

Alabama

Section 30-1-7

Marriages may be solemnized by any licensed minister of the gospel in regular communion with the Christian church or society of which the minister is a member.

Marriage may also be solemnized by the pastor of any religious society according to the rules ordained or custom established by such society.

Online ordination is not acceptable.

Alaska

AS 25.05.261. Who May Solemnize

(a) Marriages may be solemnized

- (1) by a minister, priest, or rabbi of any church or congregation in the state, or by a commissioned officer of the Salvation Army, or by the principal officer or elder of recognized churches or congregations that traditionally do not have regular ministers, priests, or rabbis, anywhere within the state;
- (2) by a marriage commissioner or judicial officer of the state anywhere within the jurisdiction of the commissioner or officer; or
- (3) before or in any religious organization or congregation according to the established ritual or form commonly practiced in the organization or congregation.

Online ordination is not acceptable.

Arizona

25-124. Persons authorized to perform marriage ceremony; definition

A. The following are authorized to solemnize marriages between persons who are authorized to marry:

1. Duly licensed or ordained clergymen...

B. For the purposes of this section, "licensed or ordained clergymen" includes ministers, elders or other persons who by the customs, rules and regulations of a religious society or sect are authorized or permitted to solemnize marriages or to officiate at marriage ceremonies.

Online ordination is acceptable

Arkansas

A.C.A. § 9-11-213 Persons who may solemnize marriages.

Any regularly ordained minister or priest of any religious sect or denomination. You must record your credentials recorded in any county clerk's office of any county.

Online ordination is acceptable.

California

Section 400

Marriage may be solemnized by any of the following who is of the age of 18 years or older and is a priest, minister, or rabbi of any religious denomination.

Online ordination is acceptable.

The laws of the State of California make it unnecessary for persons performing marriages to file credentials with the clerk of the court or with anyone else. The county and state are removed from any responsibility for verification of credentials. The State does not maintain a central registry of members of the clergy. Any such concern for verification is totally at the discretion of the parties to the marriage.

Colorado

C.R.S 14-2-109

A marriage may be solemnized by a judge of a court; by a court magistrate; by a retired judge of the court; by a public official whose powers include solemnization of marriages; by Indian tribe officials; by clergy; by the parties to the marriage.

Online ordination is acceptable.

Connecticut

Sec. 46b-22

All ordained or licensed members of the clergy, belonging to this state or any other state, as long as they continue in the work of the ministry. All marriages solemnized according to the forms and usages of any religious denomination in this state...are valid. All marriages attempted to be celebrated by any other person are void.

Online ordination is not acceptable.

Delaware

Title 13:1 § 106

A clergyperson or minister of any recognized religion.

Online ordination (through recognized religion) is acceptable.

District Of Columbia

46-406

For the purpose of preserving the evidence of marriages in the District of Columbia, every minister of any religious society approved or ordained according to the ceremonies of his religious society, whether his residence is in the District of Columbia or elsewhere in the United States or the territories, may be authorized by any judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia to celebrate marriages in the District of Columbia.

You must have an endorser from the same religious society, who is currently registered with the Marriage Bureau Section, Family Court. If there is no endorser, you must request the written "Procedures for the Registration of Clergy Without Endorser." Authorization is indefinite for District of Columbia marriage ceremonies.

<http://www.dccourts.gov/dccourts/docs/family/marriage.pdf>

http://www.dccourts.gov/dccourts/docs/family/register_clergy.pdf

Online ordination is not acceptable.

Florida

Title XLIII Chapter 741.07

All regularly ordained ministers of the gospel or elders in communion with some church, or other ordained clergy, and all judicial officers, including retired judicial officers, clerks of the circuit courts, and notaries public of this state may solemnize the rights of matrimonial contract, under the regulations prescribed by law.

Online ordination is not acceptable.

Georgia

The license shall be directed to...minister, or other person of any religious society or sect authorized by the rules of such society to perform the marriage ceremony...

Online ordination is acceptable.

Hawaii

§572-12

A license to solemnize marriages may be issued to, and the marriage rite may be performed and solemnized by any minister, priest, or officer of any religious denomination or society who has been ordained or is authorized to solemnize marriages according to the usages of such denomination or society.

