

Civil Requirements for Marriage

The Marriage Notification Process

After 5th November 2007 any couple proposing to marry should begin the process by contacting their local Registration Office to make an appointment to meet the Registrar to give him/her their marriage notification. Notifications can be taken only by prior appointment with the Registrar. While only three months' notice is required by law, couples are advised to contact the Registrar well over three months before their intended date of marriage to ensure they can get a timely appointment. The notification details will be entered on a computerised notification system by the Registrar on the basis of the information given by the couple. When attending the Registrar's office in relation to the notification, the couple must also pay the notification fee of €200 and provide the Registrar with evidence of their name, address, age, civil status and nationality.

In general, all couples will be asked to produce:-

Passport (must be in date)

Birth Certificate (must bear an apostille stamp if not issued by the Civil Registration Service in this jurisdiction)

If widowed, death certificate of the previous spouse and the civil marriage certificate for their first marriage

If party to a marriage that was annulled by an Irish Court - the final decree of nullity and a letter from the relevant court confirming that no appeal was lodged

Their **PPS Numbers** (where either or both of the parties have one)

Fee of €200 as above

Additional documentation may be required in some cases, such as where a divorce has been granted outside the State and it must be determined whether it is recognised under Irish law. The Registrar will advise what is required in each case.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ABOVE LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE. ALL COUPLES SHOULD CHECK DIRECTLY WITH THE REGISTRAR, BEFORE THEIR APPOINTMENT, TO ENSURE THAT THEY HAVE ALL THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION.

In addition to their personal particulars, the couple will be requested to provide details in relation to their proposed marriage such as

the intended date of marriage,

whether they require a civil, religious or secular ceremony,

the names and dates of birth of their witnesses, and

details of the proposed solemniser and venue.

They will also both have to complete a declaration of no impediment stating that they are not aware of any lawful impediment to the proposed marriage.

The Registrar will issue each party to an intended marriage, and the proposed solemniser, with an acknowledgement confirming the date of the receipt of the notification.

The Marriage Registration Form (MRF)

When the Registrar is satisfied that all required details have been provided and that the couple are free to marry, he or she will issue them with a Marriage Registration Form (MRF) based on the information they have provided. This is a critical document as it is effectively the civil authorisation for the marriage to proceed. All couples wishing to marry in Ireland (whether they require a religious, civil or a secular ceremony) must first be issued with a Marriage Registration Form (MRF) and any marriage that takes place without a MRF having been issued cannot be civilly registered. The MRF should be given to the registrar or religious or secular solemniser solemnising the marriage prior to the ceremony.

It is strongly advised that couples bring all documents and information requested by the Registrar to their notification meeting, so that the entire process can be completed in one meeting and the MRF can be issued to them immediately.

Locating your local Registrar of Marriage

Check www.civilregistrationservice.ie for list of local HSE Registration Offices.

NOTE: If the marriage does not take place on the date specified in the MRF, it must take place no later than 6 months from that date. Otherwise, the MRF expires and it will be necessary for the couple to repeat the entire notification process and pay the relevant fee.

The fees charged for a marriage certificate are as follows;

€20 for a full standard certificate

€1 for a copy for social welfare purposes (letter from Department of Social Protection required)

€4 for an uncertified copy of an entry in the Register

€10 to have a certificate authenticated (only available from the General Register Office)

It is the responsibility of couples wishing to marry in the Catholic Church to ensure that the civil requirements for marriage are fulfilled.