
RELIGIOUS REPRESENTATIVES'
GUIDE TO
MARRIAGE IN
BRITISH COLUMBIA

prepared by:

Vital Statistics Agency

May 2016

FOREWORD

This guide has been designed as an introduction to the British Columbia Religious Representative Registry for religious bodies and their religious representatives. It is intended as a general reference for governing authorities of religious bodies desiring to seek recognition in British Columbia and as a practical guide for individual religious representatives actively solemnizing marriages.

The religious authority to solemnize or witness marriage vested in religious bodies and their religious representatives is recognized by the government as a traditional and important role in society. The responsibility of ensuring the legal validity and statutory recognition of religious representatives and the marriage ceremonies they solemnize is the role of the Religious Representative Registry administered by the Vital Statistics Agency.

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VITAL STATISTICS AGENCY

Background The Vital Statistics Agency is primarily responsible for administering the *Vital Statistics Act*, which is the legislation governing the registering of births, stillbirths, deaths and marriages. Vital Statistics records all vital events occurring in British Columbia; this includes collecting, registering, amending, correcting, controlling, protecting, storing and retrieving information as well as compiling statistics.

Vital Statistics data has been collected in the province since shortly after the *Vital Statistics Act* was enacted in 1872. Over three million records have been collected to date. The agency is also responsible for the administration of the *Marriage Act*, *Name Act*, and Part II of the *Wills Act*. Finally, the **Religious Representative Registry** maintains the records of religious representatives from all religious bodies, churches and denominations recognized under the *Marriage Act* for the purposes of solemnizing marriage.

Introduction

RELIGIOUS REPRESENTATIVE REGISTRY

Background The Religious Representative Registry is the component of the Vital Statistics Agency responsible for the administration of the provisions of the *Marriage Act* governing the registration of religious representatives as authorized to solemnize marriage.

The registry maintains files documenting the administrative makeup and statutory qualification of all religious bodies recognized under the *Marriage Act* which in turn allows a church or religious denomination to make application on behalf of their religious representatives. There are approximately 500 religious bodies recorded with the Religious Representative Registry.

In addition, the registry consists of individual records documenting the names, addresses, religious affiliation, jurisdiction and statutory registration confirmation of all individuals authorized to solemnize marriage in British Columbia according to the rites and usages of their religious bodies. At present there are approximately 6,600 religious representatives registered with the Vital Statistics Agency and authorized to solemnize marriage in British Columbia.

CONTACTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Following is a list showing the Religious Representative Registry telephone numbers to contact for assistance.

Normally, however, the answers to questions can be found in this manual.

Religious Representative Registry Manager
250 712-3260
Cell: 250 864-3551
Email: VSRELREG@gov.bc.ca

Religious Representative Registry Clerk
250 712-7597
Email: VSRELREG@gov.bc.ca

If you are unable to reach the Religious Representative Registry contacts, you may contact the following Vital Statistics managers for assistance.

Greater Vancouver & Sunshine Coast
250 952-9035
Cell: 250 415-3395
Email: HLTH.VSAdmin@gov.bc.ca

Vancouver Island & Coast
250 952-9131
Cell: 250 217-4403
Email: HLTH.VSAdmin@gov.bc.ca

Law

LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS TO MARRY

Summary

The *Marriage Act* prescribes the legal requirements that must be observed in connection with the legal qualifications of individuals to marry, and the authorization of religious representatives and marriage commissioners to perform the marriage ceremony, and the solemnization of marriage. It is the responsibility of the Vital Statistics Agency to ensure the compliance of all responsible parties to the provisions of the Act.

Individuals who meet the legal qualifications to marry and who have obtained a Marriage Licence can select a civil ceremony performed by a marriage commissioner or a religious ceremony performed by a religious representative. Under the *Marriage Act*, the Vital Statistics Agency is required to register religious representatives of established religious denominations who desire the authority to solemnize marriage.

Law

As a governing authority of a religious body responsible for a number of religious representatives or as an individual religious representative you must be aware of your legal obligations as defined by the *Marriage Act* (see Appendix A). Failure to comply with the provisions of the *Marriage Act* may result in the suspension or cancellation of authority to solemnize marriage in the Province.

The Vital Statistics Agency and the staff of the Religious Representative Registry are always available to assist and answer questions regarding the roles and responsibilities of religious groups and individuals under the *Marriage Act*. All of your responsibilities will be outlined in this guide as we discuss the various functions of the Religious Representative Registry and the administrative and statutory requirements imposed on religious bodies and their religious representatives.

RECOGNITION OF A RELIGIOUS BODY

Summary A religious body is defined within section 1 of the *Marriage Act* as follows:

“religious body” means any church, or any religious denomination, sect, congregation or society.

In order to qualify for recognition as a religious body within the provisions of the *Marriage Act* a church, religious society or religious denomination must demonstrate that it is sufficiently well established as to continuity of existence and as to recognized rites and usages respecting the solemnization of marriage to warrant the registration of its religious representatives.

The registrar general of the Vital Statistics Agency has established in policy, standards which allow a reasonable determination of a group’s qualification for recognition. These requirements are discussed below.

Policy Religious representatives may only be registered upon application by the governing authority of a religious body which has been recognized in British Columbia in accordance with the *Marriage Act*. As a consequence, religious representatives cannot be registered independently of the recognition of their denomination or religious body.

In order for the registrar general of the Vital Statistics Agency to make a determination of qualification, a religious body must submit documentary proof of existence in British Columbia or existence and recognition in another province, for a minimum period of five years demonstrating such factors as stability, growth, and continuing viability. This documentation may include, but is not restricted to such items as financial statements, constitution and bylaws and *Society Act* documents which will also document the purpose, affiliations, administrative hierarchy and religious tenets of the religious body. A religious body must also demonstrate that it is established in a community or communities and is accessible to the public.

A church or religious denomination considering application must identify the appropriate level or organizational jurisdiction of their religious body which should make the actual application to the Religious Representative Registry. It is necessary to identify at what organizational level the responsibility lies for doctrinal, administrative and disciplinary directives. The Registry must be able to identify and document the “Governing Authority” with the responsibility to make administrative and disciplinary responses to the registrar general in matters respecting the solemnization of marriage and compliance with the *Marriage Act*.

