

Indiana Putative Father Registry: Why Men Must Know About It



In Indiana, husbands are presumed to be the biological father of any children born during the marriage. Boyfriends are not, regardless of how long you and she have been involved with each other.

Boyfriends must establish their **paternity**; in other words, they must go through a state sanctioned process to establish themselves as the presumptive father and then the legal father of the child. This article is not about that process.

This article is about establishing yourself as the putative father. A putative father is a man who may be the biological father of a child but is not yet recognized as the legal father. The boyfriend of a pregnant woman, for example, is generally not recognized as the presumptive father of the unborn child.

There is a very important ramification of this lack of presumption. If the child is born and the mother places the child for adoption before a man has taken steps to establish his paternity, then there may not be any obligation to inform the father of the adoption.

The result of this could be that someone adopts the child and the man's rights to be that child's father are extinguished, possibly forever.

Indiana Putative Father Registry

To prevent this tragic possibility, Indiana has established a putative father registry. This is a registry maintained by the state of men who have self-identified themselves as possibly being the father of a child born out of wedlock.

It is not a declaration of paternity and registration does nothing toward establishing your paternity. It is a safeguard against a child being adopted without your knowledge or consent.

The registry is checked whenever a petition for adoption of a child is filed. If someone has identified himself as possibly being the father of this child, notification is sent to him that an adoption proceeding has been filed.

This is not an action to join the man as a party to the adoption. Rather, it is more like an invitation for him to intervene in the adoption if he so chooses.

The putative father can oppose the adoption, or he can ask to stay the adoption while he established his paternity and seeks custody or support of the child. The specific remedies will vary. The key is that the man is informed of the adoption of a child of whom he may be the father.