



Procedures for Obtaining a Marriage License In Fajardo, Puerto Rico

Prior to your arrival to Puerto Rico, the bride and groom must make sure to bring with you both of your birth certificates, social security cards and a valid photo identification. The id's can be either passport or driver's license. The names on your photo ID's must be the same as the name on your birth certificate.

- Brides – please fill out all forms using your maiden name, even when signing the marriage license. In Puerto Rico you are always referred to by your maiden name.

If either of you have been previously married, the divorce decree should also be brought with you. This information is required by the government agency and must be provided if you are going to be legally married in Puerto Rico.

Once you arrive to Puerto Rico:

The couple will need to go to the Demographic Registry at the **Fajardo Department of Vital Statistics** located in the town of Fajardo. The office hours are from 8:00am to 11:30am and from 1:00pm - 3:30pm Monday - Friday. On Saturday all offices are closed for the exception of the San Juan main office. The San Juan main office is only opened until 12 Noon.

The following are the documents required by every couple and you must bring with you to get legally married in Puerto Rico:

- a) Original birth certificates
- b) Original Social security cards
- c) If previously married/divorces, copies of divorce(s) decree(s)
- d) If either or both have children, the children's birth certificates
- e) If either of both have children, it is required to fill out the address where the children currently live on the bridal information form that will be provided by the Catering Manager, as well as the city and county and state where they were born if locations are different.

The hotel Catering Manager or Concierge will assist in arranging the taxi service to take you to get everything done. The payment is required in cash and is the responsibility of the bride and groom. The bride and groom must both be present and do everything together. The price of the taxi is \$125.00 and up.

The Catering Manager will email to the bride and groom the bridal information form and the authorization letter for the pastor. The bridal information is the forms the bride and groom must fill out and return to the Catering Manager. These forms are given to the pastor on the day of your wedding along with a copy of your photo id's and the legal paperwork from the demographic office.

The bride and groom will be accompanied by the taxi driver for 3 to 5 hours depending on how long it takes to get the results of the blood test. The best time to go is first thing in the morning – 7:30 am! It is recommended that the bride and groom (if coming from the states) use the services of the taxi to transfer you to handle this paperwork. If you are not familiar with driving in Puerto Rico, running around in the town of Fajardo to get this done can be very confusing. It is always best to sit back and relax and allow the taxi driver who will accompany you at each stop to assist in translation and ensure you both get everything done for your legal work to be accepted by the pastor.

Directions to Demographics Office:

Travel time : 15-20 minutes (about 7 - 8 traffic lights)

1. Upon leaving Rio Mar Beach Resort & Spa and reaching the bottom of the hill at the traffic light, make a left turn going east towards Fajardo. Stay on Route 3 (Landmark: pass kiosk & Luquillo Beach on left side of road) until you reach *Avenida El Conquistador (10 miles)*.

Make a left turn onto El Conquistador Avenue proceed to second traffic light - make a right turn (landmark once you make the turn: a school at your right) next crossroad go left. Look for a bone white and green building. Fourth door on right hand side sign will read "REGISTRO DEMOGRAFICO" (*Department of Vital Statistics*).

Enter this office and ask for a Marriage Certificate (*Certificado de Matrimonio*) and a Doctor's Certificate (*Certificación Médica para Contraer Matrimonio*).

2. The couple must purchase (2) Stamps from the Internal Revenue Office (*Colecturia*) which is located in the center of town. One stamp in the amount of \$20.00 and the other for \$5.00. The \$20.00 stamp is the initial fee to process the marriage license and the \$5.00 stamp is for the minister/judge to return all original documentation to the demographics office once he performs wedding ceremony in order to request marriage license for the couple.

In order for the minister/judge to be able to pick up valid license from the Registro Demográfico the couple must authorize the minister/judge to do so on a formal letter to the Registro Demográfico. Without a valid release authorization, the marriage license will not be released to the pastor.

3. Once you purchase the \$20.00 and \$5.00 stamp you must go to a doctor's office to get a VDRL Blood Test Order or, if the blood test results are ready, to get the Doctor's Certificate (*Certificación Médica para contraer Matrimonio*).