Policy

GUIDE FOR APPLICATION

Primary Prerequisite A denomination must be functioning within the province of British Columbia for a period of at least five years; **or alternatively**, demonstrate that they have been established in Canada for a minimum of five years, have been recognized for the purposes of solemnizing marriage in at least one other province and have a church or congregation sufficiently established in British Columbia at the time of application.

Procedure The application is to be made by the governing authority, secretary or other authorized individual, **not by the religious representative**, on behalf of the elected or appointed board of the religious organization. Be sure to sign the letter giving your official title, address and telephone number.

The following information and documents are required in order to assess a religious body's eligibility for recognition under the *Marriage Act* for the purpose of having its religious representatives registered as authorized to solemnize marriage.

1. What is the official name of your religious body?
2. What other religious bodies are affiliated with your group? Give their name and location. Describe the nature of the affiliation with regards to any financial, administrative and disciplinary control.
3. Provide the origins and the present national or international organization of the religious body. Identify specifically the governing office in this province and their relationship to officials outside the province, if applicable. Describe the procedure by which they are *appointed* and *relieved* of jurisdictional authority.
4. How long has your religious body been continuously functioning within the province? State the date and place of incorporation.
5. If applicable, how long has your religious body been continuously functioning within Canada? State the date and place of incorporation.

GUIDE FOR APPLICATION

6. Provide a summary or statement of the tenets of your religious beliefs, their history and/or source.
7. If applicable, is your religious body recognized for the purposes of solemnizing marriage in at least one other province? State the date and place of registration.
8. Document the name, location, address, size, make-up and constitution of your church(es) or congregation(s) in British Columbia.
9. How many marriages do you estimate will be performed in a year on behalf of this group?
10. How many active members are associated with your religious body in this province? Briefly outline the growth of your membership.
11. State the name and official title of the person who would be given the “Signing Authority” to request the registration and cancellation of the religious representatives. What is this person’s term of office?
12. Provide a copy of the bylaws or rules of the religious body relating to the *appointment* and *dismissal* of officers of the religious body in this province.
13. Provide a copy of the bylaws or rules of the religious body relating to the *appointment* and *dismissal* of religious representatives in this province.

Policy

GUIDE FOR APPLICATION

In addition to your letter, please submit the following documentation:

- A copy of your B.C. Societies Act Certificate.
- A sampling of the minutes of the society meetings for a minimum of five years in order to establish continuity of existence in British Columbia.
- A copy of your Constitution and Bylaws.
- A copy of your Marriage Ceremony.
- A list of the names and addresses of proposed religious representatives who would be authorized to solemnize marriage in British Columbia.
- A copy of the record of ordination or appointment for each proposed religious representative.

If your religious body has **not** been functioning in the province of British Columbia for the required period but has been established in Canada **and** has been recognized in at least one other province, please **also** provide the following:

- A sampling of the minutes of the extra-provincial society meetings for a minimum of five years in order to establish continuity of existence in Canada.
- Proof of registration/recognition for the purpose of solemnizing marriage in at least one other province.

The qualification of an application for recognition is determined on an individual basis utilizing current legal definitions and a review of documentary evidence submitted as well as additional on-site inquiries or confirmation where warranted. The staff of the Religious Representative Registry are available at all times in this process to provide guidance and answer questions.

Once a religious body has been “recognized”, they are free to submit their religious representative’s information for registration under the signature and certification of an individual who has been designated as the “Signing Authority” for the religious body.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A RELIGIOUS BODY

Overview

Once a denomination or religious body is formally recognized, a considerable degree of confidence is placed in the “Governing Authority” with respect to the registration of new religious representatives. It is understood that new registrations will be recommended only to meet the real needs of the congregation for marriage services, and not as a form of personal accreditation. Registrations which are proposed in excess of the apparent need may be rejected or subsequently cancelled.

Note: Only individuals possessing religious authority vested in them in accordance with the rites and usages of the religious body may be submitted for registration. Individuals who simply hold an administrative position within a religious body do not meet the provisions of the *Marriage Act* for registration to solemnize marriage.

The Religious Representative Registry depends upon the governing authority through their signing authority to keep the Vital Statistics Agency informed of changes affecting religious representatives registered under their jurisdiction, as well as to ensure these religious representatives are informed of the requirements of the *Marriage Act*.

The Vital Statistics Agency routinely circulates administrative and statutory updates to the religious community via religious body governing authorities. The prompt dissemination of this information to the religious representatives under their jurisdiction is a vital and important role of all governing authorities.

Policy

THE SIGNING AUTHORITY

Overview

Once a religious body has been recognized it is necessary to document the appointment of one individual to act as the “Signing Authority”. This individual will be designated by the “Governing Authority” at the time of application for recognition.

The Religious Representative Registry must be notified of changes in “Signing Authority”. Notification must be in writing and should be accompanied by:

- an extract of the minutes of the meeting at which the transfer of office was made in accordance with the bylaws and customs of the religious body, or
- if the position was not an elected one, a letter of appointment from the “Governing Authority” of the religious body utilizing official letterhead.

A “Signing Authority” is responsible for processing the following forms:

- Application for Registration of Religious Representative (VSA 701) utilized to request the registration of a religious representative.
- Notification of Changes Affecting Religious Representative (VSA 705) utilized to request cancellation of a religious representative following retirement or death, or to advise the Registry of a change in address and/or jurisdiction.

REGISTRATION OF A RELIGIOUS REPRESENTATIVE

Summary

A “religious representative” is defined within section 1 of the *Marriage Act* as follows:

“religious representative” means a person duly authorized to solemnize marriage according to the rites and usages of the religious body to which the person belongs...

If you are an individual who has been vested or ordained with religious authority to solemnize marriage in accordance with the “rites and usages” of your religious body then you meet the definition of a “religious representative” under the *Marriage Act*.

Policy

In order to qualify for registration as authorized to solemnize marriage you must meet the provisions of section 3 of the *Marriage Act* (see Appendix A).

