



## Officiant Instructions for Completing the Marriage/Civil Union Certificate

All entries must be made in black ink to ensure a clear image on microfilm or photocopy.

**DO NOT USE water-soluble ink or felt-tipped pen.**

Please read all instructions before completing the certificate.

**Dates of Issuance and Expiration:** The marriage/civil union license is valid for three months **only**.

**Where the Ceremony Must Occur:** If either partner lives in Rhode Island, the ceremony may take place in any city or town in Rhode Island. If neither partner lives in Rhode Island, the ceremony may **only take place in the city or town where the license was issued**.

If the Rhode Island General Assembly passed legislation permitting you to perform this marriage/civil union, then the ceremony must take place in the city or town stated in the Bill.

**Witnesses:** There must be two witnesses age 18 or older in addition to you and the couple to be joined in marriage or civil union.

**Signatures and Printed Names:** You and the witnesses must sign and clearly print your names in the provided areas. Please use **black, non water-soluble ink**. Do not use felt-tipped pen.

**Corrections:** If any error occurs, do not use liquid correction fluid or correction tape. Rather, please consult with the city or town office where the license was issued **before** making corrections. Once the city or town office receives and files the certificate, all other corrections must be done by the State Office of Vital Records.

**Type of Ceremony:** Specify religious or civil ceremony. A religious ceremony is performed by an ordained clergy or elder in good standing. (This includes those from non-denominational religious groups.) All other ceremonies are civil.

**Denomination or Name of Court:** If a religious organization empowered you to perform the ceremony, specify its name or list "non-denominational." If you are a judge, specify the name of the court over which you preside. If the RI General Assembly passed legislation permitting you to perform the ceremony, please list the House or Senate Bill number and enclose a copy of the Bill with the certificate.

**Where to File the Certificate:** Rhode Island law requires you to file the marriage/civil union certificate with the city or town office **where the license was issued**. A **marriage certificate** must be filed within 72 hours of the ceremony (Section 15-3-12). A **civil union certificate** must be filed within 96 hours of the ceremony (Section 15-3.1).

**If the Marriage or Civil Union Does Not Take Place:** Either party named on the license must return the license to the city or town office where the license was issued.