

GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING



MARRIAGE IN GREECE



GENERAL INFORMATION

As of July 18, 1982, according to Greek law, both civil and religious ceremonies may be performed in Greece (Greek Law No. 1250). This law also legalized all civil marriages previously performed abroad between a Greek and a foreigner, prior to this date. Before that date, only religious ceremonies were recognized in Greece.

Foreign nationals in Greece may get married either in a civil ceremony performed by a mayor, in a religious ceremony performed by a priest, or both. Although there is no residency requirement for foreign national wishing to marry in Greece, the bureaucratic procedure may take several weeks to complete before a marriage certificate may be obtained.

Marriage licenses can be obtained from one's current place of residence, prior to coming to Greece, and are generally accepted by the Greek authorities. This only applies, however, if neither the bride nor the groom is resident in Greece.

Valid American Marriage Licenses are accepted in Greece provided they do not contain restrictive statements, which may prohibit Greek municipality officials from honoring an otherwise valid American marriage license. If these statements cannot be removed, the license should be amended by the issuing authority to include GREECE as one of the places in which the marriage can take place. It is also recommended that the marriage license be endorsed with the APOSTILLE stamp in accordance with the 1961 Hague Convention. The APOSTILLE is a special authentication for documents to be used outside U.S.A. and can be obtained from your local State Secretary. In order to avoid any further delay, you may obtain a formal translation of the license into Greek from the nearest Greek Consulate in U.S.A. rather than doing it in Greece.

If one of the parties is not an American, the American should ascertain that complete information (i.e. full name, date/place of birth, parents' names etc.) about his/her bride/groom is contained in his/her marriage license to avoid difficulties in its being accepted in Greece.

NOTE: Foreigners should possess a residence permit if they permanently reside in Greece, or if the length of stay in Greece exceeds the 3-month residence permit free period.

The following documents are required for all marriage ceremonies performed in Greece, which involve foreigners:

- ☞ A passport or other travel document.

- ☞ A certified copy of birth certificate, along with an official translation. An official translation can be obtained by an official translator or a Greek attorney. Please note that the birth certificate should have the APOSTILLE stamp which is obtained by the Local State Secretary in USA.
- ☞ If applicable, documentary evidence of the termination of a previous marriage, along with an official translation, i.e. final divorce decree, death certificate, etc., with APOSTILLE stamp and official translation.
- ☞ Affidavit (both in Greek and English) signed under oath by the American and notarized at the American Consulate General that there is no impediment to the marriage—Affidavit for Marriage form. (The fee is \$30 and is done at this Consulate on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 0900-1200).
- ☞ For minors under 18, a court decision approving the marriage is required.
- ☞ A copy of the newspaper in which the wedding notice was published. Please note that it is obligatory to publish it in one of the local newspapers in the Greek language before an application for a marriage license is submitted. (In small towns where newspapers are not published, notices are posted by the mayor or president of the community at the City Hall or Community Office.)

Following the ceremony, the marriage must be registered at the local Registrar's Office (LIXIARCHIO). You may obtain a copy of your marriage certificate from this office (LIXIARCHIKI PRAXI GAMOU). For use in the U.S., you should stamp it with the APOSTILLE stamp obtained at the local Prefecture office (NOMARHIA).

CIVIL MARRIAGES

The above mentioned documents should be taken in person to the City Hall (DIMARCHIO) or the President of the Community (PROEDROS KINOTITOS) where the applicant resides, in order to obtain a marriage license. If both parties are foreign nationals, each must submit a set of the documents. The marriage license is issued 7 days after the submission of the application and is good for 6 months.

Upon issuance of the marriage license, the parties must jointly submit another application to the Mayor or President of the Community where they will marry. This official then sets the date for the wedding ceremony. Two witnesses who are provided by the couple must attend the ceremony. The witnesses should have an identity card or passport with them.

RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES

CHRISTIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The above mentioned documents should be taken in person to the priest of the church where the ceremony is going to be performed and apply for and obtain the marriage license from the appropriate official. A waiting period is mandatory after the priest receives these documents. It should be noted that the Greek law does not provide for the religious marriage of a Christian to a non-Christian.

Each denomination has specific requirements for performing a marriage. It is advisable to check with the appropriate church before applying.

PROTESTANT CHURCH

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Both parties must show evidence of the Christian faith and baptism
2. The couple must meet with the Pastor for a series of premarital counseling sessions, or must have a letter from their Pastor declaring that the counseling has been received.
3. The couple is responsible for making arrangements to have flowers in the church and/or the services of an organist.
4. One of the parties must be a Protestant, and neither can be of the Greek Orthodox faith.
5. Two witnesses must be available to attend the wedding ceremony.

More detailed information should be received from the appropriate Protestant Church.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

REQUIREMENTS:

- A. Each party must present the following certificates:
 1. Baptism (from the church where performed)
 2. Confirmation
 3. Freedom to Marry
- B. Banns need not be posted in the case of nonresidents of Greece.
- C. Special dispensation is required in the case of mixed marriages. The non-Catholic party must obtain certificate of birth, baptism, and freedom to marry from his/her church. Divorce is not recognized.

More detailed information should be received from the appropriate Roman Catholic Church.

JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

REQUIREMENTS:

1. A certificate of freedom to marry, issued by the senior Rabbiate of the area of residence.
2. A Jewish marriage ceremony may be performed only if both parties are of the Jewish faith.

More detailed information should be received from the appropriate Jewish Synagogue.

BOTH CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE

Two sets of the above documents are required if you desire to have both civil and religious ceremony. One set is for the town hall and the other for the priest.

REGISTRATION OF THE MARRIAGE

Marriages of U.S. citizens in Greece are not registered at the American Consulate General, but have to be registered at the Registrar's Office (Vital Statistics Office) (LIXIARCHIO) of the city where the marriage was performed. This applies to both civil and religious marriages, and it must be done within 40 days from the date of marriage. After 40 days and up to 90 days the marriage can only be registered with the payment of revenue stamps. After 90 days, the marriage can only be registered with the District Attorney's authorization and the payment of revenue stamps. Marriages that are not registered have NO legal validity. Marriages can be registered by either spouse, or by a third party who is in possession of a power-of-attorney signed before a Greek Notary Public giving him/her authority to take all steps necessary to register the marriage.

NOTE: It is recommended that the marriage certificate be endorsed with the APOSTILLE Stamp in accordance with the 1961 Hague Convention. This is a special authentication for documents to be used in the U.S. and can be obtained from the Nomarchy (Prefecture) of the city where the marriage was performed. Also, U.S. documents for use in Greece should bear this stamp, obtained from your Local State Secretary.

LEGAL CONCERNS

1. Either marriage, civil or religious, is a fully recognized marriage. It is not necessary to perform both marriages.
2. According to U.S. Statutes, marriages performed abroad which are valid under the laws of that country are generally accepted as valid by any U.S. State.
3. Marriages in Greece not registered at the Registrar's Office (Lixiarchio) have NO legal validity.
4. According to the Greek Nationality Law, as amended on May 8, 1984, marriage does not result in the acquisition or loss of Greek nationality.
5. As mentioned above, if you want to legalize your marriage certificate, obtain the APOSTILLE stamp. A translation into English can be done either by the Greek Consulate in the U.S., or you can do it in Greece by an official translator, or attorney. In order to certify the translation at this Consulate, the translator has to appear in person, sign an affidavit, and you have to pay the notarial fee of \$30, either in \$ or €, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 0900-1200.