If you are a minister establishing a new denomination in the State of Hawaii which has no religious affiliation elsewhere and you are the head of the church, submit a letter of recommendation from the members of the Board of Directors or Board of Trustees (signed by each member with his name address and telephone number typed under his signature). In addition, submit a letter stating that you are the head of the church in Hawaii and a xerox copy of the church incorporation papers. An I.D. with a photo, such as a driver's license or state I.D. card must be presented.

This means that you must be commissioned by the State of Hawaii, Department of Health to solemnize marriages. You can call the Health Department at (808) 586-4540.

Idaho

Title 32 Chapter 3:32-303

Marriage may be solemnized by either a . . . priest or minister of the gospel of any denomination.

Online ordination is acceptable.

Illinois

750 ILCS 5/209

[Any minister] in accordance with the prescriptions of any religious denomination . . . Provided that . . . the officiant be in good standing with his religious denomination.

Indiana

IC 31-11-6-1

Marriages may be solemnized by any of the following: (1) A member of the clergy of a religious organization (even if the cleric does not perform religious functions for an individual congregation), such as a minister of the gospel, a priest, a bishop, an archbishop, or a rabbi.

Iowa

595.10.2

A person ordained or designated as a leader of the person's religious faith.

Kansas

Chapter 23 Article 1:23-104a.(b):(1),(2)

Any currently ordained clergyman or religious authority of any religious denomination or society; any licentiate of a denominational body or an appointee of any bishop serving as the regular clergyman of any church of the denomination to which the licentiate or

appointee belongs, if not restrained from so doing by the discipline of that church or denomination.

Kentucky

KRS 402.050(1)(a)

Marriage shall be solemnized only by: (a) Ministers of the gospel or priests of any denomination in regular communion with any religious society.

Louisiana

RS 9:202

A priest, minister, rabbi, clerk of the Religious Society of Friends, or any clergyman of any religious sect, who is authorized by the authorities of his religion to perform marriages, and who is registered to perform marriages.

Maine

Title 19-A Part 2 Chapter 23 §655:1B:1,2,3

Whether a resident or nonresident of this State and whether or not a citizen of the United States: An ordained minister of the gospel; A cleric engaged in the service of the religious body to which the cleric belongs; or A person licensed to preach by an association of ministers, religious seminary or ecclesiastical body.

Maryland

§ 2-406 (2)

A marriage ceremony may be performed in this State by any official of a religious order or body authorized by the rules and customs of that order or body to perform a marriage ceremony.

Massachusetts

Title III, Chapter 207, Section 38

A marriage may be solemnized in any place within the commonwealth by the following persons who are residents of the commonwealth: a duly ordained minister of the gospel in good and regular standing with his church or denomination, including an ordained deacon in The United Methodist Church or in the Roman Catholic Church; a commissioned cantor or duly ordained rabbi of the Jewish faith . . . it may be solemnized by a duly ordained nonresident minister of the gospel if he is a pastor of a church or denomination duly established in the commonwealth and who is in good and regular standing as a minister of such church or denomination, including an ordained deacon in The United Methodist

Church or in the Roman Catholic Church; and, it may be solemnized according to the usage of any other church or religious organization which shall have complied with the provisions of the second paragraph of this section.

Churches and other religious organizations shall file in the office of the state secretary information relating to persons recognized or licensed as aforesaid, and relating to usages of such organizations, in such form and at such times as the secretary may require.

Section 39: (Out of State Clergy) a minister of the gospel in good and regular standing with his church or denomination; a commissioned cantor or duly ordained rabbi of the Jewish faith. (There is a \$25.00 registration fee with the Secretary of State (617) 727-7030).

Michigan

R.S. of 1846 Chapter 83:551.7,(1)(i),(j):

Marriages may be solemnized by any of the following:

(i) A minister of the gospel or cleric or religious practitioner, anywhere in the state, if the minister or cleric or religious practitioner is ordained or authorized to solemnize marriages according to the usages of the denomination.

(j) A minister of the gospel or cleric or religious practitioner, anywhere in the state, if the minister or cleric or religious practitioner is not a resident of this state but is authorized to solemnize marriages under the laws of the state in which the minister or cleric or religious practitioner resides.

Minnesota

517.04:

Marriages may be solemnized throughout the state by . . . a licensed or ordained minister of any religious denomination.

Mississippi

§ 93-1-17:

By whom marriages may be solemnized.

