

The Ultimate Marriage License Checklist

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With all the excitement of planning your wedding, it is easy to forget that this is actually a legal union that requires being sanctioned by the state in which you are getting married. It is best to take of the marriage license prior to the big day, otherwise you will not be legally married on your wedding day.

We've rounded up a checklist to help you navigate this not-so-glam (but totally necessary) legal contract smoothly.

Where Do I Apply?

Where you apply for your marriage license varies depending on where you will be getting married. But, typically, the license is issued at city hall. The best thing to do is call the county clerk's office to ask where you need to get your license issued, and whether both you and your groom need to apply in person, or if just one of you is okay.

What Information Do They Need?

All your basic information will be required (name, address, birthday, social security number, etc.), but the most importance piece of the marriage license is your marriage history. If you have been married before, you must provide that information here.

How Do I Sign it?

Once you've filled out the forms and it is time to sign, be sure you sign with the right last name! This contract is legally-binding. You will sign the document with your maiden name (since you will be applying prior to your marriage), and then specify in the provided place whether you will be taking your future husband's last name, and there you will sign with your new last name.

What Do I Do With It?

Bring your marriage license to your wedding with you - you are going to need it. Be sure not to get your marriage license too early, though. Some states such as New York have marriage licenses that are only valid for 60 days (that day count is between the day you sign the license and the day you get married).

When Does It Become "Certified"?

This is why you need to bring your marriage license to your wedding. Once you are officially married, the officiant of your wedding signs the license and then mails it to the county clerk's office. There the license is certified and becomes a marriage certificate.

Congratulations! You're married!