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**National standardization:**

**Office treatment of names**

**Assignment of street addresses**

Submitted by Norway\*\*

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## Assignment of street addresses

### Summary

A new law regulating the registration of property in Norway, called “matrikkeloven”, took effect January 1, 2010. The ultimate goal is for every place in the country where people live and work (homes, offices, businesses, vacation homes, etc.) to be given a street or rural road address. A number of guidelines for the assignment of addresses have also been prepared. Each municipality is given the jurisdiction to approve names and spellings of street and road names, but the spelling must be in accordance with the norms set down in the Place-Name Act. In order to train the local staff a number of regional courses were held throughout Norway in 2010 and 2011.

### 1. Legislation

A new law regulating the registration of property in Norway, called “matrikkeloven”, took effect January 1, 2010 (<http://www.lovdata.no/all/nl-20050617-101.html>). It replaces the previous law that regulated division of property and defines the rules for assignment of addresses in the 430 Norwegian municipalities. The ultimate goal is for every place in the country where people live and work (homes, offices, businesses, vacation homes, etc.) to be given a street or rural road address. The municipalities are given the responsibility for this task within their boundaries. Ultimately, street or road addresses will be the only address system in the country, with 2015 as the designated finishing year.

In connection with the law a number of rules and administrative codes have been adopted, and one set applies to the assignment of addresses. A number of guidelines for the assignment of addresses have also been prepared (*Adresseveileder – Om tildeling og forvaltning av adresser etter matrikkelova*, <http://www.statkart.no/nor/Matrikkel/Adresse/Adresseveileder/>). A handbook of addresses and place-names is also available on the Internet (<http://www.statkart.no/nor/Matrikkel/Adresse/>).

### 2. Additional localizing name

The law allows for the use of an additional name (such as *Langvik* in the address below) as well as the name in the address itself. The basis for this is a desire to preserve place-names of cultural-historical value, with the aim of making them an integral part of street or road addresses. The same applies to names of well known institutions or buildings. An addressee and his address might look like this:

*Peter Berg, Fjellvegen 5, Langvik, 6998 Romsdal.*

### 3. Authorization

Each municipality is given the jurisdiction to approve names and spellings of street and road names, but the spelling must be in accordance with the norms set down in the Place-Name Act of 1990/2005 (<http://www.lovdata.no/all/nl-19900518-011.html>) – The Norwegian Mapping Authority stipulates the spelling of most place-names, except those that are the responsibility of the municipality in question (for instance addresses), and if an existing place-name or a part of it is used in an address, this spelling will be the norm for the name in an address. Place-name advisors, experts under the supervision of the Norwegian Language Council, give advice on correct spelling.

Guidelines for choosing and approving address names (street and road names) have been distributed.

#### **4. Training and information**

The Norwegian Mapping Authority has the responsibility for training and dissemination of information to the municipalities, in regard to both the Land Register and Place-Name Act. To facilitate these responsibilities, the Mapping Authority cooperates with GeoForum. Divisions of this institution have held regional courses throughout Norway in 2010 and 2011, but the course outline and program were developed by the Mapping Authority with the assistance of the Place-Name Advisory Committee. These courses are primarily intended for employees working in the addressing offices of the municipality or responsible for place-names. The aim is to give them a thorough introduction to the current statutes and regulations for addressing, assigning names and spellings, as well as to motivate them to launch assignment of addresses in both the urban and rural areas of the municipality. During the course the cultural-historical aspects of place-names and their function to create identity have been emphasized. When choosing a name, address agencies are advised to draw on existing place-names, and when possible, to use them as they are, or as the first element in a newly formed name.

#### **5. The procedure for assigning address names**

The procedure for assigning a street address starts when the municipality decides which streets and roadways or access road are to have a name. Following this there is an open discussion regarding the choice of name, and the municipality sends one or more name suggestions to the Place-Name Advisory Committee for evaluation. The Advisory Committee sends its comments back to the municipality, which then approves a name and its spelling. The spelling must be in accordance with the Place-Name Act. In the case that an existing name, or part of it, is used as the name of a street, the spelling approved by the Mapping Authority should be used as the basis for the address name. The approved name will then be sent to the Central Registry for Place-Names at the Mapping Authority (SSR – Sentralt stadnamnregister). The spelling in the Central Registry for Place-Names will then be used as the basis for any public use of the name.

#### **6. Guidelines for choosing and approving address names (street and road names)**

Principles for choosing a name:

- The name must fit into a comprehensive system of addressing
- The name should build on and be a continuation of local name traditions
- The name should be suited to the place
- The name should not be obscene or comical
- Names should not duplicate or closely approximate existing names
- The name should be easy to write, read, and pronounce
- Names of living persons should be avoided, and the name of a deceased person should not be used until 5-10 years after the death of the person. Names of people who lived recently should be written as they were spelled by the bearer. It is in general advisable to restrict the use of personal names.
- Classification names (names of animal and plant species, minerals, constellations, etc. in a subdivision or neighborhood) may be used when desirable, but such naming easily becomes a cliché and should be restricted.

## **7. Additional rules for individual municipalities**

Several municipalities have additional rules for naming streets, roads, and other public areas and buildings. In Oslo a committee has worked out a new and detailed set of rules for such names and the city council is now in the process of finalizing it.