

Township Of North Huron

Civil Marriage Information & Planning Package



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1.0. Introduction

The Township of North Huron is pleased to offer non-religious, civil marriage ceremonies presided over by a legal Civil Marriage Officiant.

In the Province of Ontario, a **civil marriage** may be performed by a judge, justice of the peace, and a Municipal Clerk, or their delegate. The Township of North Huron Municipal Clerk has delegated their authority to legal, trained, and local Marriage Officiants who offer civil marriage services. A civil marriage ceremony is non-denominational and follows the requirements of the *Marriage Act, R.S.O. 1990* for the Province of Ontario.

This Package serves as a guide to assist couples when planning for a **civil marriage** ceremony using a Marriage Officiant appointed by the Township of North Huron.

Religious Ceremony

A religious marriage is performed by an official of a recognized religion who has received authorization from the Office of the Registrar General to perform marriages in Ontario.

Couples seeking a religious marriage ceremony should confirm that that person performing the marriage is an authorized official by checking online at [Registered Religious Officials](#) or by calling Service Ontario at 1-800-461-2156.

Symbolic Ceremony

Some couples choose a symbolic ceremony (i.e. destination weddings) that may incorporate elements of a legal marriage. If a couple has a symbolic ceremony that includes these elements, they may no longer be eligible for a legal ceremony in Ontario. A legal destination wedding should be registered in the destination country, not Ontario. If there is concern around a symbolic wedding being misunderstood as a legal marriage in Ontario, it is recommended that the legal (civil) ceremony take place before your destination (symbolic) wedding. The Township of North Huron and/or their appointed Marriage Officiants are not able to provide advice about symbolic ceremonies to the couple.

2.0. Obtaining a Marriage License

Depending on the date of the marriage ceremony, before booking a Marriage Officiant couples should apply for (or obtain) an Ontario Marriage Licence.

The North Huron Marriage License Application Package contains further information and guidance when applying for a marriage license with the Township of North Huron. Copies of the Township of North Huron Marriage License Application Package are available on the North Huron website or at the Municipal Office.

When submitting your marriage license application package, you will be required to provide completed application forms, including Form 3, proof of photo identification, and proof of divorce (if applicable). For more information, please consult the North Huron

Marriage License Application Package or call the North Huron Clerk's Department at (519) 357-3550. Marriage Licenses are issued by appointment only.

3.0. Booking a Civil Marriage Officiant

3.1. Booking Form

North Huron Civil Marriage Officiants are available to perform a civil marriage ceremony at any reasonable time and place of your choice. Scheduling a civil marriage ceremony should take place at least four (4) weeks prior to the intended date. However, the Township will strive to accommodate ceremonies where extenuating circumstances apply. Efforts will be made to accommodate your desired ceremony date and time.

A list of North Huron's Officiants is available on the [Civil Marriage Ceremonies webpage](#) on the Township website. Once you have determined your desired Officiant, couples must complete and submit the [Civil Marriage Officiant Booking Form](#) online to begin the booking process. The couple is encouraged, while booking the Officiant, to advise of any accessibility requirements that may need to be taken into consideration by the Officiant.

Within two (2) days of submitting the booking form, Clerk's Department staff will contact both the Marriage Officiant and couple to confirm availability and arrange for the payment of fees.

A civil marriage ceremony booking is considered "booked" once payment has been received in full and Clerk's Department staff have confirmed the availability of the requested Marriage Officiant.

3.2. Fees

The fee structure for Civil Marriage Officiant services is outlined in the North Huron Fees and Charges By-law, as amended from time to time.

The fee is payable, in full, at the time of confirmed booking to reserve your date and time with the desired Officiant. All bookings and payments are administered through the Township of North Huron and fees are non-refundable.

3.3. Communicating with the Officiant

The booked Civil Marriage Officiant will contact the couple shortly after the fees are paid and the booking process is complete.

Couples can expect the Civil Marriage Officiant to collect additional information and discuss your ceremony preferences. Couples should be prepared to provide the following information:

- Personal contact information for both parties;
- Marriage License number;
- Photo I.D. may be required by the Officiant;
- Venue location & details; and
- Witnesses' names, addresses, and contact information.

Couples are encouraged to advise the Marriage Officiant of any accessibility requirements that may need to be taken into consideration before, during or after the ceremony.

