



DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
STATE VITAL RECORDS OFFICE

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Please Read

A message to the Bride and Groom regarding your Marriage Officiant

Wisconsin State Statute Chapter 765.16 provides that the following are authorized to be officiating persons:

- (1) Any ordained member of the clergy or any religious denomination or society who continues to be an ordained member of the clergy.
- (2) Any licentiate of a denominational body or an appointee of any bishop serving as the regular member of the clergy of any church of the denomination to which the member of the clergy belongs, if not restrained from so doing by the discipline of the church or denomination.
- (3) The 2 parties themselves, by mutual declaration that they take each other as husband and wife, in accordance with the customs, rules and regulations of any religious society, denomination or sect to which either of the parties may belong.
- (4) Any judge of a court of record or reserve judge appointed under s. 753.075.
- (5) Any circuit court commissioner appointed under ACR 75.02(1) or supplemental court commissioner appointed under s. 757.675(1).
- (6) Any municipal court judge.

An October 2005 Attorney General's opinion states:

"Ministers or clergy ordained or appointed through the "internet" may solemnize marriages if they meet the requirements either s. 765.16 or 765.17. The statute does not permit, and the Constitution of the United States may prohibit, inquiry into the method of ordination or appointment."

The State requires that Officiants complete the marriage certificate correctly. The State will reject the certificate if not completed correctly. It is a legal document that you will use the rest of your life.

If the marriage certificate is questioned by any agency (social security, motor vehicle, military, or an insurance company) the burden of proof is on you. The State Vital Records Office and the County Offices cannot give legal advice.

Common sense needs to be exercised by the non-traditional marriage Officiants; they need to understand they are completing a legal document and it will be with you, the couple, the rest of your lives.

Please give the following instructions (2 pages printed back to back) to your Officiant



INFORMATION FOR MARRIAGE APPLICANTS AND OFFICIANTS

- Applicants or officiants who have questions or concerns regarding the officiant's authority to perform marriages in Wisconsin should seek legal counsel. Information as to the validity of any specific religious organization or any ordination process is not available from the County Clerk's Office or from the State Vital Records Office.
- The Wisconsin Marriage License/Marriage Certificate Worksheet document has two sections; the marriage license which is completed by the County Clerk and the marriage certificate worksheet which is completed by the officiant.
- Applicants must sign the marriage license section before the ceremony, preferably in the County Clerk's Office.
- Marriage by proxy, by phone/internet camera hook-up, or other electronic device is prohibited in Wisconsin. The couple, officiant, and two competent adult witnesses must be physically present together at the time of the ceremony in order for the marriage to be legal.
- It is permissible to make copies of the Wisconsin Marriage License/Marriage Certificate Worksheet.
- If the Wisconsin Marriage License/Marriage Certificate Worksheet document is misplaced or ruined, contact the issuing County Clerk's Office immediately for instructions. Counties may charge a fee to replace the document.
- An Original Certificate of Marriage is a permanent legal document derived from the Wisconsin Marriage License/Marriage Certificate Worksheet document. Certified copies of the Original Certificate of Marriage may be needed for proof of name change, proof for insurance coverage, overseas travel, and other legal purposes.
- The couple will not automatically receive a certified copy of the Original Certificate of Marriage. Upon registration of the license/certificate worksheet document, the couple may purchase certified copies of their Original Certificate of Marriage from the Register of Deeds in the county where the ceremony was performed or from the State Vital Records Office. It is illegal to make photocopies of the Original Certificate of Marriage.
- Corrections to fields completed by the officiant can be amended on a registered certificate and do not require a court order if the request is received by the State Vital Records Office within 365 days of the marriage. The Officiant Amendment Request form is available from the Register of Deeds office, the State Vital Records Office, or on the web at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/forms/f01481.pdf>.
- Corrections to the couple's information can be amended on a registered certificate if the request is received by the State Vital Records Office within 365 days of the marriage. Contact the County Clerk's Office in the county where the marriage license was issued for information on requesting an amendment.
- To view Wisconsin laws and penalties on marriage, refer to Wis. Stat. ch. 765 located at: <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/765>.

OFFICIANT INFORMATION

- Officiants must ensure that the parties have a valid Wisconsin marriage license to marry before performing the marriage ceremony.
- The officiating person shall determine that the parties presenting themselves to be married are the parties named on the marriage license.
- An officiant must be at least 18 years old.
- It is permissible to have two officiants perform a marriage ceremony.
- **The completed Wisconsin Marriage License/Marriage Certificate Worksheet must be returned to the Register of Deeds in the county of marriage for registration within 3 days after the date of the marriage.**

**See Reverse Side for Officiant Instructions for Completing the
Wisconsin Marriage License/Marriage Certificate Worksheet**



INSTRUCTIONS FOR OFFICIANTS

FOR COMPLETING THE WISCONSIN MARRIAGE LICENSE/MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE WORKSHEET

- Officiants must correct or complete all items in the Officiant section of the Wisconsin Marriage License/Marriage Certificate Worksheet (F-05060) for any marriage ceremony performed in Wisconsin.
- Cross-outs and clearly written corrections are allowed.
- All signatures must be original; stamped signatures are prohibited.

Review, correct, or complete all items legibly and accurately.

- 8. DATE OF MARRIAGE (MM/DD/YYYY)**
Review and correct, if necessary, the month, day, and year the marriage was performed.
- 9. COUNTY OF MARRIAGE**
Review and correct, if necessary, the name of the county where the marriage ceremony was performed. The county must be a Wisconsin county.
- 10. CITY, VILLAGE, OR TOWNSHIP OF MARRIAGE**
Review, correct, or print the city, village, or township where the ceremony occurred. Do not use unincorporated places. Place an "X" in the appropriate box for "City," "Village," or "Township." NOTE: In the case where a couple will be married in a moving conveyance, the place of marriage is where the couple exits the conveyance after the ceremony.
- 11. OFFICIANT SIGNATURE**
Sign in the space provided. If there are two Officiants, both may sign. When the marriage is performed by the two parties themselves, both parties sign as Officiants.
- 12. OFFICIANT NAME (Print or Type)**
Review, correct, or print the Officiant name. If there are two Officiants, both names may be printed. When the marriage is performed by the two parties themselves, print both parties' names.
- 13. OFFICIANT MAILING ADDRESS (Street, City, State, Zip Code)**
Review, correct, or print the mailing address, including ZIP Code, of the Officiant. If there are two Officiants, both addresses may be printed. This address should identify where business mail is to be sent in the event that a Register of Deeds has a question about this record.
- 14. OFFICIANT PHONE**
Review, correct, or print the phone number of the Officiant. If there are two Officiants, both phone numbers may be printed.
- 15. OFFICIANT EMAIL**
Review, correct, or print the email address of the Officiant. If there are two Officiants, both email addresses may be printed.
- 16. ADULT WITNESS 1 TO CEREMONY (Sign and Print Name)**
A competent adult (at least 18 years old) witness must sign and print their name in the space provided.
- 17. ADULT WITNESS 2 TO CEREMONY (Sign and Print Name)**
A second competent adult (at least 18 years old) witness must sign and print their name in the space provided.