

Guide to the Name Reservation Process

Registry of Joint Stock Companies

Service Nova Scotia

Introduction to the Name Reservation Process

Reserving a name for your business is the first step in incorporating or registering a business in Nova Scotia. The Registry of Joint Stock Companies must assess the proposed name of your business and approve it for use before you can register and begin operating your business.

This guide will help you understand the name reservation process.

Important note: You are not allowed to use your name until the Registry of Joint Stock Companies has approved your business name and it has been registered. In other words, do not order business cards or signs in advance.

Step 1: Consider a name for your business

The name for your business must be unique and should describe the products and services you provide.

When selecting a name, follow the rules in the [Guidelines to Choosing a Name](#) for your business. The Registry of Joint Stock Companies may not approve your business name if it is not in accordance with the rules outlined in the guide.

Step 2: Check that your name is unique

The name of your business must be different enough from other names that it doesn't confuse or mislead people. It must be different from all other

- business names in Nova Scotia
- business names in New Brunswick
- federally incorporated companies and registered trademarks

Did you know? Legislation exempts New Brunswick businesses from having to register in Nova Scotia. A similar exemption exists for Nova Scotia entities carrying on business in New Brunswick. This is why the Registry searches your name in other Atlantic Provinces and has to consider business names registered in New Brunswick.

Before submitting your proposed name to the Registry of Joint Stock Companies for approval, you should do a preliminary search to see if there are any conflicts with existing registrations. Your name can share elements of other names, but in its entirety, your name must be unique.

Online: You can conduct your own preliminary search using the [Search the Registry](#) option found on RJSC Connect website. There is no fee for this preliminary search.

Phone or in person: Alternatively, you can request this preliminary search over the phone or in-person at the Registry of Joint Stock Companies [Head Office](#) or at an [Access Center](#). There is no fee for this search.

Important note: Doing your own preliminary search will increase the chances of having your name approved, but it does not guarantee approval. The Registry of Joint Stock Companies will still need to review your name and make sure it follows name guidelines before approving it for use.

Step 3: Submit a name reservation request

Step 3.1: Submit your proposed business name

If you have found no conflicts with your proposed name, submit a Name Reservation Request along with **one** name and the [required fee](#). The Registry of Joint Stock Companies will then review your submitted business name and decide whether to approve it for your use.

Online: You can submit your Name Reservation Request easily and conveniently using [RJSC Connect](#). If submitting online, you can pay the fee by Visa, MasterCard or American Express.

Phone: You can submit your [Name Reservation Request](#) over the phone. If submitting over the phone, you can pay the fee by Visa, MasterCard or American Express.

In person: You can complete the [Name Reservation Request](#) form and submit it in person at the Registry of Joint Stock Companies [Head Office](#) or an [Access Center](#). If submitting in person, you can pay the fee by cash, cheque, money order, debit, Visa, MasterCard or American Express.

Mail: You can complete the [Name Reservation Request](#) and submit by mail along with the appropriate fee to:

Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stock Companies, PO Box 1529, Halifax, NS, B3J 2Y4

If submitting by mail, you can pay by cheque, money order, Visa, MasterCard or American Express.

Step 3.2: Wait for the Registry of Joint Stock Companies to review your proposed name

The Registry of Joint Stock Companies reviews the Government of Canada's business name and trademark search tool (NUANS) to ensure your proposed name is not too similar to names already registered in Nova Scotia or in New Brunswick, as well as federally incorporated companies and trademarks. It usually takes the Registry two business days to ensure the proposed name meets our name reservation guidelines and that there are no conflicts with similar names.

Did you know? If you intend to use your business name outside of the Atlantic Provinces, NUANS also offers the option to search all of Canada for potential conflicts. This is called a “Federal” search. This report could be taken to another jurisdiction to reserve your proposed name for registration in that jurisdiction. Note, a federal NUANS report does **not** mean you can use the name in every jurisdiction.

The Registry of Joint Stock Companies will review your proposed name and determine whether to approve or decline your request.

The decision of the Registry of Joint Stock Companies staff is usually final. If your preferred name could create a conflict or violate any rules, your name will not be approved for use.

If you disagree with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies’ decision, you may appeal to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies in writing and explain why the name should be allowed.

Step 3.3: Receive and review your response

The Registry of Joint Stock Companies will email or mail you the name decision and your NUANS report within two to four business days of receiving your request.

Your results will include a note that your name is **approved, returned with conditions, or rejected**.

Some examples of conditions that may be applied to your name reservation:

Available with Consent: This means the proposed name is conditionally available, but we need a letter of consent from the organizations listed.

Available with Conditions: This means your proposed name is available, but the conditions that are outlined in your name reservation results need to met.

Some examples of why the name may not be available are:

Not Distinctive: The proposed name requires a distinctive, non-descriptive word or phrase such as a person's name, initials or geographic location (e.g., **Smith** Electrical Ltd.).

Not Descriptive: The proposed name requires a descriptive element, such as the industry name or services provided (e.g., Smith **Electrical** Ltd.).

Conflict: Existing names are similar or identical to your proposed name.

Step 4: Register your business

Once your business name is approved, you have 90 days to register your business. If you don't register within 90 days, you will have to repeat the Business Name Reservation Request process, including paying another fee.

If you are registering a sole proprietorship or partnership, you can complete your business registration online using [Reserve Your Name and Register Your Business](#) service on RJSC Connect.

For any other business structure, registration procedures vary. Review the [Choose a Legal Structure](#) page on the Registry of Joint Stock Companies website to learn more.

Help is available

To find out more about reserving your name.

Download: [Guide to Choosing a Name](#)

Online: [RJSC Connect](#)

Phone: 902-424-7770 or toll-free (within Canada) 1-800-225-8227

Email: rjsc@novascotia.ca

In person: Visit an [Access Center](#) or our [Head Office](#)

Disclaimer

This guide is provided for general information purposes only and is not a substitute for legal or other professional advice. Registry staff cannot give advice on what name you should choose for your business. The Registry of Joint Stock Companies does not accept responsibility for any errors or omissions in this document.