

Law Firm Name Guidelines

The following guidelines are used by staff to assist in determining whether a firm name, or a proposed firm name, complies with the Law Society Act, the Law Society's By-laws and the Rules of Professional Conduct. Each firm name, or proposed firm name, is considered on its own merits on a case-by-case basis.

1. A firm name may not include language that would imply a connection to a specific geographic location. Legal clinics under the *Legal Aid Service Act, 1998* may continue to use names that indicate a connection with the communities they serve, in keeping with the purpose of the clinic structure.
2. A firm name may not include language that would imply a connection with a government agency or with a public or charitable legal services organization (i.e. legal clinic).
3. A firm name may not include language that would imply a connection with a cultural, racial, ethnic or religious group or organization. Legal clinics under the *Legal Aid Service Act, 1998* may continue to use names that indicate a connection with the communities they serve, in keeping with the purpose of the clinic structure.
4. A firm name may not contain language that would imply a connection with any other entity or organization not already enumerated (e.g. University Legal Clinic, Osgoode Hall Law Office, etc.).
5. A firm name may not include language that would imply that the firm was the only or the best law firm (e.g. "The" Law Firm).
6. A firm name may not include language that would imply a comparison between the services performed by that firm and other firms (e.g. Best Law Firm, Greatest Law Firm etc).
7. A firm name may not contain language that would be misleading as to the number of lawyers practising with the firm, or their status in the firm.
8. A firm name may not include language that would imply the existence of a partnership, association or affiliation between lawyers when no such relationship exists (i.e. two sole practitioners who share office space carrying on business under a common firm name).
9. A firm name may not include language that is specifically prohibited by statute (e.g. *Business Names Act, Business Corporations Act, Ontario Human Rights Act, Partnerships Act, Patent Act, Trade-marks Act, Copyright Act*).
10. A firm name may not include language that is demeaning, degrading or derogatory.
11. A firm name should not be too general or only descriptive (e.g. Human Rights Law Firm, Personal Injury Law Firm etc.).
12. The name of a professional corporation must include the words "Professional Corporation" or "Société professionnelle" and may not include the word "Limited", "Limitée", "Incorporated", or "Incorporée" or the corresponding abbreviations "Ltd.", "Ltée", or "Inc."