4. You then must return to the Registro Demográfico with the VDRL or RPR blood test results, the Doctor's Certificate, a Valid Picture I.D. along with social security card (i.e.: valid driver's license or passport that is NOT EXPIRED and the social security card is a must). If either of you have been previously married a copy of the divorce decree for each time you have been divorced are required or if deceased spouse then a copy of death certificate is required.

5. The marriage ceremony must take place within ten (10) days after the marriage license has been issued.
6. The couple will present the marriage license and marriage certificate along with all other copies of birth certificate, divorce papers, death certificates, valid identification in the form of a drivers' license and or a valid passport, and the \$5.00 stamp from the Colecturia's office to the minister/judge before he performs the actual wedding ceremony.
7. The minister/judge will require the signature of the bride and groom as well as the two (2) witnesses on the forms. The bride must sign the document with her maiden name as it is in the birth certificate. The witnesses must clearly sign their names on the documents and both must be over 18 years of age.
8. The minister/judge then takes all pertinent legal documents to the demographics office for processing. In about 2 to 3 weeks time the officiate returns to the demographic office to pick up the actual valid Marriage Certificate and forwards to the bride/groom via mail.
9. When indicating the address on the forms, please fill out the full address with street number, county, city and state and zip code. Please fill out all forms in print. Sign clearly wherever signature is requested.

Once everything is completed, you should stop by the Catering Manager's office to review all of the documents and make copies of all documents (the photo id's, birth certificate, social security card and if either of you have been previously married copies of the divorce decree. If either or both of you have children, the children's birth certificates.

The minister/judge assigned to officiate your wedding will review the information together with you. They will require the authorization letter which is also sent to you in advance by the Catering Manager to be filled out if they are going to be able to pick up the license. The officiate will be able to get the official marriage license 2 to 3 weeks after your ceremony.

The officiate is reserved for you by the Catering Manager and confirmed for you to call and speak with him or her at least 1 month prior to your wedding day to discuss your ceremony. Some officiates will set up a pre-wedding meeting if coordinated in advance, but they may charge a little extra. The pastor fee in the package is paid in cash to the pastor directly at the ceremony.

On the day of the ceremony, at the time of signing the license it is extremely important that everyone sign their names clearly. Everyone means the bride and groom and your two witnesses. Your witnesses must be 18 years or older. If you are having an intimate wedding for 2, the catering manager and the photographer or other staff member will act as your witnesses. The officiate cannot sign as a witness.

If anyone signing their name does not sign clearly, their names should be written in legible print on a separate paper or on the envelope and given to the pastor. Since this is a legal document, if there is anything that is not clearly understandable, or the bridal forms and authorization forms are not filled out correctly or are missing any information, it will delay the mailing of your marriage license.

It is important that at the end of your ceremony, the bride and groom ensure, with the officiate, that all of the forms are in order, and prior to your departure from Puerto Rico that all documents were submitted to the demographic office without any inconveniences. If there is any discrepancy on any of the forms, the demographic office will not accept them from the officiate. The officiate must then be in direct contact with the bride and groom to clarify any doubts or questions for the release of the marriage license.

The slightest delay in a response from the bride and groom to the officiate can result in several weeks or even a month or more delay in receiving the official marriage license.

Some couples who prefer not to have to take blood test, and wish to avoid the legal process here, opt to legally get married back home in your local city office with a justice of the peace, and then have the wedding ceremony held here more as a symbolic gesture. The officiate here holds the sentimental aspect of the service for your family and friends. Only the officiate and your catering manager will know the truth should you prefer to keep it a secret from your families.

Please note, the Rio Mar Beach Resort & Spa is not responsible for any aspect of the legal requirements for obtaining the marriage license. **All of the fees indicated in this document are as of 2008 and are subject to change at any moment without notice; other fess may apply. The Rio Mar Beach Resort & Spa is not responsible for any increases in prices in obtaining the marriage license as required by any of the government or medical offices noted.**

The Rio Mar Beach Resort & Spa will not be held accountable for any charges or fees encountered by the bride and groom due to any delay in receiving the official marriage license. The charges for the license cannot be posted to your hotel account. All transactions with the government agencies, doctors and blood work, taxi driver and official stamps that are to be purchased are to be paid in cash by the bride and groom.

Please contact the Catering Office should you have any questions.