Any minister of the gospel ordained according to the rules of his church or society, in good standing; any Rabbi or other spiritual leader of any other religious body authorized under the rules of such religious body to solemnize rites of matrimony and being in good standing.

Missouri

451.100:

Marriages may be solemnized by any clergyman, either active or retired, who is in good standing with any church or synagogue in this state. . . Marriages may also be solemnized by a religious society, religious institution, or religious organization of this state, according to the regulations and customs of the society, institution or organization, when either party to the marriage to be solemnized is a member of such society, institution or organization.

Montana

40-1-301:

[I]n accordance with any mode of solemnization recognized by any religious denomination. This means that any licensed or ordained minister can solemnize a marriage so long as it is in accordance in the way of the licensing church.

Nebraska

42-108:

[E]very preacher of the gospel authorized by the usages of the church to which he or she belongs to solemnize marriages, may perform the marriage ceremony in this state.

Nevada

NRS 122.062:1, 4.

Any licensed or ordained minister in good standing within his denomination, whose denomination, governing body and church, or any of them, are incorporated or organized or established in this state, may join together as husband and wife persons who present a marriage license obtained from any county clerk of the State, if the minister first obtains a certificate of permission to perform marriages as provided in this section and NRS 122.064 to 122.073, inclusive. The fact that a minister is retired does not disqualify him from obtaining a certificate of permission to perform marriages if, before his retirement, he had active charge of a congregation within this state for a period of at least 3 years.

4. A county clerk may authorize a licensed or ordained minister whose congregation is in another state to perform marriages in the county if the county clerk satisfies himself that the minister is in good standing with his denomination or church. The authorization must be in writing and need not be filed with any other public officer. A separate authorization is required for each marriage performed. Such a minister may perform not more than five marriages in this state in any calendar year and must acknowledge that he or she is subject to the jurisdiction of the county clerk with respect to the provisions of this chapter governing the conduct of ministers or other persons authorized to solemnize a marriage to the same extent as if he or she were a minister or other person authorized to solemnize a marriage residing in this State..

Like Ohio, Nevada has very strict marriage licensing laws. Please go to http://www.co.clark.nv.us/clerk/pdf/Forms/NRS_122.pdf for additional instructions. Please do not skip over tip.

New Hampshire

457:31

Marriage may be solemnized...by any minister of the gospel in the state who has been ordained according to the usage of his or her denomination, resides in the state, and is in regular standing with the denomination; by any clergyman who is not ordained but is engaged in the service of the religious body to which he or she belongs, resides in the state, after being licensed therefore by the secretary of state; within his or her parish, by any minister residing out of the state, but having a pastoral charge wholly or partly in this state.

New Jersey

37:1-13:

[E]very minister of every religion, are hereby authorized to solemnize marriage between such persons as may lawfully enter into the matrimonial relation; and every religious society, institution or organization in this State may join together in marriage such persons according to the rules and customs of the society, institution or organization.

New Mexico

40-1-2:

A person may solemnize the contract of matrimony by means of an ordained clergyman.

New York

Chapter 14:3:11

A clergyman or minister of any religion. According to Section 11 of the Domestic Relations Law, an officiant must be an authorized, officially ordained member of the clergy or a public official in the State of New York such as a mayor, city clerk, deputy city clerk, appointed marriage officer, justice, or judge. In New York City, an officiant must be registered with the City of New York. Ship captains can not perform marriage ceremonies in New York State.

North Carolina

Any ordained or licensed clergymen and justices of the peace.

North Dakota

14-03-09:

[O]rdained ministers of the gospel; priests; clergy licensed by recognized denominations pursuant to chapter 10-33; and by any person authorized by the rituals and practices of any religious persuasion.

Ohio

§ 3101.08:

An ordained or licensed minister of any religious society or congregation within this state who is licensed to solemnize marriages . . . or any religious society in conformity with the rules of its church, may join together as husband and wife any persons who are not prohibited by law from being joined in marriage.

§ 3101.10 A minister upon producing to the secretary of state, credentials of his being a regularly ordained or licensed minister of any religious society or congregation, shall be entitled to receive from the secretary of state a license authorizing him to solemnize marriages in this state so long as he continues as a regular minister in such society or congregation. A minister shall produce for inspection his license to solemnize marriages upon demand of any party to a marriage at which he officiates or proposes to officiate or upon demand of any probate judge.

