

Tying the Knot – How to Get Married in British Columbia

Want to get married? No problem. Any two adults, including any two men, or any two women, can get married in British Columbia, provided they are not related to each other.

Here is how.

You need a marriage licence, someone to perform the service, and two witnesses.

You do not need to be a Canadian, or a resident of British Columbia, to get married. You have to be over 19 (or have your parents' permission or a court order). And of course you cannot be married to anyone else.

In B.C. there are no preconditions to getting a marriage licence (e.g., no blood tests).

One of you must apply in person for a marriage licence. You will have to show identification, fill out a form, and pay the fee, which is \$100. In Vancouver licences can be had from the Vital Statistics Agency (2nd floor, 605 Robson Street) or at London Drugs at 665 West Broadway.

Marriages can be performed by marriage commissioners, by ministers of religion, and by judges. Our office canvassed the marriage commissioners to find out how they felt about performing marriages for lesbians or gay men. For a list of the

marriage commissioners we would recommend, based on their responses, see the end of this pamphlet. We are working on getting queer marriage commissioners.

Marriage commissioners are allowed to charge \$82.50 to do a marriage service. They can also charge for disbursements like a mileage allowance for travel, and fees for their time if you are having a rehearsal. Most report that though they can get booked up for popular times, if you are willing to be flexible they can accommodate you on very short notice. Marriage commissioners will perform your marriage wherever you choose: at your home, in a hotel, in a park. Most will also perform the ceremony at their home if you request them to, and if you don't have witnesses will provide them (but make sure to arrange that first). You can create your own service, or have them use the standard service. Many of the commissioners I had messages from clearly enjoy working with their clients to create a unique ceremony which is meaningful to the participants.

You take the marriage licence (filled out, of course) to the marriage commissioner. S/he will complete a Marriage Registration form and send it in to the Vital Statistics Registry. In due course, you will receive a Certificate of Marriage.

And that's it! You are married.

Your marriage will be recognized throughout Canada. It may or may not be recognized in other countries. For specific information about your situation, contact our office.