

# FAQs: One-Day Marriage Officiant Certification

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## Program Details and Applicant Eligibility

### **I've gotten ordained online. Can I still get my One-Day Marriage Officiant Certification?**

No. The One-Day Marriage Officiant Certification is only for people who are not already empowered to perform marriages under Rhode Island law. Rhode Island law allows persons ordained through online ministries to perform marriages, as such you DO NOT need a One-Day Marriage Officiant Certification. Please be aware that if you have gotten ordained through an online church or ministry, you will indicate that you performed a religious ceremony on the marriage license, even if you don't plan to use religious language.

### **Can I apply for One-Day Marriage Officiant Certification on behalf of someone else?**

Yes. Any person may submit the application on behalf of the officiant.

### **Can I apply to officiate more than one wedding?**

Yes. However, you will need to submit a new application for each marriage you intend to perform. Each application permits you to perform one marriage ceremony tied to a particular date, location, and couple. There is no limit to the number of applications an individual can submit.

### **Can a Justice of the Peace perform marriage ceremonies in Rhode Island?**

No. Rhode Island law does not allow Justices of the Peace to officiate marriage ceremonies. Only the individuals listed in R.I.G.L. § [15-3-5](#) may perform marriage ceremonies in Rhode Island.

### **How many ceremonies can I perform with this certification?**

One. You may perform a marriage ceremony only for the couple specified on the Certificate Authorizing the Solemnization of Marriage and only on the date and in the location specified on the certificate.

### **The original officiant is unable to perform the ceremony due to illness, injury or other challenges. Can I request a change to the name of the officiant on the Certificate Authorizing the Solemnization of Marriage for this ceremony?**

No. The Certificate Authorizing the Solemnization of Marriage is issued to a specific person. If a different person will be officiating the ceremony, that person must submit a new application.

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## Application Process

### **How long will it take to get my Certificate?**

You can expect to receive your Certificate Authorizing the Solemnization of Marriage quickly by email. Applications are processed within 5 business days, though you may receive a response much sooner. If you

do not receive an email within 5 business days of submitting your application, be sure to check your spam/junk folder or email us at [solemnization@sos.ri.gov](mailto:solemnization@sos.ri.gov).

**How do I know if my application has been approved?**

You will receive an email from [noreply@sos.ri.gov](mailto:noreply@sos.ri.gov) confirming your appointment as a One-Day Marriage Officiant. The email will have your Certificate Authorizing the Solemnization of Marriage attached. You will need to return this certificate and the completed marriage license to the city/town clerk's office that issued the marriage license. If you did not receive the email within 5 business days of submitting your application, make sure to check your spam folder and/or email [solemnization@sos.ri.gov](mailto:solemnization@sos.ri.gov).

**How do I make a correction on my certificate?**

You can request corrections to a pending or approved certificate up to 5 business days before the ceremony. Requesting a corrected certificate is free. To begin, follow [this link](#) and enter the information as currently recorded (even if incorrect) to locate the certificate. All of the information needed to locate the certificate can be found in the confirmation email you received after submitting your initial application.

**Is there expedited/rush service available?**

No. Applications must be submitted at least 5 business days prior to the ceremony. The application form will not allow applicants to apply for a ceremony that is scheduled to occur sooner than 5 business days in the future.

**How long is my certification good for?**

You are only empowered to perform the specific marriage indicated on the Certificate Authorizing the Solemnization of Marriage, which is issued for a marriage between a particular couple on a specific date and in a specific location. The certificate will expire the calendar day following the date the marriage occurred and cannot be used to perform any other marriage ceremonies.

**We are from out of state and can't get our marriage license more than 5 business days before the ceremony. How can our officiant apply for the One-Day Marriage Officiant Certification?**

Obtaining the marriage license is not required in order to submit the One-Day Marriage Officiant application. Having a copy of the marriage license on hand is helpful to ensure all the information entered on the application is correct; however, the applicant does not need to upload a copy of the marriage license in order to apply. Please note that the information on the marriage license and the officiant's Certificate Authorizing the Solemnization of Marriage must match.

**Do I need to upload a copy of the couple's marriage license when I apply?**

No. We recommend you have a copy of the marriage license on hand when you apply to ensure the information you enter on the application matches the information the couple entered on the marriage license, but you will not need to upload a copy of the marriage license. Please note that the information on the marriage license and the officiant's Certificate Authorizing the Solemnization of Marriage must match.

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## Performing the Ceremony

**How do I perform a marriage ceremony?**

Rhode Island law requires that the marriage ceremony be performed in the presence of two additional adult witnesses apart from the officiant and couple to be married. There are no standard words required by law to perform a marriage ceremony. You can perform the ceremony any way you please. [Click here](#) to learn more about general marriage requirements in the State of Rhode Island.

### **What are my duties as a marriage officiant?**

As a marriage officiant, you are responsible for:

1. Performing the marriage ceremony;
2. Ensuring the marriage license is properly completed; and
3. Returning the completed marriage license and your Certificate Authorizing the Solemnization of Marriage to the city/town clerk's office that issued the marriage license, within 72 hours of the ceremony's completion.

If you have questions on how to return these documents, please contact the city/town clerk's office that issued the marriage license. [Click here](#) to learn more about general marriage requirements in the State of Rhode Island.

### **Are there specific words I need to use during the ceremony?**

No. There are no standard words required by law to perform a marriage ceremony. You can perform the ceremony any way you please.

### **What's the difference between a religious and civil ceremony?**

When completing the marriage license, you will notice that there are two options for the type of ceremony performed: religious or civil. This selection indicates under what power you are authorized to perform the ceremony. Religious ceremonies are performed by a member of the clergy from any denomination, including online ministries. Please note, an officiant performing a religious ceremony does not need to use religious words during the ceremony. Civil ceremonies are performed by civil servants, such as judges, and officiants appointed through the One-Day Marriage Officiant Certification program or through the General Assembly.

### **How do I fill out the marriage license?**

All information entered on the marriage license by all parties must be made in black ink only. The marriage license must be filled out completely, including 5 signatures: yours, the couple being wed, and the two adult witnesses to the ceremony. You will also indicate on the marriage license that you performed a civil ceremony and enter the certificate number from the Certificate Authorizing the Solemnization of Marriage you received via email in the appropriate space. The completed license and the officiant's Certificate must be returned to the city/town clerk's office that issued the license within 72 hours of the ceremony's completion. Please review the instructions on the marriage license for more information. If you have questions about completing the marriage license, contact the issuing city/town clerk or the [Department of Health's Center for Vital Records](#).

### **What happens after the wedding?**

After the wedding, you should complete the marriage license and return it, together with your Certificate Authorizing the Solemnization of Marriage, within 72 hours to the city/town clerk's office that issued the license.

If you wish to obtain evidence that the marriage was performed and registered successfully, you can purchase a marriage certificate from the city/town clerk's office when you hand in the documents. Please note this is possible only if you are an immediate family member of the couple. If you are not an immediate family member, at least one member of the couple will need to accompany you when you return the completed marriage license and Certificate Authorizing the Solemnization of Marriage. The couple may also choose to purchase a copy of the marriage certificate from any city/town clerk's office or from the Department of Health's Center for Vital Records at a later date.

If you have questions on how to return the marriage license or obtain a copy of the marriage certificate, please contact the city/town clerk's office that issued the marriage license.