

What You Need to do Before You Can Get Married

For a more detailed guide to help you in your preparations to marry in New Zealand, download our brochure [Getting Married: A Guide for Couples Preparing to Get Married in New Zealand](#).

Decide When and Where You Want to Get Married

You will need to decide when and where you want to get married before you complete your application for a marriage licence. It is advisable that you choose an alternative venue in case the weather prevents you from marrying at your primary venue on the day.

Choose a Marriage Celebrant

In New Zealand you must be married by an appointed Marriage Celebrant. This may be an independent Marriage Celebrant, a Registrar of Marriages, a minister of a church, or a person connected with an approved organisation. Contact a [Registrar of Marriages](#) for a list of appointed Marriage Celebrants. Before applying for your marriage licence, you will need to contact your Marriage Celebrant and agree on a time and place for the marriage.

Get a Marriage Licence

In order to get a licence you will need to complete a [Notice of Intended Marriage](#) application form. If either of you have been married or in a civil union before, and the marriage or civil union has been dissolved, you will be asked to produce evidence of the dissolution (e.g. Divorce/Dissolution Order) when you give notice to the Registrar. If your previous spouse or partner has died you do not have to produce evidence of their death, but you will have to give the date of death on the Notice of Intended Marriage.

Make a Statutory Declaration

As part of completing the application form for a marriage licence, you will need to make a statutory declaration. Either you or your partner will need to make a formal statutory declaration that there is no lawful impediment to the marriage (i.e. no legal reason that you cannot both be married), that the details provided are true, that the bride and groom are not within the "prohibited degrees of relationship," and that consent has been given (where relevant).

If you live in New Zealand, one of you must make this declaration in the presence of a Registrar of Marriages. [Contact us](#) for your nearest Registrar.

If you live outside New Zealand:

- You can send the [Notice of Intended Marriage](#) application form to the New Zealand Registrar of Marriages closest to where you intend to marry once you have completed the form, signed the statutory declaration and had it witnessed by a New Zealand Commonwealth Representative. Those in the United Kingdom or Australia can have the declaration witnessed by a Commonwealth Representative at a Department of Internal Affairs office in [London or Sydney](#). Note: only the [Notice of Intended Marriage where both parties ordinarily reside outside New Zealand \(BDM 58\)](#) can be signed by a Commonwealth Representative.
- Alternatively, if at least one of you (husband or wife) will be in New Zealand at least three working days prior to the ceremony, you can sign the statutory declaration and have it witnessed by a Registrar of Marriages in New Zealand.
- See [Cheque Payments for a New Zealand Marriage Licence or New Zealand Civil Union Licence](#) to check the locations of Registry Offices in New Zealand. The contact details for your nearest Registrar of Marriages can be obtained by [contacting Births, Deaths and Marriages](#) or the [District Court](#).
- You should advise the Registrar of the date that you intend to collect the marriage licence (this must be at least three days after your completed form reaches the Registrar).
- For more details about applying from overseas, see [When and How to Apply for a Marriage Licence; If you both live outside New Zealand](#).

Consent to Enter into a Marriage

To get married, both parties to the marriage must be at least 16 years of age. If either party is 16 or 17 years of age, they must obtain consent required by law:

- You must obtain consent from each of your guardians (usually your parents) unless they cannot be located or are, as a result of incapacity, unable to give consent.
- If none of your guardians are able to give consent, you must obtain consent from a relative acting in place of a guardian, or from a Family Court Judge.
- If your parents or guardians refuse consent, you can apply to a Family Court Judge for consent to get married.

The completed [Consent to Marriage of a Minor](#) must be submitted with the [Notice of Intended Marriage](#) form.

When and How to Apply for a Marriage Licence

You will need to get a marriage licence from a [Registrar of Marriages](#). To apply for a marriage licence **one** of the parties to the marriage must fill out the appropriate form.

