



The Philippines: Marriage registration and issuance of marriage certificates

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Introduction

The following note presents the registration and issuance procedure for Philippine marriage certificates. The note will further provide a brief description of the verification of the marriage certificate and the layout of the marriage certificate.

The note is based primarily on information obtained during a fact-finding mission to the Philippines in September 2023 as well as open source information.

Marriage registration and issuance of the Certificate of Marriage

A marriage ceremony in the Philippines can be held before a judge or in a church. Prior the marriage ceremony, the couple (both parties must be 18 years or above) needs to apply for a Marriage License at a local civil registration office. The following documents are required for both parties to have a Marriage License issued:

- A birth certificate.
- A Certificate of No Marriage Record (CENOMAR) issued by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) (see '*Certificate of No Marriage Record (CENOMAR)*' below). The CENOMAR must not be issued later than six months before the time of the Marriage License application.
- A valid government-issued ID document.¹

For foreigners, a Certificate of Legal Capacity to Marry issued by the embassy of the foreigner's country of residence, a passport with latest arrival date, and a birth certificate translated to English is required.²

¹ Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, 26 September 2023; Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, 26 September 2023, Folder p. 2.

² Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, 26 September 2023; Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, 26 September 2023, Folder p. 2.

The Marriage License can be collected after a ten days at a local civil registration office where both or one of the parties live. The Marriage License is valid for 120 days and costs 200 pesos.³

Once the marriage has taken place, the couple, the solemnising officer, and the witnesses must sign the Marriage License.⁴ However, there are specific cases where the couple is exempted to apply for and submit a Marriage License. For example, in cases where either or both of the contracting parties are on the point of death, or for the marriage of a couple who have lived together as a married-like relationship for at least five years.⁵

The process of registration differs depending on whether the couple needs to apply for a Marriage License or not. If the couple needs to apply for a Marriage License, the solemnising officer, the Church Administrator, or the couple has the duty to report the marriage by handing in the Marriage License to a local civil registration office in the same city/municipality where the marriage was solemnised. The couple must then fill out a Certificate of Marriage at the local civil registration office within 15 days. Both parties must be present at the time of registration, and the application must be accomplished in own handwriting using a black ink pen.⁶ If the couple is exempt from applying for a Marriage License, the prescribed period is 30 days in the place where the marriage was solemnised.⁷ The couple must present an affidavit as required in the Family Code of the Philippines, if the couple is exempt from applying for and submitting a Marriage License.⁸

For a timely registration, the processing time is three working days. If the marriage is not registered within this time periods, the marriage is considered registered late.⁹

At the local civil registration office, the civil registrar (or authorised personnel) checks the completeness and correctness of the entries on the Certificate of Marriage, and enters the data into a registry book.¹⁰ The Certificate of Marriage contains the couple's marriage details including their names, the date and place of marriage, and the names of the witnesses.¹¹

³ Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, 26 September 2023, Folder p. 2.

⁴ Philippine Statistics Authority Helpline A, year of issue n/a; Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, 26 September 2023, Folder p. 2.

⁵ Philippine Statistics Authority Helpline A, year of issue n/a.

⁶ Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, 26 September 2023, Folder p. 2.

⁷ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 5, 12.

⁸ Family Code, 6 July 1987, Art. 27, 28, 33, and 34.

⁹ Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, 26 September 2023, Folder p. 2.

¹⁰ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 5, 12.

¹¹ Philippine Statistics Authority Helpline A, year of issue n/a.

