

## Legal Considerations

A guide to marriage laws and regulations in North America, Mexico, the Caribbean, Hawaii and the South Pacific.

Whether you have your heart set on Fiji, Cancún, Jamaica or Las Vegas, it's essential to know the official destination wedding procedures at your chosen locale before making the travel arrangements. Does the country require a minimum residency period? How many witnesses are required? Many places ask only for a passport or photo ID, while some call for birth certificates, blood work and translated copies of your documents.

Below is a list of locations featured in *Elite Wedding Collection* magazine and the specific nuptial formalities associated with each. Note that numerous resorts and hotels guide couples through the paperwork, so be sure to ask for the type of services available when you first contact your destination.

### North America Weddings

United States

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Apply with county clerk in the city of wedding.

**Identification needed:** Most states ask for photo ID or passport; some also require social security numbers and proof of divorce or death certificate, if applicable. You may be asked for a certified copy of your birth certificate.

**License waiting period:** Varies from state to state

**License fees:** From \$10-\$100

**Residency period:** Varies

**Witnesses needed:** Varies

Canada Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Apply together with the clerk in the city of wedding.

**Identification needed:** Most Canadian states ask for photo ID and a birth certificate, along with proof of divorce or death certificate, if applicable.

**License waiting period:** Varies from state to state

**License fees:** From US\$10

**Residency period:** Varies

**Witnesses needed:** Varies

### Caribbean Weddings

Antigua Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Couples apply at Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs in St. John's.

**Identification needed:** Passport or driver's license and birth certificate. Proof of divorce, death certificate or deed poll, if applicable.

**License waiting period:** None

**License fees:** From US \$150

**Residency period:** None

**Witnesses needed:** 2

#### Aruba Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** All documents must be sent to the Civil Hall one month prior to the ceremony.

**Identification needed:** Apostille documentation from country of citizenship verifying partners' single status. Valid passports and copies of pages showing relevant details. Copies of birth certificates with raised seals. Proof of divorce or death certificate, if applicable. Copies of passport pages of witnesses.

**License waiting period:** All documents to be submitted at least one month prior (by courier) to wedding date.

**License fees:** From US\$80

**Residency period:** None

**Witnesses needed:** 2

#### Bahamas Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Couples apply in person at the American Embassy, Nassau, or a Bahamas notary public.

**Identification needed:** Proof of arrival in the Bahamas. Passport or birth certificate and photo ID. Proof of single status by the U.S. Consul, proof of divorce or death certificate, if applicable.

**License waiting period:** 1 day

**License fees:** US\$100

**Residency period:** None

**Witnesses needed:** 2

#### British Virgin Islands Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Apply in person at the Attorney General's office in Tortola on the day of arrival.

**Identification needed:** Passport, birth certificate, proof of divorce or death certificate, if applicable.

**License waiting period:** 3 days

**License fees:** US\$110 in B.V.I. postage stamps if BVI resident for 1 day; US\$50 in BVI Postage Stamps if resident for 15 days or more.

**Residency period:** None

**Witnesses needed:** 2

#### Dominican Republic Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Send written request for permission to marry to the American Consulate in Santo Domingo.

**Identification needed:** Valid passports for the couple and any foreign witnesses. Affidavit stating marriage status. Original copies and photocopies of birth certificates, and adoption certificates, name deeds and decree absolute, if applicable. Original and photocopies of death certificates. First, middle and last names must show up identically on passport, affidavit declaration and birth certificate. Documents must be translated into Spanish by the Dominican Consulate or Embassy in the United States.

**License waiting period:** Varies

**License fees:** From US\$20

**Residency period:** None

**Witnesses needed:** 2 (non-family members with valid photo identification)

The Grenadines Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** File your application in person at the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

**Identification needed:** Passport, birth certificate and proof of divorce or death certificate, if applicable. All documents must be notarized, and in English.

**License waiting period:** 1 day

**License fees:** US\$190, plus US\$7.50 in stamp fees

**Residency period:** None

**Witnesses needed:** None

Jamaica Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Apply and receive a marriage certificate from the Ministry of National Security in Kingston.