Religious representatives may not be registered independently of the recognition of their denomination or religious body. An application must be made on behalf of a religious representative by a recognized religious body and the application must attest to the qualifications of any religious representative in accordance with section 3 of the *Marriage Act*.

The basic qualifications for registration require that an applicant be:

- ordained or appointed according to the rites and usages of the religious body,
- in charge of or officiating in connection with a congregation, branch or local unit of the Province in the religious body,
- recognized by the religious body to which he or she belongs as authorized to solemnize marriage according to its rites and usages,
- that the religious body to which the person belongs is sufficiently well established.

Applications for registration on behalf of individual religious representatives are made utilizing an “**Application for Registration of Religious Representative**” form (**VSA 701**). A sample of a properly completed application is shown on page 12.

Upon registration, a religious representative will receive from the Religious Representative Registry a letter certifying their registration and an information package describing their legal responsibilities and providing instructions for the proper processing of all necessary forms and documents.

Policy

REGISTRATION OF A RELIGIOUS REPRESENTATIVE



Vital Statistics
Agency

305 - 478 Bernard Ave
Kelowna, BC V1Y 6N7
VSRELREG@gov.bc.ca
Phone: 250 712-7562
Fax: 250 712-7598

"MARRIAGE ACT"

Application for Registration of Religious Representative

To the Registrar General of the Vital Statistics Agency, Victoria, B.C.

THE Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Okanagan

Full Name of Religious Denomination

being a religious body within the meaning of the "Marriage Act", duly established within the Province of British Columbia, and having well-organized rites and usages respecting the solemnization of marriage, hereby makes application by its governing authority for the registration of the undernamed person, whose place of residence, title, and jurisdiction is set out herein, as a religious representative authorized to solemnize marriage under the said Act:-

Full Name of Religious Representative Christopher Jason Smith
Given Names Surname

Mailing Address and Telephone Number 1520 Smythe Street (250) 762-7440
Street Address Telephone Number

Kelowna BC V1Y 1J2
City Province or State Postal Code

Title (i.e., Reverend, Father, Pastor, Rabbi, etc.) Pastor

Description of Jurisdiction St Michael and All Angels
Name of Parish, Church or Extent of Jurisdiction

The said person is duly ordained or appointed to his position or office according to the rites and usages of the religious body making this application, or is by its rules deemed to be so ordained or appointed by reason of some prior ordination or appointment, and is a religious representative within the definition in sections 1 and/or 2 of the "Marriage Act".

The said person is in charge of or officiates in connection with the jurisdiction hereinbefore set out, the same being a congregation, branch, or local unit of the said religious body.

According to the rites and usages of the said religious body, the said person, acting as such religious representative is recognized as authorized, when called upon, to solemnize marriage or undertake to carry out all other such duties as imposed by the Act.

The undersigned, being the governing authority duly authorized to act in the premises on behalf of the said religious body, hereby certifies to the correctness of the statements herein contained.

Dated at Kelowna, this 1st day of June, 2014

Name of Governing Authority Bruce L. Swanson

Signature of Governing Authority *B.L. Swanson*

Official Title and Extent of Jurisdiction Bishop, Okanagan

Mailing Address and Telephone Number 940 Ominica Place (250) 555-9988
Street Address Telephone Number

Kelowna BC V2J 2K2
City Province or State Postal Code

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Approved _____ Date _____ File Number _____

Date Certificate Issued _____ Certificate Number _____

Remarks _____

VSA 701 2016/04/01

TEMPORARY REGISTRATION

Under the provisions of the *Marriage Act*, temporary registration is restricted to religious representatives who are **non**-residents of British Columbia, and is designed to facilitate and expedite the registration of out-of-province religious representatives for solemnization of a specific marriage. The date or period of registration is to be specified on the application, and no cancellation document is required.

In the case of short-term registration of British Columbia resident religious representatives to fill a temporary need, as in summer, a form (VSA 705) must also be completed to terminate the registration, a requirement which is easily overlooked. In submitting applications of this category, it will serve as a reminder to the Registry, as well as to the signing authority, if the approximate intended duration of the short-term registration is indicated on the application.

A sample of a properly completed temporary application is shown on page 14.

Policy

TEMPORARY REGISTRATION



Vital Statistics
Agency

305 - 478 Bernard Ave
Kelowna, BC V1Y 6N7
VSRELREG@gov.bc.ca
Phone: 250 712-7562
Fax: 250 712-7598

"MARRIAGE ACT"

Application for Registration of Religious Representative

To the Registrar General of the Vital Statistics Agency, Victoria, B.C.

THE Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Okanagan

Full Name of Religious Denomination

being a religious body within the meaning of the "Marriage Act", duly established within the Province of British Columbia, and having well-organized rites and usages respecting the solemnization of marriage, hereby makes application by its governing authority for the registration of the undernamed person, whose place of residence, title, and jurisdiction is set out herein, as a religious representative authorized to solemnize marriage under the said Act:-

Full Name of Religious Representative	<u>Jeremy Alden</u>	<u>Spence</u>
	<small>Given Names</small>	<small>Surname</small>
Mailing Address and Telephone Number of Religious Representative	<u>1411 Edna Circle</u>	<u>(402) 235-7269</u>
	<small>Street Address</small>	<small>Telephone Number</small>
	<u>Omaha</u>	<u>Nebraska</u>
	<small>City</small>	<small>Province or State</small>
		<u>94113</u>
		<small>Postal Code</small>
Title (i.e., Reverend, Father, Pastor, Rabbi, etc.)	<u>Pastor</u>	
Description of Jurisdiction	<u>"Temporary" St Michael and All Angels, Peachland August 20, 2014</u>	
	<small>Name of Parish, Church or Extent of Jurisdiction</small>	

The said person is duly ordained or appointed to his position or office according to the rites and usages of the religious body making this application, or is by its rules deemed to be so ordained or appointed by reason of some prior ordination or appointment, and is a religious representative within the definition in sections 1 and/or 2 of the "Marriage Act".