The Certificate of Marriage is then signed and stamped by the civil registrar (or his/her representative), and signed by the couple, the solemnizing officer, and at least two witnesses. Four copies are produced; one copy is distributed to the solemnizing officer, one to the local civil registration office, one to the PSA, and one to the couple.¹² The image below is an example of a Certificate of Marriage issued by a local civil registration office:

Municipal Form No. 97 (Revised August 2016)		Republic of the Philippines OFFICE OF THE CIVIL REGISTRAR GENERAL		(To be accomplished in quadruplicate using black ink)		
Province _____				Registry No. _____		
City/Municipality _____						
1. Name of Contracting Parties	HUSBAND			WIFE		
	(First) _____			(First) _____		
	(Middle) _____			(Middle) _____		
2a. Date of Birth	(Day) _____	(Month) _____	(Year) _____	(Age) _____	(Day) _____	(Month) _____
2b. Age				(Age) _____		
3. Place of Birth	(City/Municipality) _____	(Province) _____	(Country) _____		(City/Municipality) _____	(Province) _____
4a. Sex				(Citizenship) _____	(Citizenship) _____	
4b. Citizenship						
5. Residence	(House No., St., Barangay, City/Municipality, Province, Country)					
6. Religion/ Religious Sect						
7. Civil Status						
8. Name of Father	(First) _____	(Middle) _____	(Last) _____		(First) _____	(Middle) _____
9. Citizenship						
10. Maiden Name of Mother	(First) _____	(Middle) _____	(Last) _____		(First) _____	(Middle) _____
11. Citizenship						
12. Name of Person/ Well-Known Name	(First) _____	(Middle) _____	(Last) _____		(First) _____	(Middle) _____
13. Relationship						
14. Residence	(House No., St., Barangay, City/Municipality, Province, Country)					
15. Place of Marriage:	(Office of the/House of/Barangay of/Church of/Mosque of) _____ (City/Municipality) _____ (Province) _____					
16. Date of Marriage:	(Day) _____	(Month) _____	(Year) _____	17. Time of Marriage:	_____ am/pm	
18. CERTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES: THIS IS TO CERTIFY: That I, _____ and I, _____, both of legal age, of our own free will and accord, and in the presence of the person solemnizing this marriage and of the witnesses named below, take each other as husband and wife and certifying further that we: _____ have entered, a copy of which is hereto attached / _____ have not entered into a marriage settlement. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have signed /marked with our fingerprint this certificate in quadruplicate this _____ day of _____.						
(Signature of Husband)			(Signature of Wife)			
19. CERTIFICATION OF THE SOLEMNIZING OFFICER: THIS IS TO CERTIFY: THAT BEFORE ME, on the date and place above-written, personally appeared the above-mentioned parties, with their mutual consent, lawfully joined together in marriage which was solemnized by me in the presence of the witnesses named below, all of legal age. I CERTIFY FURTHER THAT: ☐ a. Marriage License No. _____ issued on _____ at _____ in favor of said parties, was exhibited to me. ☐ b. no marriage license was necessary, the marriage being solemnized under Art. _____ of Executive Order No. 209. ☐ c. the marriage was solemnized in accordance with the provisions of Presidential Decree No. 1083.						
(Signature Over Printed Name of Solemnizing Officer)		(Position/Designation)		(Religion/Religious Sect, Registry No. and Expiration Date, if applicable)		
20a. WITNESSES (Print Name and Sign): Additional at the back						
21. RECEIVED BY				22. REGISTERED AT THE OFFICE OF THE CIVIL REGISTRAR		
Signature _____				Signature _____		
Name in Print _____				Name in Print _____		
Title or Position _____				Title or Position _____		
Date _____				Date _____		
REMARKS/ANNOTATIONS (For LCRO/OCRG/Shar'a Circuit Registrar Use Only)						
TO BE FILLED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE CIVIL REGISTRAR						
4bH	4bW	5H	5W	7H	6H	6W

Image 1: An example of an unfilled Certificate of Marriage issued by a local civil registration office (NIDC reference material).

¹² Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, 26 September 2023, Folder p. 2; Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 6.

The Certificate of Marriage issued by a local civil registration office is for data entry purposes only and is a document that proves that the couple is legally married. The local civil registration office electronically forwards the Certificate of Marriage to the PSA for certification and printing of a marriage certificate on PSA's security paper (see '*Layout of the PSA Marriage Certificate*' below).¹³ A certified true copy of the Certificate of Marriage can be issued by the PSA within two-three months after the registration.¹⁴

Late registration of marriage

For late registration, the local civil registration office requires several documents from the couple. The required documents must be presented in two sets: one original and one photocopy. Late registrations normally take 30 days to process.¹⁵ See a full list of the required documents [here](#).

