

The Department of Internal Affairs: Births Deaths and Marriages - How to Get a Marriage Licence

Anybody can marry in New Zealand, as long as they are legally free to marry. Under New Zealand law this means that:

- They are not married already (or if they have been married, the marriage has been dissolved by a court of law).
- They are old enough (16 or over, although parental consent is required if either party is under 20 years old).
- They are not closely related by blood, marriage or adoption. Details of these “prohibited” marriages appear on the form Notice of Intended Marriage, which is used to apply for a marriage licence.

If you do not live in New Zealand, you should check with the authorities in the place where you normally live to see if there are any special steps you must take or rules that apply when you marry in New Zealand.

What you need to do before you can get married

Decide when and where you want to get married

You will need to know these details when you complete your application for a marriage licence.

Choose a Marriage Celebrant

You will need to contact your celebrant and agree on a time and place before applying for your marriage licence.

Get a Marriage Licence

To get a licence, you will need to: Complete an application form (BDM60 or BDM58 - see details below). You can download the form as a .pdf document to print and fill out later. Or, if you live in New Zealand, you can also get an application form from your nearest New Zealand Marriage Registry or by phoning 0800 22 52 52.

Make a Statutory Declaration

As part of completing the application form for a marriage licence, you need to make a statutory declaration. Either you or your partner will need to make a formal statutory declaration that there is no lawful impediment to the marriage (i.e. no legal reason that you cannot marry), that the details you give are true, that the bride and groom are not within the “prohibited degrees of relationship” and that parental consent has been given (where relevant).

If you live in New Zealand-you must make this declaration in the presence of a Registrar of Marriages. Check the address list for your nearest Registrar.

If you live outside of New Zealand - once you have completed the form, signed the statutory declaration and had it witnessed - you can send the form to the New Zealand Registrar of Marriages closest to where you intend to marry (address list). You should advise the Registrar of the date that you intend to collect the marriage licence (this must be at least three days after your completed form reaches the Registry). For more details about applying from overseas, see 'When and How to Apply for a Marriage Licence - If you both live outside New Zealand' (below).

When and How to Apply for a Marriage Licence

You will need to get a marriage licence from your most convenient Births, Deaths and Marriages Registry Office. To apply for marriage licence you must fill out the appropriate form.

If you live in New Zealand or will be in New Zealand for at least three days ahead of your wedding (either the bride or groom, or both) - contact your local Births, Deaths and Marriages office or call freephone 0800 22 52 52 (New Zealand only) and ask for a BDM 60 Notice of Intended Marriage form. You can also open and print out the BDM 60 form here, in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format. You need to have the Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. You can download a free version from the Adobe site. You cannot complete the form online, as either the bride or the groom must complete a statutory declaration (part of the form). The statutory declaration must be made in the presence of a Registrar of Marriages. This must be done in person. If you cannot download the form, contact us.

If you both live outside New Zealand and will not arrive in New Zealand until immediately before the date you want to marry, you may be able to complete most of the formalities before you arrive in New Zealand. You will need to complete a BDM 58 form (Notice of Intended Marriage where Parties Ordinarily Resident outside New Zealand), available here in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format. You need to have the Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. You can download a free version from the Adobe site. You cannot complete the form online, as either the bride or the groom must complete a statutory declaration (part of the form). If you cannot download the form, contact us.

Marriage licences are only valid for three months from the date of issue. During that period you are free to marry at the place specified on the marriage licence.

How to pay your marriage licence fee

Registry offices will accept over the counter payments by cheque, credit card, cash or, in some offices, EFTPOS.

The licence fee is NZ\$120.00. The name of the celebrant must be given on the form in order for your licence to be issued. The celebrant must be registered to conduct marriages in New Zealand

If you are sending payment within New Zealand, your cheque should be made out to: "Department of Internal Affairs". Please do not send cash. If you are sending the fee by post, payment from outside of New Zealand can be made by way of a bank draft (i.e. a bank cheque, which can be purchased at any bank) in New Zealand dollars payable to: "Department of Internal Affairs".

If applying by post, you can also send credit card details (Bankcard, MasterCard or Visa).

Collecting and Using Your Marriage Licence

A marriage licence is normally issued three calendar days after the Notice of Intended Marriage form (BDM 60 or BDM 58) is submitted and the fee is paid.

Under special circumstances a Registrar may be able to reduce the three-day waiting period between your completing the form and being able to collect and use the licence, but not to less than one day.

Your marriage licence is valid for three months from the date on which it is issued. During that period you are free to marry at the place specified on the marriage licence.