The said person is in charge of or officiates in connection with the jurisdiction hereinbefore set out, the same being a congregation, branch, or local unit of the said religious body.

According to the rites and usages of the said religious body, the said person, acting as such religious representative is recognized as authorized, when called upon, to solemnize marriage or undertake to carry out all other such duties as imposed by the Act.

The undersigned, being the governing authority duly authorized to act in the premises on behalf of the said religious body, hereby certifies to the correctness of the statements herein contained.

Dated at Kelowna, this 1st day of June, 2014

Name of Governing Authority Bruce L. Swanson

Signature of Governing Authority *BL Swanson*

Official Title and Extent of Jurisdiction Bishop, Okanagan

Mailing Address and Telephone Number of Religious Body	<u>940 Ominica Place</u>	<u>(250) 555-9988</u>
	<small>Street Address</small>	<small>Telephone Number</small>
	<u>Kelowna</u>	<u>BC</u>
	<small>City</small>	<small>Province or State</small>
		<u>V2J 2K2</u>
		<small>Postal Code</small>

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Approved _____ Date _____ File Number _____

Date Certificate Issued _____ Certificate Number _____

Remarks _____

VSA 701 2016/04/01

NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES

In order to ensure that the Registry does not maintain unnecessary or incorrect records, signing authorities are required to submit notification of cancellations and changes by completing a “**Notification of Changes Affecting Religious Representatives**” form (VSA 705).

The following changes should always be recorded and submitted to the Registry as early as possible to ensure the records are kept up to date:

- changes of residence
- changes of pastoral charge or jurisdiction
- retirement, where registration is **not** to be cancelled and
- cancellations of registrations following retirement, change of denomination/religious body or for any other cause.

For any religious representative for whom cancellation has been requested, it is necessary for the signing authority to return any registration certificate issued prior to May 9, 2003.

A sample of a properly completed notification form is shown on page 16.

The Religious Representative Registry will provide each signing authority with an annual listing of all religious representatives registered under the authority of their religious body. Signing authorities will review these listings and return them with any changes necessary to ensure that the Registry files are current and reflect correct and up to date information for every religious representative.

Policy

NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES



Vital Statistics
Agency

305 - 478 Bernard St
Kelowna, BC V1Y 6N7

Phone: 250 712-7597
Fax: 250 712-7598

"MARRIAGE ACT"

Notification of Changes Affecting Religious Representative

To the Registrar General of the Vital Statistics Agency, Victoria, B.C.

Kindly note the following changes regarding the Religious Representative whose particulars are shown hereunder:

Full Name of Religious Representative Joshua James Olson
Given names Surname

Mailing Address and Telephone Number 3219 Mara Drive (604) 936-4740
Street Address Telephone Number

of Religious Representative Surrey BC V3R 8K1
City Province or State Postal Code

Religious Body or Denomination BC Baptist Conference Certificate Number 25103

REGISTRATION TO BE CHANGED AS INDICATED BELOW

(choose one of the following)

1. Change of residence within this present jurisdiction:

New Address _____
Street Address City Province Postal Code Telephone Number

2. Transfer to another jurisdiction, Church or Parish within the denomination or religious body:

Name of Parish, Church, Temple, Synagogue People's Baptist Church

New Title Pastor

New Mailing Address and Telephone 766 Bowen Drive (250) 830-1976
Street Address Telephone Number

Number of Religious Representative Campbell River BC V1A 2S1
City Province or State Postal Code

3. To retain registration upon retirement, effective _____

4. To cancel registration due to: retirement, death, or _____
State reason

Dated at Kelowna this 1st day of June, 2014
City/Town Day Month Year

Name of Governing Authority Steven Gallagher

Signature of Governing Authority S. Gallagher

Official Title and Extent of Jurisdiction District Executive Minister

Mailing Address and Telephone Number 4848 Main Street (604) 555-9988
Street Address Telephone Number

of Religious Body Vancouver BC V2K 2K2
City Province or State Postal Code

NOTE - Where the change reported involves cancellation, the Religious Representative certificate of registration, issued prior to May 9, 2003, **MUST** be returned with this notice.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY		
Approved _____	Date _____	File Number _____
Date Certificate Issued _____	Certificate Number _____	
Remarks _____		

THE CEREMONY

Before

All officiants must ensure that they are registered by the registrar general of the Vital Statistics Agency as a religious representative in the Province and that they are in possession of a valid Letter of Registration.

A religious representative must ensure that before proceeding with the ceremony that the legal preliminaries required by the *Marriage Act* have been fulfilled, namely that they have received from the parties to the marriage a valid British Columbia **Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage** form authorizing the proposed marriage.

The **Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage** form must be reviewed and completed in full. Officiants are to ensure all information required has been provided and confirmed by the parties as being correct.

During

Ensure the parties and witnesses have all signed both the Marriage Register and the Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage form. It is normal for the religious representative to sign all documents at this time as well.

After

The religious representative must sign the Marriage Register and the Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage form at this time if not done so during the ceremony.

The provisions of the *Vital Statistics Act* designate the religious representative as the individual **responsible** for completing the Registration of Marriage. Forward the Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage form to the Victoria Vital Statistics Agency office in the postage paid envelope which is provided for this purpose. The *Vital Statistics Act* requires that Marriage Licence and Registration forms be forwarded within **two days** to ensure the timely registration of all Marriage events.

Procedures

THE MARRIAGE REGISTER

Overview Section 25 of the *Marriage Act* (see Appendix A) requires that religious representatives shall register each marriage solemnized in a book kept for that purpose. The Marriage Register remains the property of the Vital Statistics Agency and is subject to audit or recall at any time by the registrar general of the Vital Statistics Agency or representative.

It is recommended that religious bodies desiring a permanent record for their own purposes obtain an additional commercial register which may be retained for archival and historical records.

Procedure Replacement and/or subsequent new Marriage Registers are ordered through your Governing Authority or Signing Authority who will in turn request and authorize their issuance by the Religious Representative Registry.

