

OFFICE OF THE MINNESOTA
SECRETARY OF STATE **STEVE SIMON**

HOW TO REGISTER YOUR BUSINESS

All businesses in Minnesota must register with the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State.

Before registering your business you will need to decide on the structure of your business (such as Corporation, LLC, Sole Proprietorship, etc). For more information about types of business structures, see [Types of Minnesota Businesses](#).

Step 1: Create an online account with us and login. Here you can find more information about [creating an online account](#).

Step 2: Go to the [Business Filings Online](#) page and click on the [business structure](#) you would like for your business.

Step 3: Answer the questions about non-profit status and professional status.

Step 4: Verify the name you would like for your business is available. To do this, type the proposed name into the search box. NOTE: you don't need to type the entity ending (LLC, Corporation, etc) at the end, use the drop down menu to choose the way you would like the suffix displayed. Go here for more information about [Name Availability Guidelines](#).

- The words “Bank” or “Trust” are not allowed unless used in ways that do not refer to a financial institution.
- A name which contains the word “Insurance” must also include the modifier “Agency”, “Broker”, “Brokerage” or “Services” or similar modifiers in order to indicate that this business is not engaged in underwriting.
- Banks and insurance companies do not file with the Office of the Secretary of State. Instead, they must file with the [Minnesota Department of Commerce](#).

Step 5: Follow the directions to enter the information required for your business.

NOTE: Some filings may require you to upload a PDF of the filing document or requires you to draft your own filing document if the form is unavailable. Once you have completed the filing document, then save it to your computer as a PDF file before uploading. It is important to note that the file size must be less than 2 megabytes. The file name must be 10 characters or less and contain no punctuation, spaces or special characters. If a PDF form is not available for your filing type, you may upload a document that you have created directly for filing in a PDF format. A typed name at the bottom of the form, in the usual space for the signature, satisfies the legal requirement for a signature.

Step 6: You'll have a chance to review the filing at the end of the process. After you've reviewed the filing you can click "Submit". You will then receive an Order Number specific to your filing. **Record the Order Number before continuing.** Then click on the "Go to US Bank" button.

Once on the US Bank page you will have the option to set up an e-service account with US Bank. The US Bank e-service account will store your credit card information for future transactions.

You can by-pass the US Bank e-services registration by clicking on "pay without registering". This allows you to process a one-time payment with your credit card.

Step 7: After you've completed the payment you will receive a confirmation page along with a payment confirmation number. **Print out the confirmation page or record the Confirmation Number.** You will receive an email from our office when the filing is processed as well as an email for the payment from US Bank.

Step 8: When you receive the email from our office that the filing has been processed you can open the email and there will be a link that you can click on that will take you to our website where you can download a copy of the filing.

NOTE: All filings are kept in your Transaction History for 90 days. The Transaction History is accessible by signing into your online account on our website and then clicking on Transaction History. Once you're on the History page you can click on the order number on the right and it will give you an option to download the filing.

NAMING YOUR BUSINESS

When naming your new business or non-profit organization there are some important things to take into consideration:

- The type of business you will be filing
- Whether the name is available to be filed
- Similarity to names currently being used

You might want to check online see what business names are currently being used in your area for the service or product you will be supplying.

- Go here to review [Types of Minnesota Businesses](#)
- Go here to [Business Filings Online](#)

When checking name availability consider the following:

To be accepted for filing, Business Names must be different by at least one letter or numeral from other names already on file. (See examples below for what differences might distinguish business names)

If filing an Assumed Business Name, this office does NOT check against other Assumed Names on record as the law allows for the same or similar Assumed Business Name to be filed.

Foreign Trust Association and Special Information names are not checked for name availability, nor are they taken into consideration when evaluating name availability of names for other business types.

Trademarks, Service Marks, Collective or Certification Marks cannot be checked for name availability online—please call or visit our office for this service.

Steps used by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State to standardize a business name prior to checking availability:

1. Replace the ampersand character ('&') with the word 'AND'.
2. Remove any character (including spaces), except for 0-9 and A-Z.

3. Names will be evaluated up to 250 characters.

The following are examples of differences that acceptably distinguish one business name from another:

The Plural Form of a Word Example: “Fine Line Inc” vs. “Fine Lines Inc.”

Use of Roman Numerals Examples: One (or 1) vs. I; Two (or 2) vs. II

Use of Numerals vs. Words Examples: 1 vs. One; 2 vs. Two; 3 vs. Three

Use of Contractions: Examples: Ass’n vs. Association; Nat’l vs. National; Dep’t vs. Department 4

Obvious Misspellings Examples: Concep vs. Concept; Kwik vs. Quick

Variations of Words Examples: EZ vs. Easy; Hair vs. Hare; America vs. American; Quest vs. Qquest; USA vs. United States of America; Bur-Tech vs. Burr Technology, Inc.; Nsite, Inc vs. Ensite, Inc.

Abbreviations Examples: Mr. vs. Mister; St. vs. Saint; Doctor vs. Dr.

The elimination of Prepositions and Conjunctions Examples: “Into the Night Co. vs. “To the Night Co.”; “Of Women and Children Inc.” vs. “Women and Children Inc.”

Entity Designations Examples: Edwards LLC vs. Edwards Inc.; Thelma Company vs. Thelma Ltd.

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