

Officiant

TIMELINE & CHECKLIST

Being asked to officiate is a huge honor, but the role of Wedding Officiant comes with great responsibility as well.

Whether you're performing your first ceremony or your fiftieth, officiating *a/ways* requires planning, organization, and consideration.

We're [American Marriage Ministries](#), and we're here to make sure that your ceremony is meaningful, memorable, and of course – stress free!

You'll want to save and/or print this checklist – it will help you get started and keep you on track! Just like every couple, each ceremony will be different, so feel free to make adjustments and add your own notes as needed.

We wish you the very best!

- Your Friends at American Marriage Ministries



FIRST THING'S FIRST

- Once you're [ordained](#), you'll need to review marriage laws and [registration policies](#) in the state where you'll be performing marriage.
- Consider ordering [Asked to Officiate](#) (our AMM-exclusive officiant guidebook) to get fully acquainted with your role and obligations as a wedding officiant.

Asked to Officiate



AT LEAST 9 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

(OR AS SOON AS THE DATE IS SET)

- Meet with the couple and begin your discussion about their ceremony expectations.
 - *Be sure to ask questions, [take detailed notes](#), and gather as much information about the wedding and the couple as possible. This will help shape the ceremony and hone in on the details that will make it unique to them.*

3-9 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- [Order your credentials or registration materials](#). Remember, regardless of where you live, you'll want to order your credentials for the state (and/or county) where the wedding ceremony will be taking place.
 - *If you're performing marriage in a state with registration requirements, allow enough time for your documents to arrive in the mail, and then additional time to submit them to your county clerk's office without worrying about rushing. If you're concerned about receiving your materials quickly, we recommend selecting Priority or Express Mail to ensure a timely arrival.*
 - *If you order your registration materials too early (more than a year in advance), the county clerk's office will likely request a newer set of documents – which means you'll have to place a new order for updated materials, and potentially delay your registration. However, if you order too late (less than a month before you need them), you risk not being able to register in time. Stick to our timeline and don't get caught in a bind!*



- Keep all of your credentials, important documents, notes, and ceremony scripts organized and in one place. (Need help? Check out our [Royal Officiant Folio!](#))



Royal Officiant Folio
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3-6 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- If you haven't yet begun, it's time to start drafting the ceremony script.
- Visit the [Wedding Training](#) section of our site to review the ceremony basics.
- Check in with the couple as needed to ensure you're all still on the same page (quite literally) with the desired ceremony components and expectations.
- If you're feeling a little overwhelmed and want a detailed crash-course on officiating, consult [Asked to Officiate](#) for step-by-step guidance on how to craft and deliver a thoughtful, memorable wedding ceremony with confidence!
- If you plan on gifting the couple with a [commemorative marriage certificate](#), place your order *now*.

3-4 WEEKS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Finalize the ceremony with the couple. Go over timing, any special details (like ceremony readings from other family or friends), and get their approval of the finished script you have created.

- Confirm that the couple already has or will pick up their marriage license.
- Practice, practice, practice the ceremony!
- Review articles on our [American Weddings](#) blog for tips on public speaking and helpful guidance from seasoned wedding pros.

DAY BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Attend the wedding rehearsal and practice the entire ceremony.
 - *Typically, this is when couples hold their wedding ceremony rehearsal. It's not always possible to be present, but it's strongly recommended. Some professional officiants will do the rehearsal for an additional fee. Most absolutely insist on attending the rehearsal, and simply include the fee in their pricing. **If you're officiating for friends or family, make sure they understand how important the rehearsal is.***
- Carefully review the information on the marriage license to ensure that the details are correct.
 - *Marriage license return policies vary across the country. Some important things to note are:*
 - *How soon the completed license must be returned after performing the ceremony*
 - *Where it must be returned to*
 - *Who is responsible for returning it (the couple or the officiant)*
 - *Whether it must be returned in-person or by mail*
- Check the weather forecast to plan ahead for attire changes, or potential logistical issues (traffic, sound system if outdoors, etc).

DAY OF THE WEDDING

- Bring several copies of the ceremony script - including a digital copy (emailed to yourself or saved on a mobile device) *and* printed paper copies.
- Perform the ceremony!
- [Complete the marriage license.](#)

- Celebrate and take photos with the couple to commemorate a job well done!

AFTER THE WEDDING

- Return and file the completed marriage license according to the instructions provided. If it's the couple's responsibility, make sure they follow through.
- Upload your photos and ceremony script to the [AMM Wedding Wall!](#)



Questions?

Email: info@theamm.org

Call: (206) 395-9164

*Our office hours are
Monday – Friday, 9AM – 5PM PST*