Marriage Registers are issued by the Religious Representative Registry and may be obtained by mailing or faxing a completed Marriage Register Book Request (VSA 476) to:

Religious Representative Registry
Vital Statistics Agency
305 - 478 Bernard Ave
Kelowna BC V1Y 6N7

Telephone: 250 712-7562
Fax: 250 712-7598

All religious representatives will be required to sign a formal receipt for all Marriage Registers issued to them on behalf of their religious body.

The current Marriage Register utilized by the Vital Statistics Agency consists of pages which record marriages in a line entry format. Neatness and accuracy ensure that the information recorded will represent a formal and legal record of the marriages solemnized.

A sample Marriage Register entry is shown on the following page.

THE MARRIAGE REGISTER



Vital Statistics
Agency

MARRIAGE REGISTER

<i>Date of Marriage</i> <small>(Please Print)</small>	April	20	2013
	<small>Month</small>	<small>Day</small>	<small>Year</small>
<i>Place of Marriage</i>	1234 Elm St, Victoria BC		
<i>Marriage Document Control Number</i>	1234567		
Party 1			
Jones	Mark Douglas		
<small>Surname - Printed</small>	<small>Given Names - Printed</small>		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Mark Jones</i>		
	<small>Signature</small>		
Party 2			
Kennedy	Susan Joan		
<small>Surname - Printed</small>	<small>Given Names - Printed</small>		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Susan Kennedy</i>		
	<small>Signature</small>		
<i>Witness Name - Printed</i>	Steve Cottonwood		
<i>Witness Signature</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Steve Cottonwood</i>		
<i>Witness Name - Printed</i>	Felicia Williams		
<i>Witness Signature</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Felicia Williams</i>		
<i>Officiant Name - Printed</i>	C. Taylor		
<i>Officiant Signature</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>C. Taylor</i>		
<i>Officiant Certification Number</i>	41-0123		

Procedures

THE MARRIAGE LICENCE AND REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGE

Overview

The provincial government issues marriage licences as a means of meeting the federal statutes governing the freedom and qualification of individuals to marry. The fee associated with marriage licences offsets the personnel, administrative and systems costs behind this function which in turn is provided by over 900 marriage licence issuers in over 150 locations throughout the province.

A couple in possession of a valid British Columbia marriage licence is legally able to be married anywhere in British Columbia regardless of where the licence was issued.

As a religious representative, the possession of a marriage licence relieves you of the responsibility to ascertain a couples' **legal** authority to be married with respect to such concerns as marital status, age, and capacity. All of these issues will have been addressed by a Marriage Licence Issuer who has ensured compliance with all statues both Federal and Provincial before issuing the licence.

In British Columbia the Marriage Licence is an integral part of the Registration of Marriage and is not retained by the officiant. Upon being presented with a Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage form, you must ensure that the licence portion is valid. Check the date effective on the form to ensure validity of the licence.

Remember: Marriage Licences are **only valid for three months** from the effective date (which is the date of purchase).

The Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage form is presented to you partially completed. Some information is completed at the time the licence is applied for. The officiant is responsible for confirming that the parties information is correct and for completing the balance of the form. A sample of a partially completed Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage form is shown on the following page.

THE MARRIAGE LICENCE AND REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGE



Vital Statistics
Agency

MARRIAGE LICENCE AND REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGE

DOCUMENT CONTROL NUMBER
(Office Use Only)

REGISTRATION NUMBER
(Office Use Only)

Application for a Marriage Licence having been duly made at VICTORIA, British Columbia in the manner prescribed by the Marriage Act, in respect of an intended marriage between the parties indicated, and all other requirements of the Act have been duly complied with. This Licence is issued to the parties, hereby authorizing the solemnization of the intended marriage in the Province of British Columbia, by any person duly appointed under the Marriage Act as authorized to solemnize marriage.

Date Effective: JUNE 1, 2013 to * SEPTEMBER 1, 2013

* This Licence is not valid after three months from date effective.

Lucy Wilkins 38-0000 JUNE 1, 2013
Marriage Licence Issuer Signature Marriage Licence Issuer Number Date

	PARTY				PARTY			
SURNAMES	JONES				KENNEDY			
GIVEN NAMES <i>In Full</i>	MARK DOUGLAS				SUSAN JOAN			
MARITAL STATUS <i>Never Married/ Widowed/Divorced</i>	NEVER MARRIED				NEVER MARRIED			
BIRTH DATE <i>Month (by name) Day, Year</i>	MAY 11, 1983	Age 31	Sex M	APRIL 24, 1983	Age 31	Sex F		
BIRTH PLACE <i>City/Town, Province/ State, Country</i>	TORONTO, ONTARIO				VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA			
PERSONAL HEALTH NUMBER	Care Card Number 9011 233 344				Care Card Number 9025 335 568			
ABORIGINAL INFORMATION	Aboriginal? If yes, registration number (INAC) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No				Aboriginal? If yes, registration number (INAC) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 9 9 9 9 9			
ADDRESS <i>Before Marriage</i>	Complete street address, If rural give exact location 17 DOUGLAS STREET City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country VICTORIA BC				Complete street address, If rural give exact location 17 DOUGLAS STREET City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country VICTORIA BC			
	Postal Code V9V 5J4				Postal Code V9V 5J4			
OFFICIANT TO ENSURE THIS PORTION OF REGISTRATION IS COMPLETE								
FATHER <i>Names</i>	Surname and given names (print or type)				Surname and given names (print or type)			
FATHER <i>Birthplace</i>	City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country				City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country			
MOTHER <i>Names</i>	Maiden surname and given names (print or type)				Maiden surname and given names (print or type)			
MOTHER <i>Birthplace</i>	City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country				City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country			
SIGNATURES OF BOTH PARTIES TO the marriage	I certify that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief USUAL SIGNATURE OF THE PARTY ABOVE X				I certify that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief USUAL SIGNATURE OF THE PARTY ABOVE X			
SIGNATURES and PRINTED NAMES of WITNESSES to the marriage	Signature of Witness X Signature of Witness X				Witness name printed Witness name printed			
PLACE AND DATE OF MARRIAGE	Address where marriage was solemnized				City, town or other place, (by name) Postal Code			
	Date of marriage: month (by name), day, year				If Civil Marriage, Receipt Number			
OFFICIANT	I _____ NAME (printed) _____ certify that I solemnized the marriage of the parties named at the place and on the date stated above.							
	Denomination (if religious representative)				SIGNATURE OF PERSON OFFICIATING Certification Number		PHONE Date signed: month (by name), day, year	

Procedures

THE MARRIAGE LICENCE AND REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGE

Procedure Couples will present the Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage form to you prior to the wedding in order that all information that is required may be completed and verified.

