

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
OF
CIVIL MARRIAGES**

1. The couple to be married must separately obtain a license to be married. They must obtain the license **BEFORE** the ceremony is conducted. If they do not obtain and provide you with the license **DO NOT PERFORM THE CEREMONY!!!** The State of California requires the couple to purchase a marriage license prior to having the ceremony. If a ceremony is performed without a license, the couple will have to go to court and a judge will have to determine if it is a valid marriage. To save the couple from having to go through that, require that they show you the license before you perform the ceremony.

2. Item 25B on the license is the date the license to perform the wedding expires. (This is the date the license to perform the wedding expires, not the expiration of the ultimate marriage itself.) Check this date and make sure the ceremony is taking place on or before this date. If the date of the ceremony is after the expiration date, **DO NOT PERFORM THE CEREMONY!** The couple will need to get a new license to have the wedding performed.

3. No particular vows for the ceremony are required, but the parties need to declare that they take each other in marriage. A sample of a ceremony is enclosed in the packet for your consideration/modification. You are free to use any format for the ceremony that you and the couple agree to just as long as, at some point, they declare that they take each other in marriage/matrimony.

4. Confidential Marriage licenses (CML) do not require a witness. Public Marriage Licenses (PML) require at least one witness, but no more than two are allowed. The witness(es) to the ceremony complete Items 26 (A-C) and 27 (A-C), which include their full signature, legibly print of their names, street address (or PO Box), city, and a state of residence. Only one witness is required to sign. Up to one additional witness is optional.

5. After the ceremony, the Deputy Commissioner must complete the certification portion of the license, Items 28 (A-C) and 29 (A-E) on the PML or items 27 (A-C) and 28 (A-E) on the CML. The license must be returned to the County Clerk (in the county that issued the license) within 10 days of the ceremony. The Deputy Commissioner enters the month, day and year of the ceremony in Item 28A, ie: 01/02/2015 of the PML or Item 27A of the CML. This date must be on or after the issue date, and must be no later than the expiration date. Enter the name of the city (do not list the name of a landmark, beach, etc.) and county where the event took place. If the

ceremony is conducted at a remote site, the Deputy Commissioner must enter the name of the city that would provide postal service if there was a home or business located at that place.

6. The Deputy Commissioner must sign his/her full name in Item 29A of the PML or Item 28A of the CML. Only one name is allowed in this box.
7. Item 29B of PML or 28B of CML enter a single dash, ie: “-“ or “n/a”.
8. Print or type the name of the Deputy Commissioner in Item 29C of the PML or Item 28C of the CML. Only one name is allowed in this box.
9. Print or type the title Deputy Commissioner of Civil Marriages in Item 29D of the PML or Item 28D of the CML.
10. Enter the complete mailing address (include city, state, and zip code) of the Deputy Commissioner in Item 29E of the PML or Item 28E of the CML.
11. Once the Deputy Commissioner has completed Items 28-29 of the PML or Items 27-28 of the CML, the license must be mailed or brought back the county that issued the license (located in Item 25F of both the PML and CML) within 10 days of the ceremony.
12. If you have any questions, please call the County Clerk’s Office at 831-755-5450.