Together with the required documents, the solemnising officer or the person reporting the Marriage License for registration shall be required to file an affidavit, stating the exact place and date of marriage, the facts and circumstances surrounding the marriage, and the reason of registering the marriage late.¹⁶

There is a fee for late registrations, but it is only applicable if the couple or the person concerned wants a copy of the Certificate of Marriage issued, according to the PSA.¹⁷ The fee is 200 pesos for a registration less than two years late, and 500 pesos for a registration more than two years late.¹⁸

Certificate of No Marriage Record (CENOMAR)

A Certificate of No Marriage Record (CENOMAR) is a certification only issued by the PSA stating that a person has not contracted into any marriage in the Philippines. A CENOMAR is issued if no marriage exists in the National Indices of Marriages database. If an annulled marriage is found in the database, an Advisory of Marriage (AOM) is issued instead.¹⁹

It is possible to contact the PSA to get a civil status of a Philippine citizen confirmed, but a copy of the CENOMAR and an authorisation letter from the citizen in question are required.²⁰

¹³ Philippine Statistics Authority Helpline A, year of issue n/a.

¹⁴ Philippine Statistics Authority Helpline A, year of issue n/a.

¹⁵ Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, 26 September 2023, Folder p. 1.

¹⁶ Philippine Statistics Authority A, year of issue n/a.

¹⁷ Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, 26 September 2023; Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023.

¹⁸ Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, year of issue n/a, Folder p. 1.

¹⁹ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023; Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 17.

²⁰ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023.

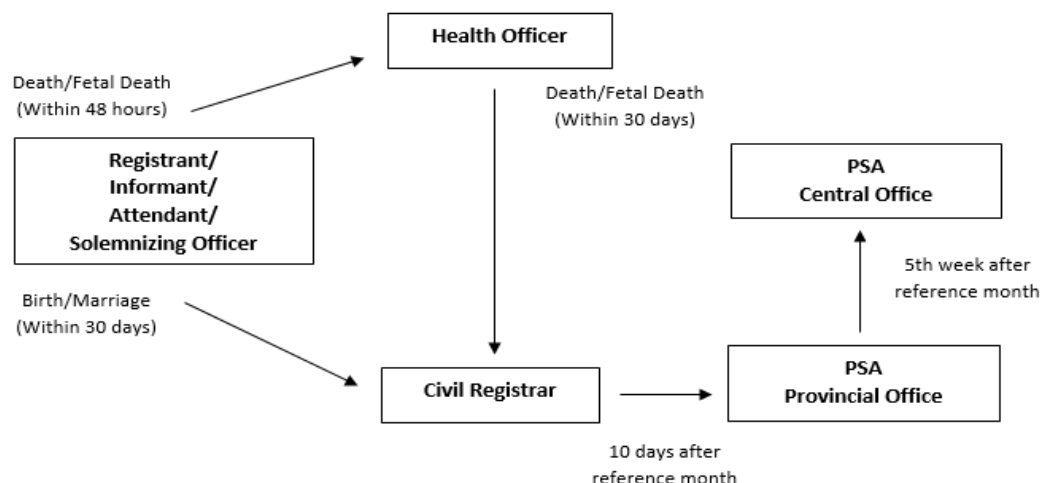
Divorce

It is illegal to get a divorce in the Philippines due to the Civil Code from 1950. However, since 1977 Muslims citizens have had the opportunity to get a divorce and have a divorce certificate issued by the PSA. Non-Muslims (nearly 80 percent of the Philippine population is Catholic) are obliged to obtain a Court's decision that the marriage can be annulled, but the annulment is subject to payment.²¹