**Identification needed:** Photo identification plus proof of citizenship (certified copy of birth certificate which includes father's name). Certified copy of death certificate or divorce decree, if applicable. Documented parental consent if either party is under 21.

**License waiting period:** 1 day

**License fees:** From US\$75

**Residency period:** 24 hours before ceremony

**Witnesses needed:** None

St. Lucia Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Apply with Attorney General through a local solicitor.

**Identification needed:** Passports, original birth certificates and proof of divorce, death certificate or deed poll, if applicable. Couples wishing to be married within the Catholic Church must have the couple's local parish priest liaise with a priest on the island.

**License waiting period:** 2 days for processing

**License fees:** From US\$195

**Residency period:** 4 days before applying

**Witnesses needed:** None

St. Martin Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Apply with civil registry at least 14 days prior to ceremony.

**Identification needed:** Birth certificate (or copy with raised seal). Certificate of good conduct (including certificate of single standing). Medical certificate issued within three months of event; a blood test is required. French translation of English documents.

**License waiting period:** See below

**License fees:** None

**Residency period:** One of partners must be a resident for 30 days (residency card is required), but many resorts help couples speed up procedures.

**Witnesses needed:** None

### Turks & Caicos Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Apply with registrar in Grand Turk.

**Identification needed:** Proof of single status (notarized copies of affidavit and proof of divorce or death certificate, if applicable). Birth certificate and photo ID.

**License waiting period:** 2-3 days to marry

**License fees:** US\$50

**Residency period:** 48 hours before applying

**Witnesses needed:** None

### U.S. Virgin Islands Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Send a letter requesting or call to request a marriage license to the Territorial court of the U.S. Virgin Islands in St. Thomas/St. John (340-774-6680) or St. Croix (340-778-9750) or download application at [www.usvitourism.vi](http://www.usvitourism.vi).

**Identification needed:** Proof of divorce.

**License waiting period:** 8 days (from receipt of notarized application. Couples need not be on-island).

**License fees:** US\$50

**Residency period:** Same as waiting period

**Witnesses needed:** None

## Mexico Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Apply with the Registro Civil in city of wedding.

**Identification needed:** Passport and birth certificate. A copy of tourist card or visa. Proof of divorce or death certificate, if applicable. Names, addresses, ages, nationalities & tourist card numbers of four witnesses. Blood tests are required and must be performed in Mexico.

**License waiting period:** 2-4 days

**License fees:** Around US\$200

**Residency period:** 2 days (no minimum stay for Cozumel)

**Witnesses needed:** 2 (18 or older)

For more information, go to [www.visitmexico.com](http://www.visitmexico.com).

## Hawaii Weddings & South Pacific Wedding

### Hawaii

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Apply with county clerk for a license valid throughout the State of Hawaii. To obtain your license application, please call the Hawaii County Department of Health at (808) 974-6008 and request a "Marriage License Packet." Or visit [www.hawaii.gov/doh/records/vr\\_marri.html](http://www.hawaii.gov/doh/records/vr_marri.html) for license application and information.

**Identification needed:** Couples must show proof of age with valid ID or driver's license. Proof of divorce or death certificate, if applicable.

**License waiting period:** None

**License fees:** \$60

**Residency period:** None

**Witnesses needed:** 1

## Fiji Weddings

**Obtaining a marriage license:** Couples apply at the Registry Office in Suva, Nadi or Lautoka. When marrying on Vanua Levu, registration must be in Savusavu and for the island of Taveuni or outer northeastern islands, register in Taveuni.

**Identification needed:** Original birth certificates and valid passports. If applicable, decree absolute with court stamp, death certificate of former spouse, adoption certificate and legally stamped deed poll; this also applies if a married woman has reverted back to her maiden name.

**License waiting period:** 1 working day

**License fees:** US\$11

**Residency period:** None

**Witnesses needed:** 2 (minimum 21 years old)