HOW TO OBTAIN A MARRIAGE LICENSE

All people who marry in Massachusetts must have a marriage license issued in Massachusetts. An out-of state license cannot be used in Massachusetts

---

HOW TO APPLY FOR A LICENSE...
How do we apply for a marriage license?

WAITING PERIOD...
Is there a waiting period from the date of application to the date the license is issued?

OBTAINING A WAIVER OF THE WAITING PERIOD...
May we marry before the three days for good reason?
How may we obtain a waiver?

COST OF LICENSE...
What is the cost of a marriage license?

AGE REQUIREMENT...
At what age may a man or woman marry?
What if one or both of us is under 18?

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE...
Is a medical certificate required before a license can be issued?

DIVORCES AND WIDOWED APPLICANTS...
What if one or both of us has been divorced?
Is there a special requirement for a widow or widower who is remarrying?

WITNESSES TO THE CEREMONY...
Do we need any witnesses present at the ceremony?

CLERGYPERSON AND JUSTICES OF THE PEACE...
What are the responsibilities of the member of the clergy or justice of the peace?
What should be done if an out-of-state member of the clergy is to perform the ceremony?

SAME SEX MARRIAGE...
Do we need to bring a picture I.D. when applying for a marriage?
Can we apply for a license if we do not live in Massachusetts?
Do we need proof of residency?

HOW TO APPLY FOR A LICENSE...

How do we apply for a marriage license?

You must both apply in person for a marriage license. This requirement is applicable to both residents and non-residents of the commonwealth. According to Massachusetts law, you must jointly file intentions to marry, and may do so with the city or town clerk in any community in the state.

If either Party A or B is in the military and unable to appear and either Party A or B is a resident of Massachusetts, the intention may be taken by one party to the marriage and the parent or guardian of the absent principal or solely by the other principal of the intended marriage. The member of the couple in the military does not have to be the Massachusetts resident.

If either Party is incarcerated in a county or state house of correction, either party may file.

A marriage license, once obtained is valid for 60 days from the date intentions are filed and may be used in any Massachusetts city or town. It is not valid outside the state.

WAITING PERIOD...

Is there a waiting period from the date of application to the date the license is issued?

Yes, there is a mandatory three-day waiting period. While Sundays and holidays are included in the three days, the day the application is made is not. For example, if you apply on Friday, your license will be issued on or after Monday.

OBTAINING A WAIVER OF THE WAITING PERIOD...

May we marry before the three days for a good reason?

Yes, you should file your intentions first with any city or town clerk. Then an application for a waiver must be filed by both of you at probate or district court. After a hearing, the court may issue a certificate allowing the marriage license to be issued, and the marriage performed without delay. You must bring the certificate to the city or town clerks office where you filed your intentions and they will issue the marriage license, and the marriage may be performed without delay.

COST OF LICENSE...

What is the cost of a marriage license?

The cost for filing a license in Northampton is $35.00

AGE REQUIREMENT...

At what age may a man or woman marry?

A Massachusetts resident may marry if he or she is 18 years of age or older. A birth certificate may be required to show proof of age.

What if one or both of us is under 18?

If either is under 18, a court order from a probate or district court where the minor resides must be obtained before the marriage intentions can be filed.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATES...

Is a medical certificate required before a license can be issued?

As of January 28, 2005, a medical certificate is no longer required in Massachusetts.

DIVORCES AND WIDOWED APPLICANTS...

What if one or both of us has been divorced?

You are not required to present a divorce certificate when filing intentions to marry. However, it is extremely important that an individual who has been divorced be certain that his/her divorce is absolute. If you are uncertain as to the absolute date of your divorce, you should contact the court where the divorce was granted.

Is there any special requirement for a widow or widower who is remarrying?

No.

WITNESSES TO CEREMONY...

Do we need any witnesses present at the ceremony?

Massachusetts statute does not require that witnesses be present at your ceremony.

However, if a member of the clergy performs the ceremony, you should ensure that you are in conformity with the appropriate religious tenets.

CLERGYPERSONS AND JUSTICES OF THE PEACE...

What are the responsibilities of the clergy or justice of the peace?

The member of the clergy or justice of the peace must complete and sign the original license and return it to the clerk of the city or town where the license was issued.

What should be done if an out-of-state member of the clergy is to perform the marriage?

If an out-of-state member of the clergy is to perform the marriage, the clergyperson must obtain a Certificate of Authorization from the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth prior to the ceremony. This certificate, which is issued by the Public Records Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, is to be attached to the original license and returned to the clerk of the city or town where the license was issued. For further information, Contact:

Division of Public Records
Secretary of the Commonwealth
One Ashburton Place, Room 1719
Boston, MA 02108
Telephone # (617) 727-2836

SAME SEX MARRIAGES...

Do we need to bring a picture I.D. when applying for a marriage license?

A picture I.D. is not required.

Can we apply for a license if we do not live in MA.

If you are from out of state, and it is not your intention to reside in Massachusetts, we cannot issue you a marriage license.

Do we need proof of residency?

Proof of residency is not required. The marriage intention is being signed under the pains and penalties of perjury.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact:

City of Northampton-City Clerk's Office
210 Main Street-Room 4
Northampton, MA 01060
Telephone# (413) 587-1224

Registry of Vital Records & Statistics
Department of Public Health
470 Atlantic Avenue, 2nd Floor
Boston, MA 02210-2224
Telephone #(413) 735-8600