



How to Certify a Building for Religious Worship and Register for the Solemnization of Marriages

There are three different options available.

You can:

- a) Certify the building as a place for religious worship only - Form 76.
- b) Apply for a building which is already recorded as a place of religious worship to be registered as a place for the solemnization of marriages between a man and a woman - Form 78. If you wish to apply for the building to be registered for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples, you will also need to complete Form 78A and provide a copy of the relevant governing authority's consent.
- c) Certify the building as a place of religious worship and apply for it to be registered for the solemnization of marriages between a man and a woman at the same time - you will need to complete two separate applications - Forms 76 & 78. If you wish to apply for the building to be registered for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples, you will also need to complete Form 78A and provide a copy of the relevant governing authority's consent.

Applying for a building to be recorded for religious worship

- The Places of Worship Registration Act 1855 enables a place of meeting for religious worship to be recorded by the Registrar General. However, a congregation is still able to worship in a building which has not been recorded.
- A church or chapel of the Church of England does not need to apply to be recorded for religious worship. If they share their building with one or more non-conformist denominations, the sharing agreement will need to be submitted with the application made by the non-conformists.
- The application form "Certifying a Place of Meeting for Religious Worship" (Form 76) must be completed **in duplicate** by any person who is able to represent the congregation, e.g. the occupier/proprietor/trustee/minister.
- The applicant will be asked to supply the following information:
 1. The name by which the place of worship is known
 2. The address of the building
 3. Whether the application refers to a whole building or to a room/rooms within a building
 4. A floor plan of the building/room(s)

5. An average weekly time table of all events taking place in the building/room(s)
 6. Whether or not the building/room(s) has been previously certified for worship
 7. The faith and denomination of the congregation
 8. The applicant's name, contact details and connection to the building/room(s)
- There is a fee of £29, which should be submitted to your local superintendent registrar with the application form.

Applying for a building to be registered for the solemnization of marriages

- The Marriage Act 1949 allows a building that has been certified as a place of religious worship to also be registered for the solemnization of marriages between a man and a woman and/or marriages of same sex couples (*if the building is not already certified as a place of worship, then the two applications can be made at the same time*). Same sex couples wishing to convert their civil partnership into a marriage in a religious building may only do so if the building has been registered for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples.
- An application form for the registration of a place of worship for the solemnization of marriages (Form 78) must be signed **in duplicate** by a minimum of twenty householders who regard the building as their usual place of worship and then countersigned by the proprietor or trustee of the building. For marriages of same sex couples, the duplicate application forms must be accompanied by a declaration that the consent of the relevant governing body has been obtained (Form 78A) together with a copy of that consent.
- The applicant will be asked to supply the following information:
 1. The full name by which the place of worship is known.
 2. The precise address of the building. If the building has a number and a name, both should be stated.
 3. The building's date of certification for worship and its worship number. This information will be on the certificate of registration returned to you by your local superintendent registrar (*not required when registering for worship and marriages at the same time*).
 4. The name of the religious organisation which uses the building. This should be different to the name of the building.
 5. The signature, name and address of at least twenty householders who use the place for religious public worship.
 6. The date that the householders sign the certificate.
 7. The person who countersigns the form must not have also signed as a householder. The countersignatory must be either the proprietor/owner or a trustee of the building.
 8. The date the certificate was countersigned. This date must not be prior to when the certificate was signed by the householders.
 9. The person who signs the application must be either the proprietor/owner or trustee of the building, who should enter the date the application was signed. This date must be within one month of the date of the householder's certificate.

10. Confirmation that public access is allowed to any marriage that takes place.

11. A copy of the intended marriage service.

- A fee of £123 should be submitted to your local superintendent registrar with your application. If the building has already been registered for the solemnization of marriages and you wish it to be registered for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples, a fee of £64 is applicable instead.
- There is no requirement for Jewish Synagogues and meeting houses of the Society of Friends to register their buildings.
- Once the General Register Office has certified a building for marriages between a man and a woman and/or marriages of same sex couples, the local Register Office is required to advertise the new place for marriages in a local newspaper and in the London Gazette.

Where can I get an application form?

- Download it from the website: www.gov.uk
- Your local Register Office
- Telephone the General Register Office (GRO) on: 0300 123 1837
- E-mail GRO: GROCasework@gro.gov.uk

Where do I send the application?

All forms and fees should be submitted to your local superintendent registrar. They will check that all the required information has been supplied and then send your application to the General Register Office to be processed. Once the building has been registered the applicant will receive confirmation of the registration from their superintendent registrar.

How long will it take for the building to be registered?

If there are no problems with your application, the General Register Office will register your building and supply certificates of registration to your local superintendent registrar within 20 working days. If GRO ask you for more information or you need to send in more paperwork, each further reply may take up to 20 working days. However, you should be aware that in exceptional circumstances it may not always be possible to meet these targets.

What happens next.....?

Once your building has been registered, there may be some changes that you want to make or questions you want to ask. A list of frequently asked questions (Form 78Q) is available to download from the www.gov.uk website. If you have any additional queries, please contact the General Register Office by email: GROCasework@gro.gov.uk or telephone 0300 123 1837.