

What you need to know about a Registry Ceremony

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, discussing 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

- Registry ceremonies are standardised to meet the legal requirements for getting married. The vows are also standardised.
- You cannot book your ceremony more than three months in advance. You need to allow at least three working days for your marriage licence to be processed.
- You should contact the registry celebrant at least 1 – 2 weeks in advance to discuss your intended date of marriage and preferred location.
- The location for your marriage must be within 10km of the registry celebrant of your choice.
- Registry ceremonies need to be held at a venue agreed to, with your celebrant. Please note, that many celebrants hold ceremonies in their own homes/office in the first instance. If living rurally, please ring your chosen celebrant and discuss a location with them. You are responsible for arranging and paying for the location. A registry ceremony cannot be held in a wedding or function centre, hotel or restaurant. Examples of acceptable venues are your home or a public council venue. Please note the 10km limit on travel mentioned above.
- There is a set fee for a registry ceremony. You must pay it in advance to your celebrant. Registry celebrants are not permitted to charge you for travel or additional costs.
- Registry ceremonies must be held between 8.30am and 5pm on a weekday, excluding public holidays and the Christmas/New Year holiday period.
- You are required to bring photo identification with you on the day. The ceremony cannot proceed without this being checked.
- You can have a maximum number of 10 guests at a registry ceremony, including your two witnesses.
- You cannot involve any parties other than the celebrant in a registry ceremony. This includes wedding planners, MCs, professional photographer, videographer, bridesmaids or groomsmen.
- 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 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 minutes late.
- 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 above.
- The celebrant can keep the fee if you cancel within 48 hours of your ceremony.

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 vows. If you would like to use the Māori version, you will need to discuss that with the celebrant when booking the ceremony. If the celebrant agrees, 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 govt.nz/registryceremonies. The form needs to be signed by the celebrant.