

## GENERAL INFORMATION

When a marriage ceremony is performed in Maine, there are certain procedures that must be followed by the officiant. The municipal clerk who issued the license will have already made sure that the parties to be married have complied with the laws of Maine. However, there are several duties for which the person performing the marriage (officiant) is directly responsible:

1. The parties to be married must present a valid State of Maine marriage license.
  2. The officiant must review the license to ensure that the parties' signatures are present and that the license has not expired.
  3. Once the marriage has been performed, the officiant must have the two witnesses sign the license using a BLACK INK pen.
  4. The officiant must complete the ceremony section of the license.
  5. The officiant, within 7 days of performing the ceremony, must file the completed license with the municipal clerk where the marriage license was issued.
- It should be clearly understood by all parties that there are severe penalties for violation of the laws that relate to vital records. A marriage certificate is a vital record. It is an important legal document. All parties should be aware of the laws about performing marriage ceremonies and the responsibility of the officiant.



The parties to be married are responsible for picking up a copy of the license and presenting it to the officiant prior to the ceremony. Once the officiant receives the "Place of Issue" photocopy of the marriage license from the parties to be married, the license is then the responsibility of the officiant.

A Maine marriage license is valid for 90 days from the date the intentions are filed. The marriage license may not be used outside the state nor does a license issued by another state or country authorize marriage in Maine.

### PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO SOLEMNIZE MARRIAGES IN MAINE

- If the officiant is a resident of this state:
  1. A justice or judge;
  2. A lawyer admitted to the Maine Bar; or
  3. A notary public under Title 4, chapter 19
- Whether the officiant is a resident or nonresident of this State and whether or not a citizen of the United States:
  1. An ordained minister of the gospel;
  2. A cleric engaged in the service of the religious body to which the cleric belongs; or
  3. A person licensed to preach by an association of ministers, religious seminary or ecclesiastical body.
- A nonresident of Maine who has a temporary registration certificate issued by the Maine CDC vital records office.

## BEFORE THE CEREMONY

Both the parties to be married must sign the marriage license at the municipal clerk's office before the license may be issued.

**The marriage license is valid for 90 days (not three months) from the date of filing.**

The age of consent in Maine is 18 years of age for both the parties to be married. The officiant should not perform the marriage if there is reason to believe that either of the parties is under the age of 18 and there is not written consent of the parents that shows permission has been granted.

The residence of the parties to be married determines where the intentions of marriage may be filed:

- a) If both the parties reside in Maine, in the same town, then the license must be obtained from their municipal office. They are free to marry anywhere within the State of Maine.
- b) If both the parties to be married reside in Maine, but in separate towns, they may file their intentions at EITHER resident town (they do not have to file in both) and they are free to marry anywhere within Maine.
- c) If either party to be married resides in the State of Maine, and the other is a non-resident of Maine, then they must obtain their license at the municipal office where the resident lives. They are free to marry anywhere within the State of Maine.
- d) If both parties reside outside of Maine, they may file their intentions at any municipal office and then they are free to marry anywhere within the State of Maine.

## AFTER THE CEREMONY

After the ceremony, the officiant must complete the 'Ceremony' section of each marriage license using a **BLACK INK** pen. Please print or type all information clearly except for necessary signatures. Necessary signatures include those of the officiant and the two witnesses.

\*\*\*It is required that two witnesses be present and sign the marriage license in the State of Maine. The officiant **CANNOT** be a witness.

\*\*\***All information is to be done in BLACK INK ONLY!**

**\*NOTE: Do not add or correct any information already on the license. All corrections must be done through a legal process at the Maine CDC vital records office.**

After the ceremony section of the license is completed, the **officiant must return the marriage license** to the municipality where the license was issued. This must be done within **seven days** of the marriage. The completed license is to be either mailed or delivered personally by the officiant to the clerk's office. Under no circumstances should this duty be assigned to the individuals who are married or any member of the wedding party.

## QUESTIONS

If any questions arise that are not covered in this pamphlet, please feel free to contact this office at:

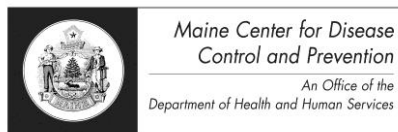
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
(Maine CDC)  
Vital Records Office  
220 Capitol Street  
11 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011  
(207) 287-3771

## DHHS

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To order additional copies of this publication or if you have questions about the content, please call: Maine CDC, Data, Research, and Vital Statistics at 207-287-5500. "TTY users call Maine relay 711".



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A GUIDE FOR OFFICIANTS

# PERFORMING A MARRIAGE CEREMONY



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(Maine CDC)  
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Augusta, Maine 04333-0011  
(207) 287-3771 Fax : (207) 287-1093  
TTY Users: Dial 711 (Maine Relay)