

# **BCA PROCEDURE FOR ISSUING MARRIAGE LICENSES**

**The British Columbia Government issues licenses to perform marriage ceremonies in BC to clergy at the request of a recognized denominational ministerial leader. For North American Baptist Churches, they recognize the Regional Minister as the official person for the NAB, and respond to his requests for licensing.**

## **Eligible Pastors and Church Workers:**

1. Senior pastors will be given a permanent license to perform marriages upon beginning their ministry in a BCA church.
2. Retired pastors, who have served a BCA church and who already have a license through the BCA, will keep that license for as long as they continue to be members of a BCA church.
3. Retired NAB pastors, who are relocating to BC and become members of a BCA church, may request a permanent license if they plan to continue to perform marriages in BC.
4. Churches (under the authority of the Senior Pastor or if the church is in transition without a permanent Senior Pastor, the church moderator) will be required to send a letter requesting a permanent or temporary license to perform marriage ceremonies for the following positions (a temporary license being for a particular wedding):
  - Full-time pastoral staff
  - Part-time pastoral staff
  - Retired pastors, other than those who have served in an NAB church
  - Para-church individuals who are members of a BCA church
5. On rare occasions the church may request a temporary license for someone who is not presently engaged in a full-time or part-time Christian ministry. Consideration must fit the guidelines below.
6. A pastor, serving an NAB church outside of BC and licensed in their province or state, may request a temporary license to perform a marriage ceremony in British Columbia.

## **Guidelines for Eligibility**

1. Persons performing marriage ceremonies must be endorsed by their church for such duties.
2. The person performing the marriage must be in a position of respect in the church, with the recognized authority to carry out the solemn spiritual and legal duties of performing the marriage ceremony.
3. The person must be in a position to ensure that adequate pre-marriage counseling is available.
4. The person must be in a position to provide a credible connection for the marrying couple to the church, so that the church can give continued support to this couple in their marriage.

## **Procedure**

1. The request for a license is sent to the Regional Minister's office, who then sends the required forms to the BC Government.
2. The BC Government sends the requested license directly to the Applicant with a copy to the RM.
3. Pastors, who move to a non NAB church, must register with their new denomination. Their status with the BCA license will be no longer valid.

4. Pastors, who leave the province or become inactive with the BCA, are required to send their license to the BC Register's office (or to the Regional Minister who will forward it for them). They will no longer be eligible to perform wedding ceremonies in British Columbia.
5. Pastors, who are in transition and without a church, will be allowed to keep their license for as long as they are actively seeking placement in a church. The Regional Minister will annually review their status.
6. Pastors who are no longer pastoring a church and are in other employment will no longer be licensed to perform marriage ceremonies.
7. The Regional Minister will make a recommendation to the Regional Executive if he believes that exceptional circumstances apply for any of the applicants