

**GENERAL
MARRIAGE REQUIREMENTS
RHODE ISLAND**

Rhode Island Department of Health
Division of Vital Records
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401.222.2812
www.health.ri.gov



Marriage Requirements In the State of Rhode Island

HOW to apply for a Marriage License

Both the bride and groom must:

- Apply for the marriage license in person at a city or town office (see section below on where to apply) and sign the license in the presence of the city or town clerk or his or her assistant.
- Present proof of birth facts and identification.
- If previously married, present a **certified copy** of the final decree of divorce (with the raised or original stamped court seal) or a **certified copy** of the death certificate of the previous spouse.
- If under age 18 or under control of a legal guardian, a parent or legal guardian must complete a “Minor’s Permit to Marry”. Grooms under age 18 and brides under age 16 will need court permission to marry.
- For a list of city and town offices, visit the Department of Health website at www.health.ri.gov under the Vital Records section.

Please note: If the bride and groom do not marry, the marriage license should be returned to the city or town office where the license was issued.

WHERE to apply for a Marriage License

Residents of R I

- **If the bride lives in Rhode Island**, apply for the license from the city or town clerk at the city or town of the bride’s residence.
- **If the bride does not live in Rhode Island but the groom does live in Rhode Island**, apply for the license from the city or town clerk at the city or town of the groom’s residence.
- **If either the bride or the groom is a resident of Rhode Island**, the marriage license is valid in any city or town in Rhode Island and the couple may be married anywhere in Rhode Island.

NON-Residents of RI

- **If both the bride and groom do not live in Rhode Island**, the marriage license must be obtained at the city or town clerk’s office where the ceremony will take place. The couple must marry in the city or town where the license was issued.
- If the marriage ceremony is performed in a city or town other than the city or town of issuance, the validity of the marriage may be in question.

Cost of the Marriage License	\$24.00
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WHO is allowed to correct information on the Marriage License?

- The State Office of Vital Records at the Department of Health can correct information on a marriage license.
- If any information is in error, the bride or groom should contact the State Office of Vital Records at 401.222.2812 after the marriage license has been registered.

RESPONSIBILITIES of the bride and groom

Both the bride and groom must supply:

1. Proof of birth facts and identification

- A certified copy of a birth certificate.
- For persons born outside the United States who cannot obtain a birth certificate, a valid passport or alien card may be accepted. Additional requirements may exist in some locations, as some offices may not accept a passport without a certified copy of a birth certificate.
- Contact the city or town office where you will apply for the license to verify the requirements and the hours of operation. A list of city and town offices with phone numbers can be found on the Department of Health website at www.health.ri.gov under the Vital Records section.

2. If applicable, a “Minor’s Permit to Marry”

A “Minor’s Permit to Marry” form must be completed if a female applicant is under 18 years of age, or if the bride or groom (regardless of age) is under control of a legal guardian. The permit should be signed and notarized in the presence of the city or town clerk, or any clerk employed in that office. A female under age 16 and a male under age 18 cannot secure a marriage license in Rhode Island without the approval of Family Court.

3. Proof that previous marriages have ended

- If either applicant has been previously married and that marriage ended in divorce, the applicant must present a **certified copy** of the **final** decree of divorce (with the raised or original stamped court seal) to the city or town clerk.
- If either applicant has been previously married and that marriage ended in death, a **certified copy** of the death record must be presented to the city or town clerk.

4. Accurate information

Any person who willfully and knowingly supplies false information on a marriage license shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both, pursuant to Section 23-3-28 of the RI General Laws.

WHEN and WHERE can the ceremony occur?

- The license is valid for **three (3) months** (beginning with the issuance date and ending with the expiration date, as specified on the “License and Certificate of Marriage” form).
- The ceremony must occur during that three-month period.
- The location of the ceremony must take place where the marriage license is valid.

WHO can be witnesses at the ceremony?

- In addition to the officiant, the marriage must take place in the presence of two (2) witnesses who have reached legal age (18 years of age).
- If the honor attendants are witnesses and are less than 18 years of age, other persons of legal age who are present at the ceremony may sign as witnesses.

WHO can perform the ceremony?

General Laws of Rhode Island § 15-3-5: Officials empowered to join persons in marriage. – 15-3-5.