You must apply to the secretary of state to receive authorization to perform marriages.

Oklahoma

§43-7: A

All marriages must be contracted by a formal ceremony performed or solemnized in the presence of at least two adult, competent persons as witnesses, by . . . an ordained or authorized preacher or minister of the Gospel, priest or other ecclesiastical dignitary of any denomination who has been duly ordained or authorized by the church to which he or she belongs to preach the Gospel, or a rabbi and who is at least eighteen (18) years of age.

2. The preacher, minister, priest, rabbi, or ecclesiastical dignitary who is a resident of this state shall have filed, in the office of the court clerk of the county in which he or she resides, a copy of the credentials or authority from his or her church or synagogue authorizing him or her to solemnize marriages.

3. The preacher, minister, priest, rabbi, or ecclesiastical dignitary who is not a resident of this state, but has complied with the laws of the state of which he or she is a resident, shall have filed once, in the office of the court clerk of the county in which he or she intends to perform or solemnize a marriage, a copy of the credentials or authority from his or her church or synagogue authorizing him or her to solemnize marriages.

4. The filing by resident or nonresident preachers, ministers, priests, rabbis, ecclesiastical dignitaries or judges shall be effective in and for all counties of this state; provided, no fee shall be charged for such recording.

5. No person herein authorized to perform or solemnize a marriage ceremony shall do so unless the license issued therefore be first delivered into his or her possession nor unless he or she has good reason to believe the persons presenting themselves before him or her

for marriage are the identical persons named in the license, and for whose marriage the same was issued, and that there is no legal objection or impediment to such marriage.

Oregon

106.120

Marriages may be solemnized by: Religious congregations or organizations as indicated in ORS

106.150 or

(d) A clergyperson of any religious congregation or organization who is authorized by the congregation or organization to solemnize marriages.

(2) A person authorized to solemnize marriages under subsection (1) of this section may solemnize a marriage anywhere in this state.

106.150 Form of solemnization; witnesses; solemnization before congregation. (1) In the solemnization of a marriage no particular form is required except that the parties thereto shall assent or declare in the presence of the clergyperson, county clerk or judicial officer solemnizing the marriage and in the presence of at least two witnesses, that they take each other to be husband and wife.

(2) All marriages, to which there are no legal impediments, solemnized before or in any religious organization or congregation according to the established ritual or form commonly practiced therein, are valid. In such case, the person presiding or officiating in such religious organization or congregation shall make and deliver to the county clerk who issued the marriage license the certificate described in ORS 106.170. [Amended by 1979 c. 724 §5; 2001 c.501 §2] Judges, County Clerks or their Deputies, Justices of Peace, and ministers, pastors, priests, rabbis may perform wedding ceremonies in Oregon.

Pennsylvania

§ 1503

A minister, priest or rabbi of any regularly established church or congregation.

b) Religious organizations.--Every religious society, religious institution or religious organization in this Commonwealth may join persons together in marriage when at least one of the persons is a member of the society, institution or organization, according to the rules and customs of the society, institution or organization.

(c) Marriage license needed to officiate.--No person or religious organization qualified to perform marriages shall officiate at a marriage ceremony without the parties having obtained a marriage license issued under this part. Ministers need to file their credentials with the county clerk's office before solemnizing any marriages.

Rhode Island

§ 15-3-5

Every ordained clergy or elder in good standing may join persons in marriage in any city or town in this state. You must obtain a license to marry from the city or town clerk before solemnizing any marriages.

South Carolina

SECTION 20-1-20

Only ministers of the Gospel or accepted Jewish rabbis and officers authorized to administer oaths in this State are authorized to administer a marriage ceremony in this State.

South Dakota

25-1-30

Marriage may be solemnized by . . . any person authorized by a church to solemnize marriages.

Tennessee

36-3-301 (a) (1)

All regular ministers, preachers, pastors, priests, rabbis and other spiritual leaders of every religious belief, more than eighteen (18) years of age, having the care of souls.

(2) In order to solemnize the rite of matrimony, any such minister, preacher, pastor, priest, rabbi or other spiritual leader must be ordained or otherwise designated in conformity with the customs of a church, temple or other religious group or organization; and such customs must provide for such ordination or designation by a considered, deliberate, and responsible act.

