How to obtain a marriage license in Rhode Island?

Couples marrying in Rhode Island must apply for a license in the city or town clerk’s office.

Residents of RI

- If both applicants live in Rhode Island, they may apply for the license from the city/town clerk’s office, of the residence of either applicant.
- If only one applicant lives in Rhode Island, then they may apply for the license from the city/town clerk’s office of the residence of that applicant.
- The marriage license is valid in any city or town in Rhode Island; the couple may be married anywhere in Rhode Island.

NON-Residents of RI

- If neither applicant lives in Rhode Island, the marriage license must be obtained at the city or town clerk’s office WHERE THE CEREMONY WILL TAKE PLACE. RI law states that the marriage license is valid only in the city or town in which it 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.

Please be sure to contact the city or town where you apply for the license to verify requirements and hours open to the public. For a list of city and town offices, please visit the RI Department of Health web site: www.health.ri.gov

What documents are required?

To obtain a marriage license, both parties must apply for the license in person at the city or town clerk’s office. The couple is required to complete the marriage worksheet and provide the required documentation. The clerk will then create the marriage license from the information provided. Both parties are required to sign both the worksheet and the marriage license in the presence of the city or town clerk. The fee for the marriage license is currently $24.00 payable to the city or town.

Both applicants must supply:

1. Proof of Birth Facts and Identification
   - Proof of birth facts, preferably a long-form certified copy of birth certificate. A passport or alien card may be accepted for persons born outside the United States who cannot obtain a birth record.
   - A valid government issued form of identification. Some offices will 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.

2. Permit to Marry for Minors and Persons Under Legal Guardianship
   - A Permit to Marry (VS 10) must be completed if either applicant is 16 or 17 years of age or 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. If this is not possible, please contact the Center for Vital Records for instructions.
   - Applicants under the age of 16 cannot secure a marriage license in the State of Rhode Island without the approval of Family Court.
3. Proof That Previous Marriages, Civil Unions or Registered Domestic Partnerships Have Ended

- If either applicant has been previously married, civilly united or in a registered domestic partnership, and the previous marriage, civil union or registered domestic partnership ended in divorce, dissolution or death, such applicant must present a certified copy of the FINAL decree of divorce or dissolution, or a certified copy of the death certificate to the city or town clerk.

4. Accurate Information

Any person who willfully and knowingly supplies false information intending that the information be used in the preparation of 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.

Who may perform the ceremony?

- The license is valid for three (3) months.
- The marriage license lists the dates when the marriage license is valid. The ceremony must occur during that three-month period.
- The marriage license lists the location where the marriage license is valid.

Please note: If the applicants do not marry, the marriage license must be returned to the city or town office where the license was issued.

Who may be witnesses at the ceremony?

- In addition to the officiant, the solemnization of marriage shall be in the presence of at least two (2) witnesses who have reached the age of legal majority (18 years of age).
- If the honor attendants are less than 18 years of age, two other witnesses to the ceremony who have reached the age of 18 may sign as witnesses.

Who is allowed to correct information on the marriage certificate?

- Issuing City or Town Clerk’s office may make minor corrects prior to filing with the State of Rhode Island.
- Once the record is filed with the State, any corrections will be amended at the Center for Vital Records.
- If any information was presented in error, contact the State Office at 401-222-2812 after the marriage license has been registered.

How and When to obtain certified copies of the marriage certificate?

- Complete a marriage application form at one of the following locations:
  - The city or town clerk’s office where the license was issued.
  - The city or town where the ceremony took place.
  - The State Office of Vital Records within a month or download an application from our website, www.health.ri.gov and mail it to the Center for Vital Records.
- All requests are to be submitted with a valid government issued photo ID
- The fee for a certified copy is as follows:
  - Walk-In Requests $22.00
  - Additional Copies of the same record $18.00 each
  - Mail-In Requests $25.00
  - Additional Copies of the same record $18.00 each

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