

## INFORMATION ABOUT MARRIAGE LICENSE, CEREMONY, AND CERTIFICATE

You must get a license from the state of Alaska before you can be married. A marriage is not valid unless it is solemnized, which means that a marriage ceremony is performed (see next page). There is no common law marriage in Alaska.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR A MARRIAGE LICENSE

These instructions describe how to apply for a license at a court. You can also apply through the Health Analytics and Vital Records office (in person or by mail). The application form is also available online here: [www.vitalrecords.alaska.gov](http://www.vitalrecords.alaska.gov).

1. Application Form.

Before a marriage license can be issued, you must complete an application. Both parties (the future spouses) must fill out part of the application form. If either party is out of town or out of state, contact the court for further instructions.

2. Waiting Period.

The waiting period is three days. It begins when either party starts the process by completing that party's section of the application form. The license can be issued on the **fourth** day, however, it will not be issued until **both** parties complete and sign the application form.

3. Age Requirement.

Each party must be one or more of the following: at least 18 years old **or** legally emancipated **or** a member of the armed forces of the United States on active duty.

If either party is 16 or 17 years old at the time of marriage, the other party can be no more than three years older. Additionally, the minor party needs **BOTH**:

(1) the written consent of the minor's parents, legal guardian, or the parent who has actual care, custody and control of the minor. If only one parent has actual custody, proof of custody (divorce decree, custody order, or death certificate) may be required. A certified copy of a birth certificate showing parentage may be required. **AND**

(2) a court order granting permission to marry. Contact your local court for questions about how to ask for this order.

The superior court has the power to grant permission to marry without the written consent of the minor's parents or guardians, however, you may wish to speak with an attorney if this situation applies to you.

A person younger than 16 years old may not marry in Alaska for any reason.

4. Identification.

Before the license is issued, each party may be required to present photo ID showing name and birthdate. A birth certificate is not sufficient.

5. Prior Marriages.

If either party has been married before, the name of the former spouse, the date and place of marriage, **and** the date and place the marriage ended are required. If the marriage ended within the past 60 days, a copy of the divorce decree, signed by the judge, or a death certificate may be required before the license will be issued.

6. Blood Test.

No blood test is required.

7. Cost.

The license costs \$60.00. The license must be used within 90 days. It can be used anywhere in Alaska.

## MARRIAGE CEREMONY (SOLEMNIZATION)

8. A marriage ceremony may be solemnized (performed) by:
  - Religious Leader. A minister, priest, or rabbi of any church or congregation in the state, or by a commissioned officer of the Salvation Army, or by the principal officer or elder of recognized churches or congregations that traditionally do not have regular ministers, priests, or rabbis. It may also be performed before or in any religious organization or congregation according to an established ritual practiced within that group.
  - Elected Official. Any individual holding an elective public office in the state.
  - Judicial Officer. Any state judge or magistrate. Ceremonies may be scheduled at the courthouse. The cost is \$25.00. You must bring one witness who is at least 18 years old with you to the ceremony. The witness must be able to certify that both parties intend to get married of their own free will. The witness must also provide the witness's name, address, phone number, and email address on the marriage certificate.
  - Marriage Commissioner. Marriage commissioners are appointed by the presiding judge of the judicial district. Any adult private citizen may get an appointment as a marriage commissioner. The appointment will be limited to performing a ceremony for two specific persons on a specific day at a specific place within the judicial district. The appointment order is valid only for these specifications. If any fact changes, such as the date or place of marriage, the commissioner must get a new appointment order. Every ceremony done by a marriage commissioner requires a separate appointment order. The cost to appoint a marriage commissioner is \$25.00. The request must be made in person at the court, by the person wishing to be appointed. The commissioner does not need to be an Alaska resident. Photo ID may be required. The court will provide an instruction sheet for completing the marriage certificate after the ceremony. The court also has sample marriage ceremony scripts available upon request.
9. Form of Ceremony.

No particular format, words, or ritual is required. The only legal requirement is that the two parties must agree and declare that they intend to be married, in the presence of each other, the person performing the ceremony, and at least one other witness.
10. Multiple Ceremonies.

If the parties are doing both a religious and a civil ceremony, only one license is needed.

## MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

11. Recording the Marriage Certificate.

After the marriage ceremony, the person who performed the ceremony **must** return the completed marriage certificate to the Health Analytics and Vital Records office at 5441 Commercial Blvd., PO Box 110675, Juneau, AK 99801. This must be done **within seven days** after the ceremony.
12. Certified Copies of Marriage Certificate.

After you are married, you may buy certified copies of your marriage certificate from Health Analytics and Vital Records at the Juneau or Anchorage office. Instructions and a request form are available at [www.vitalrecords.alaska.gov](http://www.vitalrecords.alaska.gov). Please allow at least one week for the person who performed the ceremony to file the certificate. The fee is \$30.00 for the first certified copy, and \$25 for each additional copy ordered at the same time. The \$60.00 fee for the marriage license does **not** include the cost of a certified copy of the marriage certificate.

You will be provided with a decorative certificate when your license is issued and/or after the ceremony. This decorative certificate cannot be used as proof of marriage.