Father's and Mother's information for both parties

All parental fields must be completed. In instances where some parental information is unknown please print the word UNKNOWN in the field.

FATHER	Names	Surname and given names (<i>print or type</i>) JAMES, ELMO	Surname and given names (<i>print or type</i>) KENNEDY, JOHN
	Birthplace	City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country ST. CATHERINES ONTARIO	City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country VICTORIA BC
MOTHER	Names	Maiden surname and given names (<i>print or type</i>) HARDLEY, CLAIRE	Maiden surname and given names (<i>print or type</i>) LEDNER, REBECCA
	Birthplace	City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country TORONTO, ONTARIO	City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country HAMILTON, ONTARIO

Place & Date of Marriage

PLACE AND DATE OF MARRIAGE	Address where marriage was solemnized	City, town or other place, (<i>by name</i>)	Postal Code
	1234 ELM STREET	VICTORIA	V8V 3J2
	Date of marriage: month (<i>by name</i>), day, year	If Civil Marriage, Receipt Number	
	J U N 20 2013		

Officiant, excluding signature and date signed

OFFICIANT	I, <u>REV. W. TAYLOR</u> NAME (printed) certify that I solemnized the marriage of the parties named at the place and on the date stated above.		
	SIGNATURE OF PERSON OFFICIATING <i>W. Taylor</i>		PHONE (250) 582-2558
	Denomination (<i>if religious representative</i>)	Certification Number	Date signed: month (<i>by name</i>), day, year
	BAPTIST	12345	J U N 20 2013

THE MARRIAGE LICENCE AND REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGE

The Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage form is not signed **until immediately after** the marriage ceremony has taken place. The form must be signed:

- by each of the parties to the marriage
- by at least two witnesses; and
- by the person solemnizing the marriage

The party's signatures should be their usual signature prior to the marriage.

SIGNATURES of BOTH PARTIES to the marriage	I certify that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief USUAL SIGNATURE OF THE PARTY ABOVE		I certify that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief USUAL SIGNATURE OF THE PARTY ABOVE	
	X <i>Mark Jones</i>		X <i>Susan Kennedy</i>	
SIGNATURES and PRINTED NAMES of WITNESSES to the marriage	Signature of Witness		Witness name printed	
	X <i>Felecia Williams</i>		FELECIA WILLIAMS	
	Signature of Witness		Witness name printed	
	X <i>steve Cottonwood</i>		STEVE COTTONWOOD	
PLACE AND DATE OF MARRIAGE	Address where marriage was solemnized		City, town or other place, (by name)	
	1234 ELM STREET		VICTORIA	
	Date of marriage: month (by name), day, year		Postal Code	
	J U N 20 2013		V8V 3J2	
OFFICIANT	I <u>REV. W. TAYLOR</u> certify that I solemnized the marriage of the parties named at the place and on the date stated above.			
	NAME (printed)		SIGNATURE OF PERSON OFFICIATING	
			<i>W. Taylor</i> (250) 582-2558	
	Denomination (if religious representative)		Certification Number	
	BAPTIST		12345	
			Date signed: month (by name), day, year	
			J U N 20 2013	

Procedures

THE MARRIAGE LICENCE AND REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGE

Completion Marriage Registrations are a permanent, legal record of the marriage between two individuals. Aside from its importance as proof of marriage and issuance of marriage certificates, this information is used for statistical analyses and the monitoring of vital event trends. The role of the religious representative is critical to the accuracy and completeness of the data received via the Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage forms.

Ensure that all information has been provided in a neat legible manner, printed or typed.

Section 26 of the *Marriage Act*:

A religious representative and a marriage commissioner by whom a marriage is solemnized must also observe and perform the duties imposed on him or her under the *Vital Statistics Act* respecting the records of the marriage.

A sample of a properly completed Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage form is shown on the following page.

Procedures

THE MARRIAGE LICENCE AND REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGE



Vital Statistics
Agency

MARRIAGE LICENCE AND REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGE

DOCUMENT CONTROL NUMBER
(Office Use Only)

REGISTRATION NUMBER
(Office Use Only)

Application for a Marriage Licence having been duly made at VICTORIA, British Columbia in the manner prescribed by the Marriage Act, in respect of an intended marriage between the parties indicated, and all other requirements of the Act have been duly complied with. This Licence is issued to the parties, hereby authorizing the solemnization of the intended marriage in the Province of British Columbia, by any person duly appointed under the Marriage Act as authorized to solemnize marriage.

Date Effective: JUNE 1, 2013 to * SEPTEMBER 1, 2013

* This Licence is not valid after three months from date effective.

Lucy Wilkins 38-0000 JUNE 1, 2013
Marriage Licence Issuer Signature Marriage Licence Issuer Number Date

