

What you need to know about a Registry Ceremony

Registry ceremonies are no longer officiated in registry offices but are conducted by registered independent marriage celebrants who are approved by Births, Deaths and Marriages.

The Terms & Conditions under which a registry ceremony can take place are outlined below. **If what you are asking for does not fit these criteria, you are required to book a personalised ceremony with your celebrant.** Please discuss your needs and the fee that will be charged for the service provided.

To apply for a registry marriage ceremony, go to marriages.services.govt.nz

View the Terms & Conditions and the script which is used, by [clicking here](#)

- Registry ceremonies must be held between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays and the Christmas/New Year holiday period.
- Registry ceremonies are standardised to meet the legal requirements for getting married.
 - The vows are also standardised.
- You should contact the registry celebrant before booking, to ensure they are available on your intended date of marriage. We recommend at least two weeks before your proposed date.
- You need to allow at least three working days for your marriage licence to be processed.
- You cannot book your ceremony more than three months in advance.
- There is a set fee for a registry ceremony.
 - You must pay it directly to your celebrant, in advance.
 - Registry celebrants are not permitted to charge you for travel or additional costs.
- The location for your ceremony must be within 10km of the registry celebrant of your choice.
 - Please discuss a suitable location with them.
 - You are responsible for arranging and paying for any location costs i.e. council fees if held in a park.
- You can have a maximum number of 10 guests at a registry ceremony, including your two witnesses.
 - You need to provide your two witnesses.
- A registry ceremony cannot be held in a wedding venue or function centre, such as a hotel or restaurant.
- Registry ceremonies take less than 20 minutes in total from the time booked for the ceremony. This includes saying the vows and signing the papers.
- You are required to provide photo identification prior to the ceremony taking place. The ceremony cannot proceed without this being checked.
- You cannot involve any parties other than the celebrant in a registry ceremony. This includes wedding planners, MCs, professional photographer or videographers. A registry ceremony does not include bridesmaids or groomsmen.

Cancellation and lateness policy

- You are expected to arrive on time. If you arrive late, you may need to rebook another time.
- The celebrant may retain their fee if you are more than 15 mins late.
- The celebrant can keep the fee if you (the couple) cancel as they have held date and time and invested preparation time into your ceremony.

Signing a Booking Form

Your registry celebrant may ask you to sign a booking form, which indicates you have read and agree to the Terms & Conditions of a registry ceremony as outlined.

Personalised ceremonies

If a registry ceremony does not meet your requirements, a personalised marriage ceremony may suit your needs better. An independent celebrant will work with you to deliver the ceremony you want, personalising it to your needs, culture and style.

You can have a personalised ceremony at a location of your choice. It can be held on any day of the week, including weekends and public holidays. It can be held at any time of day you wish. Celebrant fees and levels of service vary for personalised ceremonies. It's important to discuss these prior to engaging your celebrant.

Te reo Māori or English

There are te reo Māori and English versions of the registry marriage ceremony and vows.

Translations

You will need to provide an interpreter if the celebrant, couple and/or the witnesses do not all understand the same language. Before the ceremony starts, the interpreter should sign the **Declaration to translate a marriage or civil union ceremony**. This can be downloaded from the government website. The form needs to be signed by the celebrant.