
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission

Trade Name Registration: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q. What is a trade name?

A. A trade name, or fictitious name, is a name different from the legal name of a business used to identify the company to the public.

Q. What is an example of a trade name?

A. WMATC carrier No. 369, a corporation named Washington Shuttle, Inc., is better known to the public by its registered trade name, SuperShuttle.

Q. How common is the use of a trade name?

A. Approximately 25% of all WMATC carriers conduct business under a registered trade name. About 65% of sole proprietors with WMATC operating authority have registered trade names.

Q. Why would a carrier want to use a trade name?

A. There are many reasons why carriers choose to conduct business under a fictitious name. One common reason is that WMATC carriers are required to display their legal name or trade name on each revenue vehicle. Sole proprietors often decide to adopt a trade name to avoid having to display their own name on each revenue vehicle.

Q. What if my company plans to conduct business under a fictitious name?

A. Your company must provide proof that the trade name has been registered with the agency responsible for registering trade names where your company's principal place of business is located. Below is a list of agencies responsible for registering trade names in the most common business locations.

Alexandria, VA

Alexandria Circuit Court
520 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 838-4044

Washington, DC

Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
1100 4th Street, S.W., 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20024
(202) 442-4400

Arlington, VA

Arlington County Circuit Court
1425 N. Courthouse Road, Suite 6200
Arlington, VA 22201
(703) 228-4369

Maryland

Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation
301 West Preston Street, Room 801
Baltimore, MD 21201-2395
(888) 246-5941

Fairfax, VA

Fairfax County Circuit Court
Jennings Building Judicial Center
4110 Chain Bridge Road Fairfax, VA 22030
(703) 691-7320

Q. What if my company already has been granted or issued WMATC operating authority and I want to add or change my trade name?

A. Your company must file an application to add, delete, or change your trade name. The application must consist of: 1) a signed letter specifying the requested name change; 2) a certificate of registration of any new trade name from the appropriate jurisdiction; and 3) the \$100 application fee.