- Every ordained clergy or elder in good standing.
- Every justice of the supreme court, superior court, family court, workers' compensation court, district court or traffic tribunal.
- The clerk of the supreme court, every clerk or general chief clerk of a superior court, family court, district court, or traffic tribunal.
- Magistrates, special or general magistrates of the superior court, family court, traffic tribunal or district court.
- Administrators of the workers' compensation court and every former justice or judge and former administrator of these courts.
- Every former chief clerk of the district court.
- Every former clerk or general chief clerk of a superior court.
- The secretary of the senate.
- Elected clerks of the general assembly.
- Any former secretary of the senate or any former elected clerk of the general assembly who retires after July 1, 2007.
- Judges of the United States appointed pursuant to Article III of the United States Constitution.
- Bankruptcy judges appointed pursuant to Article I of the United States Constitution.
- United States magistrate judges appointed pursuant to federal law.
- Every justice and every former justice of the municipal courts of the cities and towns in this state.
- The police court of the town of Johnston.
- Every probate judge and every former probate judge.
- Wardens of the town of New Shoreham may join persons in marriage in New Shoreham.

RESPONSIBILITIES of the officiant

- Perform the ceremony.
- Sign the appropriate officiant section of the marriage license in black ink only (no commercial correction products may be used).
- Obtain witnesses' signatures on the marriage license in black ink only (no commercial correction products may be used).
- Register the marriage record within 72 hours with the city or town clerk **where the license was issued.**

Cost for one certified copy	\$20.00
Additional copies	\$15.00

**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
MARRIAGE LICENSE WORKSHEET**

INFORMATION FOR LEGAL PURPOSES

GROOM Date of Application _____
 Name in Full _____
 Present Mailing Address (Street Address or P.O. Box, City/Town, State, Zip Code) _____

 City/Town and State of Residence _____
 City/Town, State of Birth _____
 (if not USA, name country) _____
 Date of Birth (month/day/year) _____ Age: _____
 On day of issuance _____
 Social Security Number* _____
 Groom's Father's Name _____
 Groom's Father's Birthplace (State) _____
 (if not USA, name country) _____
 Groom's Mother's Full Maiden Name _____
 Groom's Mother's Birthplace (State) _____
 (if not USA, name country) _____

BRIDE Date of Application _____
 Name in Full _____
 Maiden Name if married before _____
 Present Mailing Address (Street Address or P.O. Box, City/Town, State, Zip Code) _____

 City/Town and State of Residence _____
 City/Town, State of Birth _____
 (if not USA, name country) _____
 Date of Birth (month/day/year) _____ Age: _____
 On day of issuance _____
 Social Security Number* _____
 Bride's Father's Name _____
 Bride's Father's Birthplace (State) _____
 (if not USA, name country) _____
 Bride's Mother's Full Maiden Name _____
 Bride's Mother's Birthplace (State) _____
 (if not USA, name country) _____

INFORMATION FOR LEGAL AND STATISTICAL PURPOSES

This information requested below is required by law but is not issued on certified copies of marriage records unless requested by bride or groom.

GROOM
 Number of this marriage (1st, 2nd etc.) _____
 If previously married:
 How did your last marriage end? Circle: death , divorce or other
 If other describe _____
 Date last marriage ended _____

BRIDE
 Number of this marriage (1st, 2nd etc.) _____
 If previously married:
 How did your last marriage end? Circle: death , divorce or other
 If other describe _____
 Date last marriage ended _____

INFORMATION FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES

Note: Section 15-2-7 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, 1956 as amended, requires completion of all items for which information is requested on this worksheet. However, the information requested below is not issued on certified copies of marriage records unless requested by the bride or groom. The information requested below is used for demographic and health use only in a wide range of social and health research studies.

GROOM
 Race (White, Black, American Indian, etc.) _____

BRIDE
 Race (White, Black, American Indian, etc.) _____

Being aware that a penalty of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or a year imprisonment or both is provided for in Rhode Island law for furnishing false information to go on a vital record, I hereby certify that the information provided above is correct.

(Signature of Groom) _____ (Date of Signature) _____

(Signature of Bride) _____ (Date of Signature) _____

 Name of Person Completing
 Information, if not Groom _____

 Name of Person Completing
 Information, if not Bride _____

INFORMATION TO ASSIST IN REGISTERING YOUR MARRIAGE RECORD

Name, Address, and Phone Number of location, if known, where marriage will take place _____

 Name, Address, and Phone Number of officiant (if known, and as defined by RI Law 15-3-5), who will perform the marriage ceremony _____

 Date and City or Town planned for marriage ceremony. NOTE: License expires 3 months after issuance _____

Name of witnesses, if known:

Bride's Phone Number: _____

Groom's Phone Number: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Type of Document and ID# Used for Identification, for example, birth certificate, passport etc.

Groom: _____

Bride: _____