

Marriage Requirements in the State of Rhode Island
Cost of the Marriage License: \$24.00

HOW to apply for a Marriage License

Both parties to the marriage must:

- Apply for the marriage license in person at a city or town office and sign the license in the presence of the city or town clerk or an 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”. Any party to the marriage under age 16 must obtain an order from the Family Court 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 parties 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 RI:

- **If the both parties live in Rhode Island**, apply for the license from the city or town clerk at the city or town of either party’s residence.
- **If the one of the parties does not live in Rhode Island but the other party does**, apply for the license from the city or town clerk at the city or town of the Rhode Island party’s residence.
- **If either party 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 parties to the marriage 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.

RESPONSIBILITIES of the parties to the marriage:

Both parties to the marriage must supply:

1. Proof of birth facts and identifications

- 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.
- Contact the city or town office to verify the requirements and the hours of operation.

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

- A “Minors Permit to Marry” form must be completed if either party to the marriage is under 18 years of age, or under the 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. Anyone under age 16 cannot secure a marriage license in Rhode Island without an order from the 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 RIGL § 23-3-28.

WHERE AND WHEN 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?

RIGL § 15-3-5: Officials empowered to join persons in marriage

- 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.
- 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.**