

## What You need to Know to get married in Massachusetts

A Justice of the Peace/Celebrant must have a valid marriage license in hand to officiate or solemnize your wedding. No witnesses are required in this civil ceremony. The Justice of the Peace/Celebrant's signature is sufficient.

- ❖ To apply for a license,
  - Both parties must appear jointly in person with identification in any Massachusetts City/Town Clerk's Office.
  - If either is under 18 years of age, a court order must be obtained from a probate or district court.
  
- ❖ The fee for a license varies from city/town to city/town.
  
- ❖ Massachusetts no longer requires blood tests.
  
- ❖ There is a mandatory 3-day waiting period which can only be waived with a court order. The license or "intention to marry" is valid for 60 days from the date you file and can be used to marry in any city or town in Massachusetts. When you pick up the license, check it for accuracy or you may later be charged for corrections.
  
- ❖ There is no prescribed form of ceremony and no particular words are essential, but there should be evidence of a promise or contract to take each other as marital spouses.
  
- ❖ Once you have been pronounced a married couple, the Justice of the Peace/Celebrant completes The Solemnizer Section on the license, signs it, and returns it to the city or town hall from which it was obtained. Couples can then obtain for a fee a certified copy of their marriage license from the City/Town Clerk's Office which issued the license. State law prohibits a Justice/Celebrant from making a copy of the license for a couple. Certain cities/towns may choose to mail the official document to the married couple during pandemic.

## **CHANGING YOUR NAME**

After your wedding, the officiant will return your license to the Clerk's Office from where you applied for it.

After it is recorded certified copies will be available upon your request, each town/city hall have different charges for these. You may request as many copies as you need in person, or by mail.

If you are changing your last name you will need to change your identifications' records. This requires you to contact the agencies and institution you deal with. For some it may require a certified copy of your marriage certificate and/or a special form from the institution, others may accept a photocopy, letter or simple a phone call. Some forms and/or institutions may be found online.

Here is a list of some organizations you may need to contact:

- Social Security (SSI)
- RMV for Drivers License
- Passport
- IRS
- Post Office
- Schools
- Voter Registration
- Banks
- Credit Cards
- Insurance Companies
- Employer Retirement Plan
- Legal documents i.e. Will, Power of Attorney, Health Care Proxy