4.0. Personalizing your Civil Marriage Ceremony

4.1. Ceremony Location/Venue

Civil Marriage Officiants have the authority to perform civil marriage ceremonies at any reasonable location in Ontario. Ceremonies are booked based on the availability of Officiants and their ability to attend a particular location.

If the location/venue confirmed at the time of booking must change, the couple must get the consent of the Marriage Officiant as soon as possible.

It is the sole responsibility of the couple to make venue arrangements and pay for the use of the location/facility.

4.2. Selecting Two Witnesses

Couples must select two (2) witnesses, who:

- Are physically present at the ceremony;
- Understand what they are witnessing; and
- Will sign the Marriage License and the marriage register.

There is no minimum age requirement for a witness, however, it is suggested that a witness be at least sixteen (16) years of age, able to understand and appreciate what is taking place and be able to give evidence of such at a later date, if required.

4.3. Selecting Civil Marriage Vows

The Township of North Huron's Civil Marriage Officiants offer sample marriage vows. The couple may choose to design and customize their ceremony. The Marriage Officiant will assist the couple in selecting vows and/or scripts that reflect their preference.

Civil marriages are conducted in English only and may take approximately twenty (20) minutes, depending on the personalization of the ceremony. The ceremony may be longer or shorter and will be tailored to meet the preferences of each individual couple.

In Ontario, a civil marriage ceremony must incorporate declarations mandatory under the Marriage Act. In addition to the mandatory vows, personal vows, readings and/or music may be permitted (subject to the approval of the Civil Marriage Officiant).

Civil marriage ceremonies shall be non-denominational, and no reference should be made to God or a Supreme Being, nor should the ceremony contain religious connotations.

4.4. The Day of the Ceremony

By the date of the ceremony, the couple and the Marriage Officiant should be comfortable that all event details, and changes, have been confirmed.

Couples should make sure they, or someone supporting them, have the ability to communicate any last-minute changes to the Marriage Officiant.

5.0. Legal Requirements

5.1. Obligations of the Civil Marriage Officiant

The Civil Marriage Officiant has a legal obligation to ensure the following:

- The five following people are physically present at the marriage ceremony:
 - Both parties to the marriage (the couple);
 - Two witnesses that understand what they are witnessing; and
 - The Marriage Officiant.
- During the ceremony:
 - Both parties must have the capacity to marry and consent to the marriage;
 - That the mandatory declarations are made.

To clarify, the Marriage Officiant must consider the following:

a) Capacity & Consent

The Civil Marriage Officiant must not perform the marriage for a person whom they know does not consent to the marriage, or it is unclear that both parties to the marriage consent.

Likewise, the Marriage Officiant must not perform the marriage if they know or have reasonable grounds to believe that a party to the marriage (the couple) lacks the mental capacity to marry.

b) Drugs/Alcohol

The Marriage Officiant shall not perform a marriage if they believe that one or both of the parties, or the witnesses, are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

c) Required Declarations During Ceremony

The Marriage Officiant must ensure that the ceremony includes statements and declarations required under the Ontario Marriage Act, in the presence of the person solemnizing the marriage and two witnesses.

Each of the parties shall declare:

I do solemnly declare that I do not know of any lawful impediment why I, [spouse AB] may not be joined in matrimony to [spouse CD]; and

Each of the parties shall say to the other:

I call upon these persons here present to witness that I, [spouse AB] do take you, [spouse CD], to be my lawful wedded (wife/husband/spouse/partner); and

After which, the Marriage Officiant shall say:

[name of Officiant], by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Marriage Act, do hereby pronounce you [spouse AB] and [spouse CD] to be married.

5.2. Registering Your Marriage

After the ceremony, all parties (the couple and witnesses) must sign the Statement of Marriage, Record of Solemnization, and the marriage register. The Civil Marriage Officiant will ensure all documentation is provided to the Township of North Huron to be forwarded to the Office of the Registrar General within two (2) business days to register your marriage with the Province of Ontario.

The Record of Solemnization of Marriage provided at the ceremony is not a legal record. Approximately six to eight (6 to 8) weeks after the ceremony the couple may apply to the Office of the Registrar General to obtain a Certificate of Marriage.

6.0. Additional Information

[Township of North Huron Website – Marriage Licenses](#)

[Township of North Huron Website – Civil Marriage Ceremonies](#)

[Township of North Huron – Civil Marriage Officiant Booking Form](#)

[Township of North Huron – Marriage License Application Package](#)

[Registered Marriage Officiants in Ontario](#)