




Let's cover legal necessities!

Legal Requirements for Wedding Officiants Checklist

As a wedding officiant, it's essential to understand the legal requirements associated with performing marriages in your region. Use this checklist to ensure you're compliant with all necessary regulations:

1. Research Jurisdictional Laws

- Identify the legal requirements for officiating weddings in your specific city, state, province, or country.
- Contact your county/parish and ask what is required for wedding officiants to both:
 - Operate a business
 - Legally marry a couple and sign the required license/certificate
- Document the specific regulations or restrictions that apply to wedding officiants in your area and create a checklist to follow.

 **Tip:** For a quick check on your state requirements visit:
<https://theamm.org/weddings-by-state>

2. Obtain Necessary Credentials

- Determine if you need to be ordained, registered, or both to officiate weddings legally.
- If ordained, ensure that your ordination is recognized and valid for performing marriages in your jurisdiction. *(ULC licenses have been named specifically in several court cases as NOT a legitimate ordination or real religious organization.)*

3. Apply for Officiant License or Registration

- If required, complete the application process for obtaining an officiant license or registration after you've successfully completed your ordination as required by the state/local government.
- Provide any necessary documentation, such as proof of ordination or religious affiliation.



Tip: It is a good idea to order a physical certification/license (proof of ordination) when you become ordained, even though it is usually not required.

4. Understand Marriage License Procedures

- Familiarize yourself with the process for couples to obtain a marriage license in your area. Your state will have requirement information available online or by speaking to an employee.
- Understand any waiting periods, documentation requirements, or fees associated with obtaining a marriage license.
- Write down all requirements and the process for your couples to see. List on your website and/or create a document for them to download/print.

5. Verify Identification and Legal Documents

- Confirm that you are performing marriages for legally eligible couples.
- Verify the identification and legal documents of the couple, including proof of age and any required paperwork.

6. Complete Marriage Certificates and Documentation

- Understand the process for completing and filing marriage certificates and other necessary documentation. Be sure to know all important dates such as:
 - How long the license is valid before having a ceremony, signing, and turning it in
 - When the license must be turned in after the wedding ceremony
 - Other important time frames)
- Ensure accuracy and completeness when filling out marriage certificates to avoid delays or legal issues.

7. Stay Informed About Updates and Changes

- Regularly check for updates to marriage laws and regulations in your jurisdiction.
- Stay informed about any changes that may affect your status as a wedding officiant or the requirements for performing marriages.

8. Maintain Records and Documentation

- Keep detailed records of the weddings you officiate, including dates, locations, and couples' information.
- Store copies of marriage certificates and other relevant documents in a secure and organized manner.

9. Renew Licenses and Registrations

- Be aware of any expiration dates or renewal requirements for officiant licenses or registrations.
- Ensure that you renew your credentials on time to maintain your legal authority to officiate weddings.

10. Seek Legal Advice When Necessary

- As the owner of a business and an officiant, it is wise to find a trustworthy lawyer who can assist you with questions about legal matters.
- Consult with legal professionals or relevant authorities if you have any questions or concerns about your legal obligations as a wedding officiant.
- Seek guidance on complex legal issues or unusual circumstances that may arise during the marriage process.
- Have a legal professional review any binding contracts before implementing them into your business.

By following this checklist and staying informed about the legal requirements for wedding officiants in your area, you can ensure that you perform marriages responsibly and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.