

# REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

## MARRIAGE OFFICERS

### *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)*

#### **1. How can I become a Marriage Officer/Civil Registrar?**

Ans. "All applications by ministers of religion for appointment as Marriage Officers must be in writing to the Registrar-General." Also a checklist stating additional requirements can be located on the RGD website or you can visit any of the RGD offices.

#### **2. What is the difference between a Marriage Officer and a Civil Registrar?**

Ans. A Marriage Officer is a minister of Religion appointed to conduct marriages while "a Civil Registrar shall be ex officio a marriage officer". You do not have to be a Minister of Religion to become a Civil Registrar however only Ministers of Religion can apply to become a Marriage Officer.

#### **3. Should the RGD be notified when a Marriage Officer or Civil Registrar leaves the island?**

Ans. Yes, the Marriage Officer is required to submit in writing of him or her leaving the island and state date of return. Also all books must be submitted to the office for safe keeping. Failure to notify the RGD when travelling overseas constitutes a breach under the Marriage Act which can result in de-gazetting.

#### **4. What are the Authorities used to solemnize marriages?**

- Ans. a) Civil Registrar's certificate  
b) Marriage Officer's certificate  
c) Minister's Licence  
d) Special Marriage Licence

#### **5. Who can use a Civil Registrar Certificate?**

Ans. This certificate is used only by a Civil Registrar (non-religious). A notice of not less than seven (7) clear days (effectively, this means nine days) must be given by the parties intending to get married.

#### **6. Who can use a Minister's Licence?**

Ans. This licence can be used by both Civil Registrars and Marriage Officers. It is obtained from the Ministry of Justice. This licence requires no notice and can be obtained usually within one working day of application.

#### **7. Who can use a Special Marriage Licence?**

Ans. This can be used by both Marriage Officers and Civil Registrars. The Special Marriage Licence is used with the criteria listed below: -

- a. A Minister of Religion, being a Marriage Officer must know both parties to be married well.
- b. The parties must residing in the island for a period not less the least 15 days.

- c. The parties will complete the “Notice of Marriage by Licence” form which is provided by the Marriage Officer. This form must be signed by the parties to be married and two witnesses.
  
- d. After the Marriage Officer receives the completed “Notice”. He is required to complete a Statutory Declaration which must be signed by a Justice of the Peace. Both the Notice and the Statutory Declaration should be submitted to any Justice for any parish or parishes of the Island of Jamaica or to the Clerk of the Resident Magistrate’s Court for the parish in which the parties. A postage stamp must be affixed to the Special Marriage Licence before issuing. The Marriage Officer who uses the licence to perform the marriage should visit the RGD office and pay \$5000.00 for Special Marriage Licence, after which the Licence is issued.

## **8. Who can use a Marriage Officer’s Certificate?**

Ans. This is used only by Marriage Officers along with the following listed below: -

- a. The parties to be married complete and sign the “Notice for Banns (I or We form)” form and the parties must be residing in Jamaica.

“I” form is for one person giving notice or for parties in different congregations or living in different parishes.

“We” form is for both parties giving notice or for parties from the same congregation or living in the same parish.

- b. The parties submit the completed Notice of Banns to the Marriage Officer.

- c. Upon receiving the completed Notice for Banns, the Marriage officer then publishes the Banns by:
- I. Reading the publication in the main church service; and
  - II. Placing the completed “Public Notice” on the church’s main Notice Board.

The Public Notice must be displayed for a period of no less than seven (7) clear days (so if the Notice is put up on January 1, it must not be removed before January 9).

- d. After the seven (7) clear days for publication of banns is complete, the Marriage Officer will then issue the Marriage Officer’s Certificate (I or We).

#### **9. What is “In Articulo Mortis”?**

Ans. This is known as the “Death Bed Marriage”, different registers are used for this purpose. The marriage is only done when one of the parties believe he or she is at the point of death. The marriage is done only if both parties gives consent in the presence of two witnesses. The marriage CANNOT take place if he or she is under the age of 21 years unless he or she is a widower or widow.

#### **10. Can a Marriage Officer use another Marriage Officer’s Register?**

Ans. No, a Marriage Officer cannot use another Marriage Officer’s register. He or she must only use a Register that was issued to him/her by a representative from the RGD.

#### **11. If I resign my Pastoral Duties can I still be a Marriage Officer?**

Ans. No, the Marriage Act states that a Marriage Officer must be in charge of a congregation or having supervision over several congregations for the church to which he or she belongs. If you resign as Pastor, you must report this to the RGD immediately in writing.

**12. If a member of my church does not want the ceremony to be held in the church where should I publish the Public Notice?**

Ans. Once the parties are member(s) of the church, the Public Notice must be published at the church.

**13. Can there be more than one Marriage Officer having membership at my church?**

Ans. Yes, there may be more than one Marriage Officers can be assigned to a church.

**14. Can a pastor who is not a Marriage Officer conduct a wedding on my behalf?**

Ans. Yes, however only if a gazetted Marriage Officer is present for ceremony and he records the marriage details in his Marriage Register.

**15. How long after a Marriage Licence or Authority (Marriage Officer's Certificate, Civil Registrar Certificate, Minister's Licence and Special Marriage Licence) is issued can it be used (how long is it valid)?**

Ans. All marriage licences or authorities must be used within three (3) month after the date it was issued. Should it expire before it is used; the intended parties are required to obtain a new licence/authority.

**16. Can a couple be married without a b/cert?**

Ans. No, the couple must present his or her birth certificate for documentation purposes for the wedding. If the individual(s) does not have a birth certificate a marriage cannot be done.

**17. In the case of unemployed females, can “home duties” be used for occupation on record?**

Ans. Yes, “Home duties” or “Nil” can be used

**18. Can the Certificate of Registration (Pink Slip) be used instead of the original birth certificate?**

Ans. No. The Birth certificate should be used

**19. What surname should be placed on record if woman is divorced and wants to re-marry?**

Ans. The bride would indicate the surname being used on her current documents. She would state if she is using the maiden name or the previous married.

**20. Can overseas addresses be written on marriage record?**

Ans. No, only local addresses are required.

**21. How do I determine whether or not a divorce is final?**

Ans. For local divorces you can check the Registry at the Supreme Court for its validity.

**22. When should the marriage record be taken to the RGD office?**

Ans. All Marriage Duplicate Registers must be sent in within 24 hours after the marriage ceremony. If the marriage is conducted on a Saturday or Sunday, it is the next business day.

**23. If I am a Marriage Officer in another country, can I automatically be gazetted as a Marriage Officer in Jamaica?**

Ans. No, the applicant must be a resident of Jamaica and having a church and is in charge of a congregation on the island. Once he/she meets this requirement, an application must be made to the RGD for appointment as a Marriage Officer for the island of Jamaica.

**24. If I am the Head of my denomination, can I be exempted from submitting the recommendation?**

Ans. No, you must still submit recommendations, from current Marriage Officers.