

DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

Applicants are advised that persons who have been ordained over the Internet may not be persons permitted to perform marriages in Pennsylvania. A recent Court decision held that persons ordained over the Internet are not ministers as defined in the marriage law of Pennsylvania IF they do not regularly preach to a congregation that regularly meets at a place of worship. You are advised to consult an attorney concerning the legality of such marriages.

This office will not determine what is/is not a church and/or congregation.

PLEASE BE ADVISED: IF you choose to be married by someone other than the officiants specifically listed as authorized by PA law, the burden of proof will be on you regarding the legality of your marriage – should future issues arise that require a determination of the marriage's validity.

To be recognized as legal by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, marriages must be performed under a valid marriage license duly issued by a Clerk of Orphans' Court & **MUST BE OFFICIATED** by one of the following individuals specifically recognized under PA law as authorized to officiate, to wit:

§ 1503. Persons qualified to solemnize marriages.

(a) General rule.—The following are authorized to solemnize marriages between persons that produce a marriage license issued under this part:

1. A justice, judge or district justice of this Commonwealth.
2. A former or retired justice, judge or district justice of this Commonwealth who is serving as a senior judge or senior district justice as provided or prescribed by law.
3. An active or senior judge or full-time magistrate of the District Courts of the United States for the Eastern, Middle or Western District of Pennsylvania.
4. An active or senior judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit who is a resident of this Commonwealth.
5. A mayor of any city or borough of this Commonwealth.
6. A minister, priest or rabbi of any regularly established church or congregation.

(b) Religious organizations.—Every religious society, religious institution or religious organization in this Commonwealth may join persons together in marriage when at least one of the persons is a member of the society, institution or organization, according to the rules and customs of the society, institution or organization.

(c) Marriage license needed to officiate.—No person or religious organization qualified to perform marriages shall officiate at a marriage ceremony without the parties having obtained a marriage license issued under this part.

Effective 01/01/05

Common Law marriage is no longer valid in Pennsylvania