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,
THESSALONIKI – NOVEMBER 2002-nd

REPUBLIC OF GREECE)
 PROVINCE OF THESSALONIKI)
 CITY OF THESSALONIKI) SS:
 CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE)
 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)



AFFIDAVIT FOR MARRIAGE

Before me, _____, in and for the Consular District of Thessaloniki, Greece, duly commissioned and qualified, personally appeared _____, American citizen, who being first duly sworn, deposes and says as follows:

PERSONAL DATA

	AMERICAN'S	INTENDING SPOUSE'S
NAME:		
DATE OF BIRTH:		
PLACE OF BIRTH:		
FATHER'S NAME:		
MOTHER'S NAME: (INCLUDING MAIDEN)		
OCCUPATION:		
RELIGION:		
PASSPORT/ID NO.:		
DATE OF MARRIAGE:		
PLACE OF MARRIAGE:		
U.S. ADDRESS:		
ADDRESS IN GREECE:		

- (1) I was never married.
- (2) I was last married on _____,
 at _____,
 to _____,
 born on _____ at _____.
 Marriage was terminated by _____,
 on _____ at _____.
 This was my _____ marriage.

I further declare that I now have no marital ties and I am free to contract marriage with _____.

 (signature)

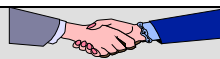
CERTIFICATION

This sworn statement would be sufficient for the deponent to contract marriage in the United States of America, and thus there is no reason to believe that there is any impediment to the deponent's marriage to

_____.
 Subscribed and sworn to before me, this _____ day of _____.



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
ΕΠΑΡΧΙΑ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ
ΝΟΜΟΣ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ
ΓΕΝΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΞΕΝΕΙΟ ΗΝΩΜΕΝΩΝ
ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΩΝ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ



ΕΝΟΡΚΗ ΔΗΛΩΣΗ ΓΑΜΟΥ

Ενώπιόν μου _____ του Γενικού Προξένου/Προξένου στην Προξενική Περιφέρεια Θεσσαλονίκης, δόντως νενομισμένου και εξουσιοδοτημένου, παρουσιάστηκε προσωπικά ο/η _____, υπήκοος των Η.Π.Α., και αφού πήρε τον νενομισμένο όρκο, κατέθεσε και δήλωσε τα παρακάτω:

ΠΡΟΣΩΠΙΚΑ ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ

	ΑΜΕΡΙΚΑΝΟΥ/ΙΔΑΣ	ΜΕΛΛ. ΣΥΖΥΓΟΥ
ΟΝΟΜΑ		
ΗΜΕΡΟΜΗΝΙΑ ΓΕΝΝΗΣΗΣ		
ΤΟΠΟΣ ΓΕΝΝΗΣΗΣ		
ΟΝΟΜΑ ΠΑΤΕΡΑ		
ΟΝΟΜΑ ΜΗΤΕΡΑΣ (ΜΕ ΠΑΤΡΙΚΟ)		
ΕΠΑΓΓΕΛΜΑ		
ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΜΑ		
ΑΡΙΘ. ΔΙΑΒΑΤΗΡΙΟΥ		
ΑΡΙΘ. ΤΑΥΤΟΤΗΤΑΣ		

ΗΜΕΡΟΜΗΝΙΑ ΤΕΛΕΣΗΣ ΓΑΜΟΥ
ΤΟΠΟΣ ΤΕΛΕΣΗΣ ΓΑΜΟΥ
ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΣΗ Η.Π.Α.
ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΣΗ ΕΛΛΑΔΑΣ

1. ΔΕΝ ΠΑΝΤΡΕΥΤΗΚΑ ΠΟΤΕ.
 2. ΕΙΧΑ ΠΑΝΤΡΕΥΤΕΙ ΤΟΝ/ΤΗΝ _____,
ΣΤΙΣ _____, ΠΟΥ ΓΕΝΝΗΘΗΚΕ ΣΤΙΣ _____,
ΣΤΗ _____. Ο ΓΑΜΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΣ ΔΙΑΛΥΘΗΚΕ ΜΕ _____,
ΣΤΙΣ _____, ΣΤΗ _____.
ΑΥΤΟΣ ΗΤΑΝ Ο _____ ΓΑΜΟΣ ΜΟΥ.

