

Duties of the Responsible Person at an Approved Venue

1. At the time of booking

The Responsible Person (or their deputy) will:

- Ensure the couple understand that they must contact Hampshire Registration Service immediately in order to confirm that registration staff are available on the date and time they have chosen.
No venue booking should be confirmed until this has been done.
- Ensure that the couple are aware that a marriage or civil partnership cannot take place until the legal Notice of Marriage or Civil Partnership has been given. This must be done not more than 12 months and not less than 16 days before the date of the ceremony.

2. In the lead up to the wedding/civil partnership

Ensure that all enquiries by the couple are directed to the correct Ceremony Co-Ordination (CerCo) Team (see below). Such enquiries may include:

- Content of the ceremony, i.e. readings, music, extra words, etc. Ceremonies to be held after the legal ceremony, e.g. renewal of vows, naming, etc.
- Unusual requests, e.g., having an owl or a dog to deliver the rings, sand ceremonies, candle lighting, breaking of glasses or ring warming.
- Any form of unusual decorations in the room, i.e. structures, statues, etc.
- Garden ceremonies
- Registration fees
- All other registration related matters

3. Registration Contacts

Mid Hampshire – including Winchester, Alton and Eastleigh venues

E-mail; ceremonies.midhants@hants.gov.uk

Telephone; 01962 845756

North Hampshire – including Basingstoke, Aldershot and Andover venues

E-mail; ceremonies.northhants@hants.gov.uk

Telephone; 01252 317152

South Hampshire – including Fareham, Petersfield, New Forest and Romsey venues

E-mail; ceremonies.southhants@hants.gov.uk

Telephone; 01329 289195

It is important that couples contact the Ceremony Co-Ordination (CerCo) Team responsible for the area in which their ceremony is to take place. The law governing marriage and civil partnership is complex and it is therefore important that venues do not attempt to answer any questions about registration matters, including the content of the ceremony.

It is essential that the Responsible Person (or their deputy) is aware of the points highlighted below:

- It is vital that the couple are on time for their ceremony. Registration staff will almost always have several ceremonies to attend and if couples are very late, their ceremony may have to be re-scheduled.
- Couples will need to be advised to expect a pre-ceremony interview immediately prior to the ceremony taking place. The groom/1st partner is usually seen half an hour before the ceremony and the bride/2nd partner approximately 10 minutes before the ceremony. Sometimes couples elect to be interviewed together, in which case they are seen together 15 minutes before the ceremony. They must be ready for these interviews and they must take place in an appropriate room designated for this purpose as agreed as part of the licence approval e.g. not in their bedroom or in the back of the wedding car.
- The Responsible Person should make couples aware of the maximum capacity of the ceremony room (to include the couple, the registration staff, the photographer and any musicians or singers) and told that if the capacity is exceeded, any extra guests will have to stand outside the room.
- The Responsible Person should liaise with their Ceremony Co-ordination (CerCo) Team over all matters relating to and affecting civil ceremonies taking place in the approved premises.
- The ceremony itself must take place in the room which was identified as one to be used for that purpose on the plan submitted with the approved application and licence issued.
- The approved premises must be made available at all reasonable times for inspection by Hampshire County Council (HCC).

4. On the day of the ceremony

The Responsible Person must be available at the venue at least an hour before the ceremony to:

- Open up the building (if applicable), ensure that the room is correctly laid out to meet the minimum requirements of one table (of sufficient size to accommodate the register) and four chairs. Any surplus furniture should be removed. The interview room will require one table and four chairs.
- Be ready to greet the couple and their guests.
- If the Responsible Person is not available, then a deputy must be appointed to act in his/her absence.
- Ensure that no food or drink is served in the ceremony room or free standing structure for at least an hour before the ceremony. No food or drink is to be served or consumed in the ceremony room (this does not include babies' bottles or water). There is no restriction on food or drink being consumed immediately the ceremony is finished.
- Make sure that the current licence is on display, as appropriate, at each public entrance to the premises. Failure to comply will result in staff being unable to proceed with the ceremony.
- Ensure the provision of a sign(s) on prominent display at each public entrance to the premises for one hour prior to and throughout the proceedings indicating that a Civil Ceremony is to take place and in which room.
- Supply a carafe of water, four glasses and a box of tissues on the table in both the ceremony and interview rooms.
- Ensure there are two clearly identifiable parking spaces for the registration staff close to the entrance for 1 hour before the ceremony. Also to greet the registration staff on arrival and direct them to the interview and ceremony rooms

- The Registrars will arrive at least half an hour before the ceremony start time, if they have not arrived, immediately contact 0750 7777 534
- Locate the groom/1st partner and bring him/her to the interview room. Once the first interview is over, the Responsible Person should take the groom/1st partner to the ceremony room and then move the guests into the ceremony room. The way is then clear for the bride/2nd partner to be brought to the interview room for their interview. This works slightly differently if the couple are happy to be interviewed together, but this, although it does happen, is quite unusual.
- Once the bride/2nd partner has been interviewed, the responsible person must wait with them whilst the registration staff make their way to the ceremony room. When the bride/2nd partner is ready to enter the ceremony room, the responsible person should alert the Registration Officer who is officiating at the ceremony that everything is ready and cue the entrance music if appropriate.
- Depending on the size of the ceremony party, the Responsible Person may need to provide an usher/ushers to control or assist the guests. The usher(s) will be under the supervision of the Responsible Person, subject to any overall directions from the Registration Officers. The Responsible Person and his/her team (if appropriate) must be on hand at all times before and during the ceremony to solve any problems that may arise.

Once the ceremony is concluded the registration staff will leave immediately.