	PARTY			PARTY		
SURNAMES	JONES			KENNEDY		
GIVEN NAMES <i>In Full</i>	MARK DOUGLAS			SUSAN JOAN		
MARITAL STATUS <i>Never Married/ Widowed/Divorced</i>	NEVER MARRIED			NEVER MARRIED		
BIRTH DATE <i>Month (by name) Day, Year</i>	MAY 11, 1983	Age 31	Sex M	APRIL 24, 1983	Age 31	Sex F
BIRTH PLACE <i>City/Town, Province/ State, Country</i>	TORONTO, ONTARIO			VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA		
PERSONAL HEALTH NUMBER	Care Card Number 9011 233 344			Care Card Number 9025 335 568		
ABORIGINAL INFORMATION	Aboriginal? If yes, registration number (INAC) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			Aboriginal? If yes, registration number (INAC) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 9 9 9 9 9		
ADDRESS <i>Before Marriage</i>	Complete street address, If rural give exact location 17 DOUGLAS STREET City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country VICTORIA BC			Complete street address, If rural give exact location 17 DOUGLAS STREET City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country VICTORIA BC		
	Postal Code V9V 5J4			Postal Code V9V 5J4		
OFFICIAN TO ENSURE THIS PORTION OF REGISTRATION IS COMPLETE						
FATHER	Surname and given names (print or type) JAMES, ELMO City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country ST. CATHERINES ONTARIO			Surname and given names (print or type) KENNEDY, JOHN City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country VICTORIA BC		
MOTHER	Maiden surname and given names (print or type) HARDLEY, CLAIRE City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country TORONTO, ONTARIO			Maiden surname and given names (print or type) LEDNER, REBECCA City, town or other place, Province/State, and Country HAMILTON, ONTARIO		
SIGNATURES of BOTH PARTIES to the marriage	I certify that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief USUAL SIGNATURE OF THE PARTY ABOVE X <u>Mark Jones</u>			I certify that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief USUAL SIGNATURE OF THE PARTY ABOVE X <u>Susan Kennedy</u>		
SIGNATURES and PRINTED NAMES of WITNESSES to the marriage	Signature of Witness X <u>Felecia Williams</u> Signature of Witness X <u>steve Cottonwood</u>			Witness name printed FELECIA WILLIAMS Witness name printed STEVE COTTONWOOD		
PLACE AND DATE OF MARRIAGE	Address where marriage was solemnized 1234 ELM STREET Date of marriage: month (by name), day, year J U N 20 2013			City, town or other place, (by name) VICTORIA If Civil Marriage, Receipt Number		Postal Code V8V 3J2
OFFICIAN	I <u>REV. W. TAYLOR</u> NAME (printed) certify that I solemnized the marriage of the parties named at the place and on the date stated above. Denomination (if religious representative) BAPTIST			Signature of Person Officiating <u>W. Taylor</u> Certification Number 12345 Date signed: month (by name), day, year J U N 20 2013		
				PHONE (250) 582-2558		

Procedures

USE OF SURNAME AFTER MARRIAGE

Overview

A party to the marriage will at times inquire about what surname can be used once they are married. As indicated by section 3 of the *Name Act*:

A spouse by marriage may:

- use the surname he or she had immediately before the marriage, **or**
- use the surname he or she had at birth or by adoption, **or**
- use the surname of his or her spouse by marriage.

A person is free to use any of the above surnames. Changing from one surname to another does not constitute a name change under the *Name Act*.

If a spouse wishes to combine or hyphenate surnames, this would require a legal change of name. If, at a later date, they wish to revert to their original surname, after legally changing to a combined or hyphenated surname, this would require another legal change of name.

Note: A legal change of name will normally result in your original Canadian birth or marriage registration being changed. All certificates issued subsequent to the change will reflect your new name.

ADMINISTRATION - SUBMISSION OF REGISTRATIONS

Overview The *Vital Statistics Act* requires that the Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage form be delivered or mailed to the registrar general of the Vital Statistics Agency within **two (2) days** after the marriage.

Procedure As the legal responsibility for filing lies with the religious representative, the Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage form is **not** to be released to the couple.

The mailing address for the Vital Statistics Agency is as follows:

Vital Statistics Agency
PO Box 9657 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9P3

Postage paid envelopes are available for this purpose and may be obtained from this Vital Statistics Agency email address: HLTH.VSSTOCK@gov.bc.ca

Note: Marriage Licence and Registration of Marriage forms **must not** be transmitted to the Vital Statistics Agency via facsimile.

Procedures

LEGISLATION

Marriage Act

Registration of religious representatives to solemnize marriage

- 2 (1) On application, in the form required by the registrar general, the registrar general may register any religious representative as authorized to solemnize marriage.
- (2) The application on behalf of a religious representative must be made by the governing authority with jurisdiction in British Columbia over the religious body to which the religious representative belongs.
- (3) The wording of the form required by the registrar general may be varied according to the facts, to set out other qualifications for registration recognized by this Act.
- (4) The registrar general may
- (a) issue to the governing authority one or more certificates of registration in respect of each religious representative registered under this Act, and
 - (b) include in one certificate the names of any number of registered religious representatives who belong to the same religious body.
- (5) The registrar general must keep a register showing
- (a) the name of every religious representative registered,
 - (b) the name of the religious body to which the religious representative belongs, and
 - (c) the date of the religious representative's registration.
- (6) The registrar general must issue a letter of certification to each religious representative registered under this Act.
- (7) The registrar general may register a person as a religious representative if the registrar general is satisfied that
- (a) the doctrines of a religious body do not contemplate a religious representative for the religious body, and
 - (b) the appropriate governing body of the religious body has designated a person to act in the place of a religious representative to perform all the duties imposed by this Act on a person solemnizing a marriage, other than solemnizing the marriage, in respect of marriages performed according to the rites and usages of the religious body.

Qualifications for registration

- 3 (1) A person must not be registered as a religious representative unless the registrar general is satisfied as follows:
- (a) that the person is a religious representative ordained or appointed according to the rites and usages of the religious body to which he or she belongs, or is by the rules of that religious body deemed an ordained or appointed religious representative because of some earlier ordination or appointment;
 - (b) that the person
 - (i) is, as a religious representative, in charge of or officiating in connection with a congregation, branch or local unit in British Columbia of the religious body to which he or she belongs, or
 - (ii) is a resident in British Columbia who was formerly in charge of or officiating in connection with a congregation, branch or local unit in British Columbia, has been superannuated or placed on the supernumerary list, or is a retired religious representative in good standing of the religious body to which he or she belongs;
 - (c) that the person is, as a religious representative, recognized by the religious body to which he or she belongs as authorized to solemnize marriage according to its rites and usages;
 - (d) that the religious body to which the person belongs is sufficiently well established, both as to continuity of existence and as to recognized rites and usages respecting the solemnization of marriage, to warrant, in the opinion of the registrar general, the registration of its religious representatives as authorized to solemnize marriage.
- (2) If a religious representative is in British Columbia temporarily, and, if resident and officiating in British Columbia, might be registered under subsection (1) as authorized to solemnize marriage, the registrar general may register the person as authorized to solemnize marriage during a period to be set by the registrar general.
- (3) A certificate of registration issued under subsection (2) must state the period during which the authority to solemnize marriage may be exercised.

