

Obtaining Marriage Licenses and Certificates in Southern California

The weddings I perform are legally recognized, but there are certain things you must know and do for the wedding to have legal effect. See below, then feel free to contact me for questions.

BEFORE THE WEDDING—OBTAINING A LICENSE: For a wedding to be legally recognized by California, you are required to obtain a marriage license from a County Recorder's office in California. If you live in California, you can obtain the license in your home county and use it in any other county in California within 90 days. If you are visiting from out of state, plan to arrive early enough to have time to obtain the license in the county in which you plan to marry. You **MUST** obtain the license in advance and bring it to the ceremony (or rehearsal). To get the license, you must both be physically present in person with valid government picture ID (Driver's License or ID, Passport, Military ID and pay a fee (*fees vary in different counties—from \$61 in Orange County to \$100 in Riverside County*). No one else can do this on your behalf. Some counties require that you make an appointment; others allow walk-up service—best to check your county's policy on its website below. Visit the appropriate link below to learn how to obtain a marriage license in five SoCal counties. For other California counties, Google the name of your county and the words, "marriage license" -- e.g., "Kern County Marriage License"—it'll pop up.

AFTER THE WEDDING—OBTAINING YOUR MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE: After the ceremony, you are required to have at least one witness sign the license (although you can have two witnesses, which is what most couples do, typically asking the Best Man and Maid of Honor to sign), then I will sign it myself. State law requires that the wedding officiant (that's me) send the document by surface mail to the County Recorder, so I will take it with me and put it in the mail the next business day. (*Please affix two First-class stamps to the official envelope the Recorder provides you.*) **The County Recorder does not automatically send you your marriage certificate after the wedding; you have to request it—either in person or by mail—check your county's policy and ask when you obtain the license.** Depending on the county, wait about 10-15 business days to give time for the mail and the office clerks to work. Once the clerk has certified the license, it is then considered an official marriage certificate. They then scan/reprint "original copies" with a barcode and serial # for you at \$17.00 each—you probably want 2-3 original copies for changing your name, updating accounts, etc—visit this link for more info about that: <https://tinyurl.com/5anda3pa> To learn how to obtain your marriage certificate from the county which issued your license, click on the appropriate link below.

IF YOU ARE ALREADY LEGALLY MARRIED : If you are already legally married and are now wanting what I call a Public Celebration with more guests present, or you were married at the county office but now want a faith-based ceremony, I'm happy to serve you. In those cases it is a legal requirement that I view the marriage certificate—just take a picture of it and email/text it to me. If the ceremony is clearly a vow renewal like after 10 or 25 years of being married, I don't need to see your marriage certificate.

San Diego County

Obtaining a License: <https://arcc.sdcounty.ca.gov/pages/marriage-licenses.aspx>

Requesting your Marriage Certificate: <https://arcc.sdcounty.ca.gov/Pages/marriage-certificates.aspx>

Riverside County

Obtaining a License: <https://www.rivcoacr.org/Marriages>

Requesting your Marriage Certificate: <https://www.asrclrec.com/birth-death-and-marriage-certificates>

Orange County

Locations: <https://ocrecorder.com/about-us/hours-locations>

Obtaining a License: <https://ocrecorder.com/services/marriage-services>

Requesting your Marriage Certificate: <https://ocrecorder.com/services/vital-records>

Los Angeles County

Obtaining a License: <https://lavote.gov/home/county-clerk/marriage-licenses-ceremonies/general-info>

Requesting your Marriage Certificate: <https://lavote.gov/home/records/marriage-records/marriage-records-request>

San Bernardino County

Obtaining a License: <https://sbcountyarc.org/services/marriage/>

Requesting your Marriage Certificate: <https://sbcountyarc.org/services/vital-records/>