - *ellipsis (")*

- *comma(,)*
- *brackets ([ ], { }, <>)*
- *underscore(\_)*
- *carrot (^)*
- *colon (:)*
- *accent (´)*
- *dotted line(--)*
- *asterisk (\*)*
- *greater/less than (< >) or any other special characters.*

Examples:

- *"ADC Search Team" is NOT distinguishable from "A.D.C. Search Team"*
- *"Reliable Eyes" is NOT distinguishable from "Reliable: Eyes"*
- *"Bob's Polygraph Service" is NOT distinguishable from "Bobs Polygraph Service "*
- *"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 from "Out Bound Concepts"*
- e. *"Northwest Security Services" is NOT distinguishable from "North West Security Services"*

- 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 sub-division 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 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. "myinvestigativeco.com" is NOT distinguishable from "myinvestigativeco.org"
- b. "www.securitywatch.com" is NOT distinguishable from "http://securitywatch.org"
- c. "RooseveltAreaAgency.org" 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 Services" is NOT distinguishable from "Security Plus Investigation Services"
- 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 inappropriately 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 Security Concepts"*

2. **Foreign language names:** Words in a foreign language are not translated into English, but must 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 "Tammy & 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 and Services then Alan's Security and Services must be displayed on stationery, advertising and contracts.*
- c. If using Arizona Jack of all Trades, Inc. DBA Jays agency, then Jays agency must be displayed on the stationery, advertising and contracts.*

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