Procedures

Cancellation of registration

- 4 (1) With or without a hearing, the registrar general may cancel the registration of a person authorized under this Act to solemnize marriage if the registrar general is satisfied that the person
- (a) has failed to observe and perform the duties referred to in section 26, or
 - (b) has ceased to possess the qualifications entitling the person to be registered.
- (2) On cancellation of the registration, the person whose registration is cancelled ceases to have authority to solemnize marriage under this Act.
- (3) The registrar general must mail notice of the cancellation at once by registered mail to the person whose registration is cancelled, addressed to the person's last known address in British Columbia.
- (4) Immediately on receipt of the notice of cancellation, a person who is notified under subsection (3) must deliver his or her certificate of registration to the registrar general for cancellation.
- (5) A religious body whose religious representatives are registered under this Act as authorized to solemnize marriage must notify the registrar general, in the form required by the registrar general, of the name of every religious representative registered who
- (a) has died,
 - (b) has ceased to reside in British Columbia, or
 - (c) has in any other way ceased to possess the qualifications entitling the religious representative to be registered.

Authority to solemnize marriage

- 7 (1) A religious representative registered under this Act as authorized to solemnize marriage has and may exercise authority to solemnize marriage in accordance with this Act between any 2 persons neither of whom is under a legal disqualification to contract marriage.
- (2) The registration of a religious representative under this Act, by the insertion of his or her name in the register kept by the registrar general, is conclusive evidence
- (a) that all the requirements of this Act in respect of registration and of matters precedent and incidental to registration have been complied with, and
 - (b) that the religious representative, so long as his or her registration remains in force, is a religious representative authorized to solemnize marriage.
- (3) Despite any law to the contrary, a person must not solemnize any marriage unless he or she is at that time
- (a) a religious representative registered under this Act as authorized to solemnize marriage,
 - (b) a marriage commissioner acting under this Act, or
 - (c) a treaty first nation member designated under the laws of the treaty first nation to solemnize marriages, which laws are authorized by that treaty first nation's final agreement.
- (4) A treaty first nation designate has and may exercise authority to solemnize marriage between any 2 persons only if
- (a) at least one of the persons is a member of the treaty first nation of which the designate is a member, and
 - (b) neither person is under a legal disqualification to contract marriage.

Licence requirement

- 8 A religious representative or a treaty first nation designate may solemnize marriage only under a licence issued under this Act.

Requirements as to witnesses and public ceremony

- 9 (1) All marriages solemnized under this Act by a religious representative must be in the presence of 2 or more witnesses besides the religious representative.
- (2) The ceremony must be performed in a public manner, unless otherwise permitted by licence.
- (3) Both parties to the marriage must be present in person at the ceremony.

Procedures

Issue of licences

- 15** (1) Subject to section 17, a religious representative must not solemnize a marriage under this Act unless the persons intending to marry possess a marriage licence that, under subsection (3), permits the religious representative to marry them.
- (2) An issuer of a marriage licence may issue the licence if the application complies with section 16 and the applicants pay the prescribed fee.
- (3) A marriage licence must
- (a) bear the date on which it is issued, and
 - (b) authorize the solemnization of the marriage of the persons named in it at any time within 3 months after it was issued.

Manner of registration

- 25** (1) When a religious representative, marriage commissioner or treaty first nation designate solemnizes a marriage, he or she must register the marriage by entering a memorandum of it in a book kept under this section for that purpose by
- (a) him or her,
 - (b) the religious body to which the religious representative belongs, or
 - (c) the treaty first nation of which the treaty first nation designate is a treaty first nation member.
- (2) The memorandum* must be signed
- (a) by each of the parties to the marriage,
 - (b) by at least 2 witnesses, and
 - (c) by the religious representative, marriage commissioner or treaty first nation designate who solemnized the marriage.
- (3) Books* for the registration of marriages under this section must be supplied free of charge by the registrar general but remain the property of the registrar general's office and must be returned to the registrar general on demand or on the holder ceasing to be authorized to solemnize marriage.
- (4) The registrar general, or a person designated by the registrar general, may, during normal business hours and as often as the registrar general considers necessary, inspect marriage registers and compare them with the returns of marriages.

* Refers to the marriage register book. See page 19.

- (5) If a religious representative in charge of, or officiating in connection with, a congregation, branch or local unit in British Columbia of the religious body to which he or she belongs moves or transfers out of British Columbia, the religious representative must surrender every marriage register issued to him or her under subsection (3)
- (a) to his or her successor in the pastoral charge, or
 - (b) if there is no successor appointed at the time of moving or transferring, to the district registrar of the district in which the pastoral charge is located.

Performance of duties under Vital Statistics Act

- 26** A religious representative, marriage commissioner or treaty first nation designate by whom a marriage is solemnized must also observe and perform the duties imposed on him or her under the Vital Statistics Act respecting the records of the marriage.

Vital Statistics Act

Registration of marriages

- 15** (1) A marriage solemnized in British Columbia must be registered as provided in this Act.
- (2) A person authorized by law to solemnize marriage in British Columbia must, immediately after the person solemnizes a marriage, prepare a statement in the form required by the registrar general respecting the marriage, which statement must be signed by all of the following:
- (a) each of the parties to the marriage;
 - (b) at least 2 witnesses to the marriage;
 - (c) the person by whom the marriage was solemnized.
- (3) The person by whom the marriage was solemnized must, within 2 days after the day of the marriage, deliver the completed statement to the district registrar of the registration district in which the marriage was solemnized.
- (4) On the receipt within one year from the day of a marriage of a completed statement respecting the marriage, the registrar general must register the marriage if satisfied as to the truth and sufficiency of the statement.