

Clerk of the Circuit Court Loudoun County, Virginia

Gary M. Clemens, Clerk

P.O. Box 550, Leesburg, VA 20178

18 E. Market Street, Leesburg, VA 20176

703-771-5644 (Civil Division)

www.loudoun.gov/clerk

One-Time Ceremony Civil Celebrant Information

One-Time Civil Celebrant Appointment Process:

Individuals performing a one-time ceremony must be residents of Loudoun County and authorized by the Circuit Court pursuant to VA. Code 20-25. Individuals must file a petition with the Clerk requesting appointment as a civil celebrant. Petition forms are available from the Clerk's Office or on our website at <http://www.loudoun.gov/clerk>. Petitioner must sign the petition before a notary public or deputy clerk, and must supply at least two (2) letters of reference from Loudoun County citizens who can attest to the character, reputation and integrity of the petitioner before the Court will consider the petition for appointment. For example, a letter of recommendation from a local minister, a civic leader in the community or an elected official can be submitted for consideration. Please note that these petitions can take a couple weeks for approval or denial.

There is a \$56.00 filing fee for the petition, payable to the Clerk of Circuit Court. The court file containing the petition and the letters of reference will be provided to the Judge of the Circuit Court, who determines whether the individual is qualified to be appointed as a civil celebrant. Upon approval by the Judge, the Judge will enter a court order directing the appointment, and a certified copy of the order will be provided to the Petitioner.

Legal Requirements for Appointed Celebrants:

Once the certified copy of the court order is received by the Petitioner, he/she must post a \$500 bond prior to officiating the ceremony for the marriage to be legal. The bond can be posted in three ways: a cash bond that is deposited with the Clerk, a surety bond from a bonding company, or a property bond for real estate in Loudoun County in which the applicant has an equity interest of at least \$500. Any cash bond will be deposited and remain in the possession of the Clerk and refunded to the applicant after proof is presented that the marriage has taken place and the celebrant has returned the license to the appropriate Circuit Court Clerk's Office. The celebrant must submit a certified copy of the filed marriage

license to the Civil Division as proof of completion of their duties. Property or surety bonds posted by the celebrant will remain in full force and effect for the same period of time. If the petitioner is presenting a surety bond, it is the responsibility of the celebrant to pay the applicable premium required by the bonding company for the surety bond. The Clerk's Office and the Court are not responsible for paying the premium or confirming that the celebrant has paid the required premium to establish and maintain an active surety bond. According to the Code of Virginia, any individual officiating the rites of marriage without proper authorization by law to do so, could be confined in jail not to exceed one year and fined an amount not to exceed \$500. A celebrant's authority to perform marriage ceremonies extends throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Duties and Responsibilities for Performing the Rites of Marriage:

The spouses should deliver the marriage license to the celebrant performing the ceremony before the ceremony is conducted. The celebrant has the duty to confirm that the couple appearing to be married is indeed the spouses whose names appear on the marriage license. A celebrant shall certify the fact that the marriage occurred and return the completed license (Copies A and B) to the Clerk's Office where the couple applied for the license. The marriage certification may not be filed by anyone other than the celebrant. The spouses may not return the certification of marriage documents on behalf of the celebrant. The license is valid anywhere in the Commonwealth of Virginia, regardless of which Virginia Circuit Court issues the license.

Other Considerations:

When you speak with the couple prior to the ceremony, you should advise them that any Clerk of the Circuit Court in Virginia can issue the marriage license to the spouses upon their appearing together and completing the marriage license application. The marriage license is valid for sixty (60) days from the date of issuance by the Clerk, and the ceremony must take place in Virginia. After 60 days, the license is no longer valid and any ceremony that takes place will not be considered a legal marriage. The celebrant should inspect the license to confirm the license has not expired. If the license has expired, then the couple must return the expired license to the Clerk's Office and obtain a new marriage license from the Clerk.

In addition to providing the celebrant with the marriage license, the celebrant may also receive a blank one-page marriage certificate document from the spouses. The blank, pre-printed document is not a legal document and should not be returned to the Clerk's Office. Celebrants are not required to complete the blank marriage certificate form since this form is not a legal document, however, the celebrant, upon the request of the spouses, may complete it and provide this "unofficial" certificate to the spouses as a keepsake or remembrance of their special ceremony.

VIRGINIA:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF LOUDOUN COUNTY

IN RE: APPOINTMENT OF CIVIL CELEBRANT)
) **Civil No.** _____
_____)

PETITION

COMES NOW, the petitioner, _____, who moves this Court for appointment as a civil celebrant for the County of Loudoun, Commonwealth of Virginia to perform the rites of marriage consistent with the Code of Virginia.

Your petitioner respectfully requests appointment as a civil celebrant to perform the rites of marriage for one marriage ceremony, namely the marriage of:

_____ (Full name of Spouse)

_____ (Full name of Spouse)

Date of Marriage: _____

Location/Address of Marriage Ceremony: _____

Your Petitioner resides in the County of Loudoun, Virginia and sets forth the following information to substantiate Petitioner's residence:

_____ (Street Address)

_____ (Town and Zip Code)

_____ (Telephone Number)

_____ (Years Resided at Above Address)

Your Petitioner states and affirms under oath that the information provided in said Petition is accurate and truthful as of the date said Petition is filed with the Court.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

(SIGNATURE)

State/Commonwealth of _____

(PRINT NAME HERE)

COUNTY/CITY OF _____

Subscribed and sworn to before me by _____
on this ____ day of _____, 20__.

(NOTARY PUBLIC/DEPUTY CLERK)

My Commission Expires: _____
Notary Registration Number: _____