

Getting Married? You Need a License And a Premarital Exam

THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

A couple who intends to be married in New York State must apply in person for a marriage license to any town or city clerk in the state. The application for such a license must be signed only by the bride and groom, if both are 18 years of age or older.

How long is it valid?

A marriage license is valid for 60 days from the date it was issued. However, the marriage ceremony may not take place within three days from the date on which either blood specimen was taken or within 24 hours from the time that the license was issued, whichever is later.

It is noteworthy that the day, on which the blood is taken does not count as one of the three days.

How much does it cost?

The fee is \$5 for the license and up to \$5 for the Certificate of Marriage Registration. The latter is automatically sent by the clerk to the applicants within 15 days after the completed license is returned by the officiant, and serves as notice that a record of their marriage is on file.

THE PREMARITAL EXAM

Upon application, the clerk will require from each applicant a statement signed by a licensed physician or a commissioned medical officer of the Armed Forces or the U.S. Public Health Service. The statement must indicate that on the basis of an examination and blood test, the applicant is not infected with syphilis or, if infected, is not in a communicable state.

The statement, form VS-77M, is usually provided to physicians by the laboratory performing the blood test. The applicants obtain their respective statements from the physician when the results of the blood test are returned by the laboratory.

A premarital examination report is valid for 30 days from the date on which the examination and blood test are made.

An examination and blood test are not required when a couple who is already legally married needs a license for the purpose of a second or subsequent ceremony.

The provisions of the premarital examination and blood test may be modified or waived by order of a justice of the Supreme Court or the county judge of the county in which the woman resides. Such justice or judge may also authorize the ceremony to take place immediately.

WHO CAN GET MARRIED?

A person may be required to submit documentary proof of age in the form of a birth certificate, baptismal record, passport, driver's license, employment certificate, school record, immigration record, naturalization record or court record. No other type

of proof, such as a statement by parents, may be accepted.

There are special requirements for issuing a marriage license to minors:

- Marriage is prohibited if the man is less than 16 years of age or the woman is under 14.

- If the woman is over 14 but under 16, she must submit the written consent of both of her parents or guardian and the written approval of either a justice of the Supreme Court or the judge of a Family Court having jurisdiction of the area where she applies for a license.

- If either the man or woman is over 16 but under 18 years of age, he or she must submit the written consent of both parents or guardian.

One parent alone may consent to a minor's marriage if: a) the other parent has been missing for one year preceding the application; b) the parents have been divorced and the consenting parent was given full custody of the child when the divorce decree was awarded; or c) the other parent has been judged incompetent.

Parents, guardians or other persons consenting to the marriage of a minor must personally appear and acknowledge or execute their consent before the town or city clerk or some other authorized official. If the affidavit is made before an official outside of the State of New York, it must be accompanied by a certificate of authentication when the consent is filed in New York State.

Familial Restrictions

A marriage may not take place in New York State between an ancestor and descendant, a brother and sister (full- or half-blood), an uncle and niece or an aunt and nephew, regardless of whether or not these persons are legitimate or illegitimate offspring.

IF YOU'VE BEEN MARRIED BEFORE

Information regarding previous marriages must be furnished in the application for a marriage license. This includes whether the former spouse or spouses are living, and whether the applicants are divorced persons and, if so, when, where and against whom the divorce or divorces were granted. A Certificate of Dissolution of Marriage issued by a county clerk may be required by the clerk issuing the marriage license.

WHAT ABOUT THE CEREMONY?

To be valid, a marriage must be conducted by one of the individuals specified in Section 11 of the Domestic Relations Law. Further information concerning who may perform a marriage ceremony is available from the clerk.

The marriage certificate must be signed by the officiant and at least one witness.

Within five days of the marriage, the officiant must forward the marriage certificate to the town or city clerk who issued the license. If there was a court order authorizing an immediate ceremony, it must also be sent to the clerk.

You're Special And Feb. 14 Will Note the Fact

Your marriage is our business! Why? Because we're married and we love it. What you do with your marriage affects all of us. Of course what we do with our marriage affects you also.

We all have a stake in each other. In fact, the whole Church has a stake in us. As married couples we are pretty special people. We are a Sacrament in the flesh. We are one of seven specific ways that Jesus has chosen to reveal Himself — His love for us — to the whole Church. In fact, to the world. We are special. We have been called to a special way of life, to a special vocation, but we are not alone in our journey.

Our relationship as husband and wife is our prime focus. Each day we want to strive to love each other more and more, and the more we love one another, the more we'll be able to love our family, our children, our Church, our God. And to help us do this, we have been given special graces. Special graces of the Sacrament of Matrimony. It's those special graces that help us to live out our call to be a couple, a couple who is madly, passionately in love with one another. It's a call

to be different from the rest of the world — it's a call to intimacy with each other — it's a call to be romantic with one another. It's a call to believe that our Sacrament of Matrimony, our love relationship, is God's plan for us — that what He wants most for us is to love one another as totally as we possibly can.

So, you are not alone — we are right there beside you. God is right there with you. We believe in you, we believe in us, and we believe that as married couples we can make a difference in our Church and in our world.

Throughout the country, Feb. 14, Valentine's Day, is being celebrated as "We believe in Marriage Day." Governors and mayors of cities are proclaiming this day publicly. It's time we as married couples stand up and shout from the roof-tops how great our Sacrament of Matrimony is. Come join us celebrate "us" on Feb. 13 at Midtown Mall in Rochester and/or your own local parish on Sunday, Feb. 14. "We believe in Marriage."

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