
KEY POINTS FOR OFFICIANTS

1. DO NOT PERFORM THE MARRIAGE UNTIL THE COUPLE GIVES YOU AN ORIGINAL WISCONSIN MARRIAGE LICENSE.
2. DO NOT PERFORM THE MARRIAGE UNLESS BOTH THE BRIDE AND GROOM ARE PHYSICALLY PRESENT WITH YOU.
3. DO NOT PERFORM THE MARRIAGE UNLESS THERE ARE TWO (2) COMPETENT ADULTS (18 YEARS OLD OR OLDER) WHO ARE PHYSICALLY PRESENT AT THE CEREMONY. THEY MUST SIGN THE MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE.
4. DO NOT PLACE A CHURCH SEAL, OR ANY OTHER TYPE OF SEAL, ON THE MARRIAGE LICENSE.
6. SEND OR TAKE THE MARRIAGE LICENSE TO THE REGISTER OF DEEDS IN THE COUNTY OF MARRIAGE WITHIN 3 DAYS OF THE WEDDING.

THE COST OF REPRINTING OR REPLACING A MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE IS \$5.00.



Marriage License Instructions for the Officiant

Buffalo County Courthouse



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A Guide to Completing a Marriage License

OFFICIANT

At the time of the marriage ceremony, the marriage license is given to the officiant who is responsible for its accurate completion and filing. The officiant must insure that the couple has a valid Wisconsin marriage license before performing the ceremony.

IMPORTANT GENERAL MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS (per s. 69.08, Wis. Stats.)

All entries including signatures, must be in BLACK or BLUE INK to insure legible photocopies and clear images for microfilming.

The officiant may NOT place a church seal (or any other type of seal) on the marriage certificate.

The Register of Deeds will NOT accept a marriage license if it is prepared with any ink color other than black; if it contains erasures, correction fluid, correction tape, or other unauthorized alterations; or if it has a seal. IT WILL BE RETURNED AND A NEW, PROPERLY COMPLETED RECORD WILL BE REQUIRED.

Buffalo County charges a \$5.00 fee to replace the record.

PENALTY INFORMATION (per s. 765.30, Wis. Stats.)

1. A fine of not less than \$10,000 or imprisoned for not more than nine (9) months or both for:
 - a. Marrying outside the state for the purpose of avoiding Wisconsin law.
 - b. Making certain false statements to obtain a license to marry.
 - c. Issuing a marriage license illegally (County Clerk).
 - d. Wilfully and knowingly performing a marriage without statutory authority to perform marriages in the state. (See "Who May Legally Perform a Marriage in Wisconsin".)
 - e. Being a party to performing a fictitious marriage ceremony for fraudulent purposes.
2. A fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 or imprisoned for not more than six (6) months or both for:
 - a. Unlawfully solemnizing a marriage (by the officiant or by the two parties themselves).
3. A fine of not less than \$10 nor more than \$200 or imprisoned for not more than three (3) months or both for:
 - a. Failing to file a marriage certificate (the officiant must mail

the certificate to the Register of Deeds within 3 days of the marriage ceremony, per Chap. 69.16, Wis. Stats.)

- b. Failing to keep a public marriage docket (County Clerk).

WHO MAY LEGALLY PERFORM A MARRIAGE IN WISCONSIN (per ss. 765.16 and 765.17, Wis. Stats.)

1. Ordained clergy or licentiate of a denominational body or appointee of any bishop (if officiant is a Wisconsin resident).
2. Family court or other court commissioner or supplemental court commissioner in Wisconsin.
3. Municipal judge, reserve judge or any judge of a court of record in Wisconsin or a Wisconsin tribal judge.
4. The two parties themselves, by mutual declarations, in accordance with the customs, rules, and regulations of any religious society, denomination, or sect to which either of said parties belong (per s. 765.16, Wis. Stats.). At least one of you must belong to a religious organization that believes that the marriage ceremony should be performed without an officiant). NOTE: VERY FEW RELIGIONS ALLOW SELF MARRIAGE.
5. An out-of-state clergy person, if that officiant has a letter of sponsorship from a clergy person in Wisconsin. The letter must state that the sponsor knows of this officiant and believes that the officiant is authorized to perform marriages by that religious organization. The County Clerk may ask to see the letter of sponsorship.

FILING THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

DO NOT keep your original certificate of marriage. It is of legal value only if it is filed properly with the appropriate Register of Deeds. The officiant must file the marriage license with the Register of Deeds within three (3) days of the marriage ceremony (per s. 69.16, Wis. Stats.). If the marriage license is not filed, you are still legally married; however, it is more difficult to show proof of your marriage.

COPIES

IT IS ILLEGAL TO MAKE PHOTOCOPIES OF A MARRIAGE LICENSE. You may purchase copies of the marriage certificate from a Register of Deeds in the State of Wisconsin or from the State Vital Records Office.

OFFICIANT SECTION (Black or Blue Ink Only)

11. OFFICIANT SIGNATURE

The officiant must sign in black ink. If the ceremony is a "self-marriage" (see item 4 under "Who May Legally Perform a Marriage in Wisconsin" for limitations on the use of this option), the bride and groom must both sign in this area. Be careful that the signature does not obscure other information or go beyond the space provided.

12. OFFICIANT NAME (Print or type.)

Print or type the officiant's name. If you are performing a self-marriage ceremony, enter both your names. (See item 11.)

13. OFFICIANT MAILING ADDRESS (Street, City, State, Zip Code)

Print or type the mailing address, including Zip Code, of the person whose name appears in item 11. Enter the officiant's primary mailing contact address.

14. OFFICIANT PHONE

Enter the phone number of the Officiant performing the ceremony.

15. OFFICIANT EMAIL

Enter the email address of the Officiant performing the ceremony (if an email address is available).