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) is responsible for civil status documents in the Philippines and is mandated to collect data from registrations conducted locally at the local civil registration offices. The PSA consults its database to verify personal information when issuing a PSA civil status document upon request from the applicant. The personal information collected, when registering a vital event at the LCRO, is electronically submitted to a database at a PSA Provincial Office. At the PSA Provincial Office, the data will electronically be transferred to a PSA Central Office in Manila for verification and approval. Approved documents are then transferred to the database prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Marriage printed on security paper known as a PSA Marriage Certificate. The same procedure applies to the issuance of both birth and death certificates.²²

The PSA Central Office is electronically connected to all the PSA Provincial Offices, who are linked to 63 PSA Outlets with a Civil Registry System (CRS). This means that a Philippine citizen can have PSA certificates issued in every PSA CRS Outlet regardless of the place of registration. The PSA CRS Outlets are located throughout the Philippines.²³ See a full list of the locations of the PSA CRS Outlets [here](#).



²¹ US Department of State, 3 March 2017; New York Times, 4 November 2023.

²² Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023; Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 10.

²³ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023; Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 21.

Layout of the PSA Marriage Certificate

The current format of the PSA Marriage Certificate has been in use since 2016. The layout of the certificate is the same as the Certificate of Marriage issued by a local civil registration office (see image 1). However, the official certificate is issued by the PSA, which is printed on security paper and contains several security features.²⁴ Please see the NIDC guide for further information about the security features.

According to the PSA, a new format of the PSA certificates will soon be presented.²⁵

The issuance procedure of the PSA Marriage Certificate and the CENOMAR

Both the Marriage Certificate and the CENOMAR can be achieved by Philippine citizens above 18 years old in two ways; online or walk-in. An appointment is required for walk-in applications, which can be done through the PSA's Online Appointment System. At the website, the applicant can choose the date, time, and the PSA CRS Outlet for the application.²⁶

After completing the online appointment application, the applicant receives an appointment slip via email, which must be printed or be visible on a phone. Securing an appointment is free of charge and the appointment slip is non-transferable.²⁷

At the chosen PSA CRS Outlet, the applicant must present the appointment slip and get an application form and a queue ticket number. At the counter, the applicant must present a valid ID document together with an authorisation letter, if the Marriage Certificate or the CENOMAR is for someone else (e.g. a family member). For foreigners, a passport and an alien/immigrant certificate is required. The applicant must pay the corresponding fees and is subsequently provided an official receipt. The application is then transmitted to the request service officers for proceeding. The applicant can collect the PSA Marriage Certificate/CENOMAR at the releasing area at the PSA CRS Outlet where the documents are printed and released.²⁸

The fee and service time are different depending on the frontline service at the PSA CRS Outlet. For the copy issuance, where the information from the local civil registration office is already in the PSA database, the fee is 155 pesos for the issuance of a Marriage Certificate and the service time after payment is one-two hours. For the copy issuance, where the information from the local civil registration office is not

²⁴ Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, 26 September 2023; Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023.

²⁵ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023.

²⁶ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 38; Philippine Statistics Authority Helpline A, year of issue n/a; Landinfo 2 June 2015, p. 6.

²⁷ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 38; Philippine Statistics Authority Helpline A, year of issue n/a.

²⁸ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 21-31; Philippine Statistics Authority Helpline A, year of issue n/a.

yet in the PSA database, and the information must be manually verified, the fee is 155 pesos for the issuance of a Marriage Certificate, but the service time after payment is seven working days. The fee is 210 pesos for a CENOMAR and the service time after payment is one-two working days.²⁹

For the online application procedure, the applicant can order a certified true copy of the PSA Marriage Certificate/CENOMAR through <https://psaserbilis.com.ph/> for local and foreign requests (worldwide delivery service), and through <https://psa-helpline.ph/> for local requests only. The websites are authorised by the PSA to issue PSA certificates, and help facilitate the application procedure.³⁰ Through the websites, the applicant can either apply for his/hers own Marriage Certificate/CENOMAR or for someone else (e.g. a family member). The applicant needs to provide certain information such as gender, civil status (if female), first name etc., and choose a government-issued ID document to continue the application. Once continuing, the spouse's details and the date and place of marriage must be submitted as well. After completing the online application, the applicant must pay a fee of 365 pesos for a Marriage Certificate, and 420 pesos for a CENOMAR, which is possible via various payment options.³¹

