



Town Clerk's Office

Basic Marriage Information

In Massachusetts, a couple first files their intentions to marry, then there is a mandatory three day waiting period before a marriage license is issued. If you filed your intentions on a Monday, for example, we could then issue you your marriage license any time after 8 am on a Thursday. You would then take that marriage license to a Justice of the Peace, or anyone who can officiate a marriage, and have the ceremony. The marriage is not considered a legal union until the Justice of the Peace conducts the wedding and signs the marriage license. The marriage license then becomes a legal document and the original is returned to its point of origin (where you filed your intentions). A copy is forever kept as a part of the town's vital records, and the original is sent to the State Department of Public Health to be recorded in the State's vital records statistics.

Marriage filings must be conducted in the Clerk's office with both parties present and cannot be done through the mail or via the Internet.

A waiver of the mandatory three day waiting period can only be granted by a judge, the nearest of which is located in Orleans, a town roughly 35 minutes from Provincetown. If you would like to pursue this waiver option, please call the Orleans District Courthouse directly at 508-255-4700. The cost for a waiver from Orleans District Court is \$195.00. You can also obtain a waiver from Barnstable Probate Court, which only charges \$65.00 for the same service.

Town Hall does not have a Justice of the Peace on site, but you will find a listing of local Justice of the Peace information on our Town web site www.provincetown-ma.gov.

You do not have to get married in the town that you file your intentions in. Once your marriage license is issued, you can take that license anywhere in the Commonwealth to have your ceremony, but the original must be returned to the Town in which you filed your intentions.

Please note that as of January 28, 2005, a pre-marital blood test is no longer required in Massachusetts.

Once you have filed your marriage intentions, you have 60 days to act on those intentions (get married), or the intention becomes invalid and you have to start the whole process over again.

No appointments to file marriage intentions are necessary. Everyone who comes in during business hours (Mon through Fri. 8 am - 5 pm) will be able to file their intentions and no one will be turned away. Please address your questions to the Town Clerk's Office at 508-487-7013, or via e-mail at djohnstone@provincetown-ma.gov.