Texas

§ 2.202: a)

The following persons are authorized to conduct a marriage ceremony:

(1) a licensed or ordained Christian minister or priest;

(2) a Jewish rabbi;

(3) a person who is an officer of a religious organization and who is authorized by the organization to conduct a marriage ceremony.

Utah

30-1-6

Marriages may be solemnized by the following persons only:

(a) Ministers, rabbis, or priests of any religious denomination who are:

(i) in regular communion with any religious society; and

(ii) 18 years of age or older;

2) A person authorized under Subsection (1) who solemnizes a marriage shall give to the couple married a certificate of marriage that shows the:

(a) Name of the county from which the license is issued; and

(b) Date of the license's issuance..

Vermont

§ 5144

Marriages may be solemnized by . . . a member of the clergy residing in this state and ordained or licensed, or otherwise regularly authorized thereunto by the published laws or discipline of the general conference, convention or other authority of his or her faith or denomination or by such a clergy person residing in an adjoining state or country, whose parish, church, temple, mosque or other religious organization lies wholly or in part in this state, or by a member of the clergy residing in some other state of the United States or in the Dominion of Canada, provided he or she has first secured from the probate court of the district within which the marriage is to be solemnized a special authorization, authorizing him or her to certify the marriage if such probate judge determines that the circumstances make the special authorization desirable.

The only ministers that need to file for a permit are non-resident clergy.

Virginia

§ 20-23

When a minister of any religious denomination shall produce before the circuit court of any county or city in this Commonwealth, or before the judge of such court or before the clerk of such court at any time, proof of his ordination and of his being in regular communion with the religious society of which he is a reputed member, or proof that he holds a local minister's license and is serving as a regularly appointed pastor in his denomination, such court, or the judge thereof, or the clerk of such court at any time, may make an order authorizing such minister to celebrate the rites of matrimony in this Commonwealth. Any order made under this section may be rescinded at any time by the court or by the judge thereof. **Pastors of ministries cannot perform weddings in Virginia.**

Washington

RCW 26.04.050

The following named officers and persons, active or retired, are hereby authorized to solemnize marriages, to wit: . . . any regularly licensed or ordained minister or any priest of any church or religious denomination.

West Virginia

§48-2-402

a) Beginning the first day of September, two thousand one, the secretary of state shall, upon payment of the registration fee established by the secretary of state pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, make an order authorizing a person who is a religious representative to celebrate the rites of marriage in all the counties of the state, upon proof that the person:

(1) Is eighteen years of age or older;

(2) Is duly authorized to perform marriages by his or her church, synagogue, spiritual assembly or religious organization; and

(3) Is in regular communion with the church, synagogue, spiritual assembly or religious organization of which he or she is a member.

(b) Shall give bond in the penalty of one thousand five hundred dollars, with surety approved by the commission. Any religious representative who gives proof before the county commission of his or her ordination or authorization by his or her respective church, synagogue, spiritual assembly or religious organization is exempt from giving the bond.

§48-2-202: (a) The person solemnizing a marriage shall retain the marriage license and place an endorsement on it establishing the fact of the marriage and the time and place it was celebrated.

(b) Before the sixth day of the month after the month in which the marriage was celebrated, the person who solemnized the marriage shall forward the original of the marriage license to the clerk who issued the license.

To avoid having to provide a \$1500.00 surety bond, you must present to the Secretary of State your certificate of ordination or license.

Wisconsin

765.16

(1) Any ordained member of the clergy of any religious denomination or society who continues to be an ordained member of the clergy.

Any licentiate of a denominational body or an appointee of any bishop serving as the regular member of the clergy of any church of the denomination to which the member of the clergy belongs, if not restrained from so doing by the discipline of the church or denomination.

765.17 Any member of the clergy, licentiate or appointee named in s. 765.16 who is not a resident of this state may solemnize marriages in this state if he or she possesses at the time of the marriage a letter of sponsorship from a member of the clergy of the same religious denomination or society who has a church in this state under his or her ministry.

Wyoming

20-1-106

a) Every district or circuit court judge, district court commissioner, supreme court justice, justice of the peace, magistrate and every licensed or ordained minister of the gospel, bishop, priest or rabbi, or other qualified person acting in accordance with the traditions or rites for the solemnization of marriage of any religion, denomination or religious society, may perform the ceremony of marriage in this state.