- **If you live in New Zealand or will be in New Zealand** at least three days before you intend to be married (either the bride or groom, or both), complete the [Notice of Intended Marriage \(BDM 60\)](#) form. You cannot complete the form online, as either the bride or the groom must complete a statutory declaration (part of the form). The statutory declaration must be made in person, in the presence of a [Registrar of Marriages](#).
- **If you both live outside New Zealand** and will arrive in New Zealand less than three days before the date you want to marry, you may be able to complete most of the formalities before you arrive in New Zealand. You will need to complete a [Notice of Intended Marriage where both parties ordinarily reside outside New Zealand \(BDM 58\)](#) form. If you are overseas, the declaration must either be signed by a [Commonwealth Representative](#), and then sent (with payment) to the Registry Office in New Zealand closest to where you will be married. Or, if it is convenient, you can have the declaration witnessed by a Commonwealth Representative at a Department of Internal Affairs office in [London or Sydney](#). Note: only the [Notice of Intended Marriage where both parties ordinarily reside outside New Zealand \(BDM 58\)](#) can be signed by a New Zealand Commonwealth Representative. Or you can complete everything on the form except the declaration, and send it (with payment) to the Registry Office in New Zealand closest to where you will be married. When you arrive in New Zealand, you must visit that office, sign the declaration before a [Registrar of Marriages](#) and collect the marriage licence.
- **If you wish to change the form of your relationship from a civil union to a marriage** you will need to complete a [Notice of Intended Marriage; Change of relationship from civil union \(BDM 59\)](#) form. See: [Changing a Civil Union to a Marriage](#).

Marriage licences are only valid for three months from the date of issue. During that period you are free to marry at the place specified on the marriage licence. An alternative place of marriage may be specified on the licence, e.g. in the case of bad weather.

Paying for Your Marriage Licence

Marriage Conducted at the Registry Office

If you wish for your marriage to be conducted by a Registrar of Marriages at the Registry Office, you must pay a fee of NZ\$170.00 when you return the completed Notice of Intended Marriage form. This includes the fee for the marriage licence and the ceremony. Please discuss with the Registrar at the office where you plan to have the marriage ceremony, and advise them of the date and time for your ceremony. Remember to include your contact details (e.g. a New Zealand telephone number or an address) in case the Registrar needs to contact you.

Marriage Conducted by a Marriage Celebrant

If you wish for your marriage to be conducted by a Marriage Celebrant, you must pay a fee of NZ\$120.00 when you send in or hand over the completed Notice of Intended Marriage form. This includes the fee for the marriage licence but does not include any other costs the Marriage Celebrant may want to cover. The name of the Celebrant must be given on the form in order for your licence to be issued. Only those persons appointed by the Registrar-General as Marriage Celebrants and whose names appear in the list of Marriage Celebrants in the [New Zealand Gazette](#) have authority to solemnise marriages in New Zealand.

How to Pay Your Marriage Licence Fee

Registry Offices will accept over-the-counter payments by cheque, cash, New Zealand money order or, in most offices, by credit card and EFTPOS.

If you are sending the fee by post from outside New Zealand, payment can be made by way of a bank draft (i.e. a bank cheque, obtainable at most banks) in New Zealand Dollars. Who you make the cheque payable to depends on the Registry Office you intend to send your application to. Please see '[Cheque payments for a New Zealand Marriage Licence or New Zealand Civil Union Licence](#)' for further information.

Collecting and Using Your Marriage Licence

A marriage licence is normally issued no sooner than three calendar days after the completed Notice of Intended Marriage form is submitted and the fee has been paid.

Your marriage licence is valid for three months from the date of issue. During that period you are free to marry at the place or places specified on the marriage licence.

If you change your appointed Marriage Celebrant or your venue before the marriage has occurred, you must advise the Registry Office from where your licence was obtained.

At the conclusion of the ceremony you will be handed a signed copy of one of the 'Copy of Particulars of Marriage'. The other copy will be returned to the issuing Registrar by your Marriage Celebrant.