

Dear pastors,

I hope this email finds you well. I'm emailing you today with an important notice from the Ontario Marriage Office. They wish all marriage officiants to be made aware of the following information. Please read this carefully, especially if you are working with couples who have needed to adjust wedding plans due to COVID-19.

The Ministry of Government and Consumer Services is aware that many couples have had to postpone their wedding due to the COVID-19 outbreak. In response to concerns raised regarding the three-month validity period of marriage licences, they made amendments to Ontario's Marriage Act (Act) and Regulation 738 of the Act to assist couples in this situation. Amendments to the Act have been made to extend the three-month validity period for any unused marriage licences purchased between December 1, 2019, and the termination date of the province-wide declaration of emergency made on March 17, 2020. Such licences are now valid from the date of issuance up to 24 months from the first day following the end of the province-wide emergency. This does not include licences where there has been a change to critical information on the licence since the date it was issued, (i.e., either of the parties to the proposed marriage has changed their name, the marital status of either of the parties has changed).

They encourage you as the officiant to examine the licence prior to solemnizing the marriage to ensure the information on the licence is accurate and the licence is valid.

Note: Any licences issued after the end of the province-wide emergency must be used within the three-months following issuance of the licence.

If critical information on these licences is no longer accurate or the original unused licence is unavailable (e.g., lost or destroyed), couples will be able to replace it without having to pay the provincial fee of \$75. Please note that municipalities may charge their own administrative fees to issue replacement licences. Couples should be advised that, if a new licence is required, they should seek a replacement only within three months of their rescheduled wedding.

More detailed information is in the letter sent to our office is attached for your reference. Further information can also be found on the ServiceOntario website: [ServiceOntario.ca/GettingMarried](https://www.serviceontario.ca/GettingMarried).

Sheryl