

Legal Requirements for Weddings in South Africa

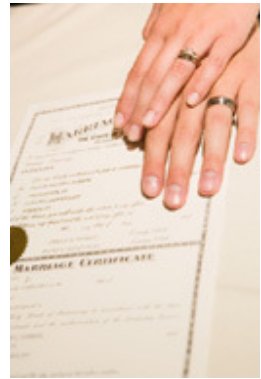
In South Africa, you will find a vast variety of venues in which to get married, from wine farms to majestic mountains, sun-soaked beaches to reverent places of worship. And, it's not difficult to get married here – all you really need is a Marriage Officer, a couple of witnesses and a person who wants to marry you!

Making sure that your marriage is legal is pretty straightforward. Marriage Officers are usually persons serving in one of the major religions in South Africa (Christian, Jewish or Moslem) and they are generally very helpful indeed, particularly when it comes to the legal details.

The Marriage Officer will require you to supply the following documents:

A) The couple are BOTH South African

- Clear copies of your Identity Documents
- Clear copies of Divorce Decrees (if applicable)
- Clear copies of Death Certificates (if applicable)
- Clear copies of Identity Documents of your 2 witnesses.



Issuing of the Marriage Certificate

The marriage officer will present you with your original Abridged Marriage Certificate immediately after the ceremony and the marriage officer will register your marriage with the South African Department of Home Affairs.

If you require an Unabridged Marriage Certificate, one can be obtained from the South African Department of Home Affairs and usually takes 6-8 weeks to obtain. Speak to your Marriage Officer as many will gladly apply for one when he/she registers your marriage.

B) Both parties NOT South African

- Clear copies of your valid Passports
- Clear copies of Divorce Decrees (if applicable)
- Clear copies of Death Certificates (if applicable)
- Clear copies of Passports of your 2 witnesses

Each party needs to complete an affidavit – “Declaration for the Purpose of Marriage” – called a BI-31, which you will complete in the presence of the Marriage Officer when

you arrive in South Africa. All Marriage Officers are Commissioner of Oaths and competent to complete this affidavit with you.

Issuing of the Marriage Certificate

An Abridged Marriage Certificate will be issued to you immediately after the ceremony. The Marriage Officer will register your marriage with the South African Department of Home Affairs and apply for your Unabridged Marriage Certificate, which you can use to register your marriage back in your home country. The Unabridged Marriage Certificate will be stamped "Apostille" by the High Court of South Africa. The issue of this certificate will take approximately 6-8 weeks. The Marriage Officer will then post this to your permanent home address.

C) One party is South African, the other party is NOT South African

- Clear copies of your valid Passports and Identity Document
- Clear copies of Divorce Decrees (if applicable)
- Clear copies of Death Certificates (if applicable)
- Clear copies of Passports or Identity Documents of your 2 witnesses

The Non-South African member needs to complete an affidavit – "Declaration for the Purpose of Marriage" – called a BI-31, which you will complete in the presence of the Marriage Officer when you arrive in South Africa. All Marriage Officers are Commissioner of Oaths and competent to complete this affidavit with you.

Issuing of the Marriage Certificates

An Abridged marriage certificate will be issued to you immediately after the ceremony. The Marriage Officer will register your marriage with the South African Department of Home Affairs and apply for your Unabridged Marriage Certificate, which you can use to register your marriage back in your home country. The Unabridged Marriage Certificate will be stamped "Apostille" by the High Court of South Africa. The issue of this certificate will take approximately 6-8 weeks. The Marriage Officer will then post this to your permanent home address.

Definition: APOSTILLE

Unabridged Marriage Certificates get stamped "Apostille" at the Cape Town High Court as authentication of certificate and issue.