New Zealand Marriage Certificate

Purpose
A New Zealand Marriage Certificate is an official document containing registered information about a couple's marriage as at the date of issue.

Quick steps
Over the years there have been a number of different designs and layouts of the New Zealand Marriage Certificate.

Check that the certificate has been stamped with a Registrar’s seal, or signed by the Registrar, or have both the Registrar’s seal and signature.

Check for watermark. All certificate issued from 1985 contain a 'black wave watermark' visible when the certificate is held up to the light. From late 2011 certificates have a watermark of a kiwi and two ferns visible when the certificate is held up to the light and there is a red map of New Zealand in the bottom right-hand corner.

Check paper and embossing. Between late 2011 and mid 2017 certificates were printed on glossy paper.

Check registration number. A Marriage certificate issued from 2001 will have a 10-digit registration number. The first four digits will usually be the year that the civil union was registered.

Validity
A marriage certificate has no validity period associated with it. (Valid indefinitely)

Versions
Different versions have been issued over the years as detailed above.

Information
Information about the couple contained in the document includes:
- Given name(s) and surname(s)
- Given name(s) and surname(s) at birth (if different from above)
- Sex
- Date of birth
- Place of birth
- Usual occupation, profession or job
- Relationship status
- Usual residential address.

Other information includes:
- Given name(s) and surname(s) of Mothers and Fathers of parties to Civil Union
- Surname(s) at birth (if different to above)
- Date of civil union
- Place of civil union
- other information pursuant to sections 59, 60, 62 or 62D of the Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationships Registration Act 1995
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Standard Fit

The marriage certificate can be used to prove officially that either party may, through common law, use the other party’s surname as her/his own surname. As such, a marriage certificate only provides corroborative evidence about the use of a married name.

Because the identification of applicant is based upon which party completes a statutory declaration (on the notice of intended marriage) and for both parties at the marriage ceremony and anyone is generally able to request a marriage certificate, this certificate should not be used as a primary form of identification.

Issuance Process

To initiate the process, one of the parties getting married must first complete a Notice of Intended Marriage and sign a statutory declaration. If the individuals are legally free to marry, a Marriage Licence is issued and is valid for three months. The marriage must occur before the licence expires. Before the ceremony, the marriage celebrant confirms that the persons before them are those named on the licence. The marriage celebrant returns a copy of the Particulars of Marriage to the issuing Registrar within 10 days of the ceremony.

At the time of marriage, the parties are given their copy of the Particulars of Marriage that can be used as an official document to confirm that the marriage took place.

The marriage register is a public register. As such, any individual can generally be issued a marriage certificate or printout providing the request is in respect of both names of the couple, in a manner approved by the Registrar-General, the regulated fee is paid and the required information is supplied (e.g. both parties names, date and place details contained on the marriage record).

Marriage certificates can be ordered online (at www.govt.nz/bdm), by phone, by post or in person.

To apply, applicants need to provide information about themselves and the person named on the certificate, if not ordering their own. This will include relevant birth, marriage and civil union information.

Issuing Authority

Department of Internal Affairs

Legislation

Section 74 of the Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationships Registration (BDMRR) Act 1995

Further information: www.govt.nz/bdm

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