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## Rules

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The basic rule governing the solemnization of marriages or civil unions is that the ceremony must be public and take place before an authorized officiant, in the presence of two witnesses. Marriages and civil unions by proxy are not recognized in Québec.

The other rules governing the solemnization of marriages and civil unions concern

- the places where ceremonies can be held;
- the days and times when ceremonies can be held;
- the procedure for the solemnization;
- the conservation of documents;
- the file that must be kept by the officiant;
- the fees that must be paid.

The officiant must, within 30 days after the solemnization, send the declaration of marriage to the registrar of civil status so that the act of marriage may be drawn up as quickly as possible. In the case of a civil union, the officiant must send the declaration of civil union to the registrar of civil status without delay.

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## Forms

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The officiant must complete various forms. Some are available on the website of the registrar of civil status, while others can be obtained at one of the service counters operated by the registrar of civil status.

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## Contact information

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Registrar of civil status  
Phone: 418 644-4545 or 514 644-4545  
Toll-free: 1 877 644-4545  
Teletype (TTY): 1 800 361-9596  
Website: [www.etatcivil.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.etatcivil.gouv.qc.ca)

# OFFICIANTS

### For more information

The information summarized in this document was valid at the time of printing. For more information, consult the website of the Ministère de la Justice at [www.justice.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.justice.gouv.qc.ca), or contact

#### Ministère de la Justice

Phone: 418 643-5140

Toll-free: 1 866 536-5140

E-mail: [informations@justice.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:informations@justice.gouv.qc.ca)



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An officiant who performs a marriage or civil union is responsible for receiving the free and enlightened consent of the intended spouses. The officiant sees that all the formalities prescribed by law are observed and ensures the validity of the marriage or civil union.

### Authorized officiants

The following individuals may act as officiants for a marriage or civil union:

- clerks and deputy clerks of the Superior Court who have been specially designated for that purpose;
- notaries authorized to receive notarized acts;
- mayors, members of municipal or borough councils and municipal officers designated by the registrar of civil status, when acting within the territory defined in the instrument of designation;
- any person authorized by the registrar of civil status to perform a single marriage or civil union.

Some couples may wish to have their marriage or civil union solemnized by someone special to them. The intended spouses and the person they have chosen as officiant must complete the form entitled Request for the Designation of an Officiant of a Marriage or Civil Union (available on the website of the registrar of civil status) and send it to the registrar of civil status, preferably three to four months before the date of the ceremony, in order to obtain authorization.

A person who agrees to act as officiant at a single marriage or civil union ceremony

- must be a Canadian citizen or have a permanent residence in Québec;
- must be of full age and have the full exercise of all his or her civil rights;
- must be able to speak French or English;
- must agree to comply with all the requirements of the marriage or civil union ceremony;
- must not have been convicted of a criminal offence in the three years preceding the request for designation or have been found guilty of a summary conviction offence in the year preceding the request.

After the registrar of civil status has signed the instrument of designation, it is forwarded to the designated officiant who then has full responsibility for the legal aspects of the ceremony.

The registrar of civil status will assign an authorization number (officiant code) to the officiant that must appear on the declaration of marriage or civil union. The officiant will also receive an information kit.

In certain circumstances, ministers of religion are considered competent to solemnize marriages and civil unions if they are authorized by the religious society to which they belong and by the registrar of civil status.

A database listing all the individuals authorized to solemnize marriages or civil unions can be consulted on the website of the registrar of civil status. This will help intended spouses ensure that the officiant they have chosen is authorized to solemnize their ceremony on the scheduled date.

### Formalities

Before solemnizing a marriage or civil union, the officiant must ensure that the intended spouses meet the requirements and conditions laid down by law. If this is not the case, there is an impediment, and the officiant is prohibited from completing the solemnization.

Marriages and civil unions are public ceremonies. That is why the law requires, in both cases, that the intended spouses announce their upcoming union by means of a posted notice (publication). This notice is very important and bypassing this step may result in the nullity of the marriage or civil union. However, in some cases the registrar of civil status may exempt the intended spouses from the requirement of publication, on serious grounds.

In addition, if the life of one of the intended spouses is endangered and the marriage or civil union must be solemnized promptly without it being possible to obtain a dispensation from the registrar of civil status, the officiant may grant the dispensation. In such a case, when sending the declaration of marriage or civil union to the registrar of civil status, the officiant must include the dispensation, which must specify the grounds for granting it.

The notice of publication of the marriage or civil union must include:

- the name and the domiciliary address of the intended spouses;
- the year and place of their birth;
- the scheduled solemnization date;
- the name of the officiant.

The correctness of these particulars must be confirmed by a witness of full age.

The notice must be posted 20 days before the date of the marriage or civil union on the website of the registrar of civil status. If a marriage or civil union is not solemnized within three months from the twentieth day after publication, the officiant must post a new notice.