

**MARRIAGE LICENCE REGISTRATION
POLICY AND GUIDELINES HANDBOOK**

FEBRUARY 2020

Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council

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MARRIAGE LICENCE REGISTRATION POLICY AND GUIDELINES

WESTERN ONTARIO WATERWAYS REGIONAL COUNCIL

UCC Marriage Licence Registration Policy for Regional Councils in Ontario

This marriage policy applies to all regional councils of The United Church of Canada within the Province of Ontario.

The Regional Council will name a “governing official” as defined by the Marriage Office, with all related responsibilities as outlined by the Province of Ontario.

Permanent licences

Those eligible to hold a permanent licence to conduct a wedding within the Province of Ontario are:

1. Ministry personnel in a covenanted relationship with a ministry recognized by a regional council of The United Church of Canada within the Province of Ontario.

Temporary licences

Those eligible to hold a temporary licence to conduct a wedding within the Province of Ontario are:

1. Ministry personnel in good standing who are not in an ongoing covenanted relationship with a ministry recognized by a regional council of The United Church of Canada.
2. Ministry personnel from other regional councils within The United Church of Canada who are in good standing and reside outside Ontario.
3. Ministry personnel from other communions which are recognized by the Canadian Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches.

UCC Marriage Licence Registration Procedures for Regional Councils in Ontario

All procedures will be consistent with the policies of the Marriage Office. These procedures are common to all regional councils of The United Church of Canada within the Province of Ontario.

Permanent Licences

1. All ministry personnel in a covenanted relationship with a community of faith will be authorized by the regional councils to apply for a marriage licence. There is no need to check the standing of each minister because they would not be called or appointed without a credentials check with the Office of Vocation.
2. A covenanted relationship for those not called or appointed to a community of faith will consist of a joint statement from the ministry personnel and a community of faith indicating a mutual agreement that conducting weddings is part of the duties of the ministry personnel. Ministry personnel will have a valid police records check in accordance with General Council policy and have completed any other training required by General Council policy, currently boundaries and racial justice training.
3. The regional council will periodically determine whether a covenanted relationship continues to exist between a ministry personnel and a community of faith.
4. All marriages shall be registered in a marriage register kept by a United Church of Canada community of faith or regional council recognized ministry.

Notes:

Re #1: This language does away with having to make special requests for non-ordained ministry personnel. If a minister is called or appointed, they get a marriage licence automatically as part of their ministry.

Re #2: This language eliminates the use of the term Voluntary Associate Minister, but does not preclude its use if a regional council wishes to use the term.

Information on the Voluntary Associate Minister Policy can be found on the WOWRC website:
<https://wowruc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/VAM-Policy-WOWRC-HR-Commission.pdf>

Temporary Licences

1. Ministry personnel without a permanent licence for conducting weddings will contact the marriage registration governing official requesting a temporary licence.
2. The governing official will confirm the ministry personnel's standing by checking the Office of Vocation Church Hub.
3. Ministry personnel requesting a temporary licence shall supply a letter of support from the ministry personnel serving the United Church of Canada community of faith in which the wedding is taking place.
4. For "off-site", non-church weddings, ministry personnel shall provide a letter from a United Church of Canada community of faith whose marriage register is being used to register the marriage.
5. All marriages shall be registered in a marriage register kept by a United Church of Canada community of faith or regional council recognized ministry.
6. Temporary licences for weddings to be conducted on the premises of other denominations shall be requested through the governing official of the other denomination.
7. The maximum number of temporary registrations to be authorized for any individual in any calendar year is three. Those wishing to conduct more than three weddings per calendar year will be required to enter into a covenanted relationship with a community of faith or regional council recognized ministry.

8. Ministry personnel applying for a temporary licence must have a valid police records check in accordance with General Council policy and have completed any other training required by General Council policy, currently boundaries and racial justice training.
9. Ministry personnel from another denomination applying for a temporary licence must have a police records check valid within the last six months.
10. Whatever personal record the officiant makes of the event, it must be entered into the marriage register of a congregation according to #4 or #5, above.
11. Ministry personnel of a denomination which is a member church of the Canadian Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches will provide a letter of standing from their denomination of accountability. The ministry personnel would be subject to #1 and #3-10 above.