The PSA Marriage Certificate/CENOMAR will be delivered straight to the given delivery address or at a selected pick-up destination. At both the delivery and the pick-up destination, the applicant is required to present the submitted ID document. The PSA certificates cannot be received by anyone else than the applicant. The delivery time normally is three-eight working days depending on the location. All undelivered documents after two attempts will be returned to the PSA after 30 calendar days, and payments will be forfeited.³²

Both the Marriage Certificate and the CENOMAR have no expiration date. However, entities such as the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and embassies require the PSA certificates not to be older than six months from the date of payment, when applying for an Apostille.³³ Furthermore, the PSA occasionally updates the security paper of the certificates, which means that an old certificate may not be accepted by some government agencies, if the security paper is outdated. The PSA advises applicants to submit a new PSA certificate issued on the latest security paper.³⁴

²⁹ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 19.

³⁰ Philippine Statistics Authority Helpline B, year of issue n/a.

³¹ Philippine Statistics Authority Helpline A, year of issue n/a.

³² Philippine Statistics Authority Helpline A, year of issue n/a.

³³ Philippine Statistics Authority Helpline A, year of issue n/a.

³⁴ Philippine Statistics Authority Helpline A, year of issue n/a; Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 56.

Besides the above mentioned online and walk-in service, the PSA has a newer service where applicants can get their PSA Marriage Certificate/CENOMAR accessible online via the two above mentioned websites. The requested certificate can be viewed online as an e-copy via an access code after the payment of 130 pesos. The availability of the certificate on the website is subject to an expiry period. After a further request, the viewable online version of the Marriage Certificate/CENOMAR can be printed on security paper at any PSA CRS Outlet, which costs 80 pesos.³⁵

Corrections in the PSA Marriage Certificate

If the names of the bride and/or groom entered in the PSA Marriage Certificate are different from the names appearing on their respective Certificate of Live Birth (COLB), a petition for correction of entries is to be filed at the local civil registration officewhere the marriage was registered. The fee is 1.000 pesos for filing a petition for correction of entries. If the Marriage Certificate is missing entries in any of the items, a supplemental report must also be filed at the local civil registration office-where the marriage was registered. For typographical errors in entering the date and place of marriage, a petition must be filed for correction of entries.³⁶

The PSA in some cases makes corrections in the margins of the marriage certificates. The annotation is a standard procedure.³⁷

PSA validation services

The PSA has developed an e-Verification Mobile App which enables the general public to validate the PSA Marriage Certificate/CENOMAR. The e-Verification Mobile App is a stand-alone system that is available for download on any smartphone. According to the PSA, the encrypted system confirms the authenticity of issued certifications and copies of civil registration documents by scanning the QR code printed on the document (it should be noted that the NIDC does not know the exact result of the e-Verification validation).³⁸ The QR code was introduced in July 2022 on PSA certificates, in accordance to the PSA (the NIDC is provided with a list of which PSA Outlets that are currently issuing certificates with QR codes).³⁹

In addition, the PSA itself offers several validation services. For example, the PSA verifies and certifies the authenticity of the local copy of the Certificate of Marriage by verifying the signatures of the civil registrars. Twice a year the PSA receives an updated list of the persons authorised to sign documents.⁴⁰ The PSA also provides validation to different partner agencies such as the embassies and government

³⁵ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 18.

³⁶ Philippine Statistics Authority B, year of issue n/a.

³⁷ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023.

³⁸ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 35.

³⁹ Civil Registration Office, Makati City, the Philippines, 26 September 2023; Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 34.

⁴⁰ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023.

agencies (e.g. the DFA) by retrieving the data from the database based on the agency's supplied requirements. The fee for an authentication is 155 pesos.⁴¹

⁴¹ Philippine Statistics Authority, 26 September 2023, PowerPoint p. 17.

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