ΔΗΛΩΝΩ ΟΤΙ ΔΕΝ ΕΧΩ ΠΙΑ ΔΕΣΜΟ ΓΑΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΜΑΙ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΣ/ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΗ ΝΑ ΣΥΝΑΨΩ ΓΑΜΟ ΜΕ ΤΟΝ/ΤΗΝ _____.

(ΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΗ)

ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗ

Η παρούσα ένορκη δήλωση για τη σύναψη γάμου του/της _____, είναι αρκετή για τη σύναψη γάμου στις Η.Π.Α. και επομένως δεν υπάρχει ένδειξη κωλύματος για τον προτιθέμενο γάμο του/της με τον/την _____.

Ορκίστηκε και υπέγραψε ενώπιόν μου στις _____ του μήνα _____ του έτους _____.

MARRIAGE OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS ABROAD

Who May Perform Marriages Abroad

American diplomatic and consular officers are NOT permitted to perform marriages (Title 22, Code of Federal Regulations 52.1). Marriages abroad are almost always performed by local (foreign) civil or religious officials.

As a rule, marriages are not performed on the premises of an American embassy or consulate. The validity of marriages abroad is not dependent upon the presence of an American diplomatic or consular officer, but upon adherence to the laws of the country where the marriage is performed. Consular officers may authenticate foreign marriage documents. The fee for authentication of a document is \$32.00.

Validity of Marriages Abroad

In general, marriages which are legally performed and valid abroad are also legally valid in the United States. Inquiries regarding the validity of a marriage abroad should be directed to the attorney general of the state in the United States where the parties to the marriage live.

Foreign Laws and Procedures

The embassy or tourist information bureau of the country in which the marriage is to be performed is the best source of information about marriage in that country. Some general information on marriage in a limited number of countries can be obtained from Overseas Citizens Services, Room 4811, Department of State, Washington, DC 20520. In addition, American embassies and consulates abroad frequently have information about marriage in the country in which they are located.

Residence Requirements

Marriages abroad are subject to the residency requirements of the country in which the marriage is to be performed. There is almost always a lengthy waiting period.

Documentation and Authentication

Most countries require that a valid U.S. passport be presented. In addition, birth certificates, divorce decrees, and death certificates are frequently required. Some countries require that the documents presented to the marriage registrar first be authenticated in the United States by a consular official of that country. This process can be time consuming and expensive.

Parental Consent

The age of majority for marriage varies from one country to another. Persons under the age of 18 must, as a general rule, present a written statement of consent executed by their parents before a notary public. Some countries require the parental consent statement to be authenticated by a consular official of that foreign country in the United States.

Affidavit of Eligibility to Marry

All civil law countries require proof of legal capacity to enter into a marriage contract in the form of certification by competent authority that no impediment exists to the marriage. No such document exists in the United States. Unless the foreign authorities will allow such a statement to be executed before one of their consular officials in the United States, it will be necessary for the parties to a prospective marriage abroad to execute an affidavit at the American embassy or consulate in the country in which the marriage will occur stating that they are free to marry. This is called an affidavit of eligibility to marry and the fee for the American consular officer's certification of the affidavit is \$30.00, subject to change. Some countries also require witnesses who will execute affidavits to the effect that the parties are free to marry.

Additional Requirements

Many countries, like the United States, require blood tests.

Some countries require that documents presented to the marriage registrar be translated into the native language of that country.

Loss of U.S. Nationality

In some countries, marriage to a national of that country will automatically make the spouse either a citizen of that country or eligible to become naturalized in that country expeditiously. The automatic acquisition of a second nationality will not affect U.S. citizenship. However, naturalization in a foreign country on one's own application or the application of a duly authorized agent may cause the loss of American citizenship. Persons planning to apply for a foreign nationality should contact an American embassy or consulate for further information.

Marriage to an Alien

Information on obtaining a visa for a foreign spouse may be obtained from any office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. embassies and consulates abroad, or the Department of State Visa Office, Washington, DC 20520-0113. General information regarding visas may be obtained by calling the Visa Office on 202-663-1225.