Notes: Previous Conference policies/procedures have permitted retired Designated Lay Ministers to apply for temporary licences. Because the One Order of Ministry remit failed, DLMs who retire continue as lay people. Thus, they are not eligible to be licenced because they are not in an appointment.

WOWRC Marriage Licence Policy

Retired Members of the Order of Ministry

Retired members of the Order of Ministry, unless they are in appointment or have entered into a Voluntary Associate Minister relationship with a community of faith, will not hold an active licence to marry. The licence to marry will be cancelled as per the time frame below:

- Retired members of the Order of Ministry: four (4) months following the end of the pastoral relationship
- Retired members of the Order of Ministry on restorative care/long term disability when retirement is taken: six (6) months following the end of the pastoral relationship.

To enter into a VAM relationship, please refer to the VAM policy and appointment form posted on the WOWRC website under “Pastoral Relations Toolkits” <https://wowrucucc.ca/pastoral-relations-toolkits/>

Retired Designated Lay Ministers (DLM)

Designated Lay Ministers who retire and are not in a re-engaged retiree appointment are lay persons who no longer are eligible for a marriage licence under provincial legislation (*the Marriage Act*) and the agreement that the United Church in Canada has with the Ontario government.

Notes

The HR commission will inform the governing official of WOWRC of the following, so that the appropriate action can be taken:

- ***When a VAM appointment has been made.***
- ***When retirement commences.***
- ***When a retired member of the Order of Ministry is in an appointment.***
- ***When a retired member of the Order of Ministry begins an appointment.***
- ***When ministry personnel move to Ontario from another province, requiring the issuing of a permanent marriage licence registration.***

WOWRC Process for Requesting Marriage Licence Registration

Reactivation of a Permanent Marriage Licence Registration

Should a retired member of the Order of Ministry need to reactive their licence, the governing official will be contacted and the requisite marriage licence registration information and paperwork will be forwarded.

The information includes:

- A cover letter and a letter of authorization from the Governing Official of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council;
- An application form from the Office of the Registrar General of Ontario.

For the letter of authorization to be completed, the following information is required:

- The name, full mailing address and ministry affiliation (Appointment or VAM) of the applicant;
- Previous marriage licence registration number.

The applicant is required to complete the application form and send it, along with the letter of authorization and a photocopy of their ordination certificate or appointment form, directly to the Office of the Registrar General in Thunder Bay, ON (address will be provided).

Requesting a Temporary Marriage Licence Registration

Complete #1 and 2, and #3 or #4 (depending on where the wedding will be held) as outlined in the UCC Marriage Licence Registration Procedures (page 3). **Ministry Personnel from another denomination need to ensure completion of #1, #3 or 4, #9 and #11 as outlined in the UCC Marriage Licence Registration Procedures (page 3). Electronic correspondence is acceptable for #3, #4, and #11.

Once these steps are complete, the governing official will forward the requisite marriage licence registration information. The information includes:

- A cover letter and a letter of authorization from the Governing Official of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council;
- An application form from the Office of the Registrar General of Ontario.

For the letter of authorization to be completed, the following information is required:

- The ministry personnel's name, full mailing address and ministry affiliation (including address and regional council);
- Names of the couple being married;
- Date of the wedding;
- Location of the wedding (including full address).

The applicant is required to complete the application form and send it, along with the letter of authorization and a photocopy of their ordination certificate or call/ appointment form, directly to the Office of the Registrar General in Thunder Bay, ON (address will be provided).

Notes: The Marriage Office, Office of the Registrar General, is unable to accept faxed or photocopied applications and/or letters; they require original signatures. Both permanent and temporary marriage licence registrations take from 4 to 6 weeks to be processed by the Marriage Office.

Updating the Marriage Office

Clergy changes/updates can only be completed by the governing official. Information re: changes in name, contact information, moving out of province, desire to cancel an active licence to marry, needs to be provided to the governing official.