



LEXATLAS

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COMPASS

Cross-Border Marriage Kit

FRA ↔ CAN

CROSS-BORDER MARIAGE KIT

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Overview

CATEGORY	FRANCE	CANADA
AUTHORITIES IN CHARGE	Town Hall (<i>Mairie</i>) –civil registrar	Register office / approved venue; authorized religious officiant
COSTS	Civil ceremony is free	Notice from £42 pp (£57 if referred); ceremony fees vary
PROCESSING TIMES	Banns publication: 10 days minimum. Full process: ~3–6 weeks	Licence issued same day; valid 30–90 days depending on province
LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS	All documents must be in French. Certified translation required.	Documents in English or French accepted. Translations required if in another language
APOSTILLE / LEGALISATION	Canadian docs must be legalised (Global Affairs Canada + French consulate). No apostille possible	French docs require certified translation; may need legalisation for admin use
IMMIGRATION EFFECT	VLS-TS → VPF residence card for Canadian spouse	Spousal sponsorship (IRCC); processing ~12 months

KEY INSIGHTS

- **Authority & venue:** France – civil registrar at the Town Hall (*mairie*).
Canada – provincial Vital Statistics office + authorised officiant (civil or religious).
- **Residency:** France – one spouse must be domiciled or resident in the commune.
Canada – no residency requirement in most provinces/territories.
- **Notice/Banns:** France – banns published for 10 days.
Canada – no banns; a marriage licence is required (valid 30–90 days depending on the province).

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Legal Requirements

FRANCE

- Civil marriage is the only legally recognised form; religious ceremonies have no civil effect.
- At least one spouse must be domiciled or resident in the commune where the marriage will take place.
- The file must be lodged with the Town Hall (mairie); a pre-marriage interview (audition) may be required, interpreter allowed if necessary.
- **Banns** must be displayed publicly at the mairie for at least 10 days.
- Canadian civil status documents must go through **legalisation** (Global Affairs Canada → French Consulate), as Canada is **not part of the Hague Apostille Convention**.
- Sworn (assermenté) French translations are required for all foreign documents.
- **2–4 adult** witnesses with valid ID.
- If previously married: provide divorce decree or death certificate, duly legalised and translated.

CANADA

- Marriage law is under **provincial jurisdiction**: requirements vary slightly between provinces/territories.
- A **marriage licence** is mandatory (valid 30–90 days depending on the province).
- No residency requirement for foreign spouses.
- Minimum legal age: 16, with parental/judicial consent if under 18 or 19 (depending on province).
- Required documents: valid passports/IDs, birth certificates (with certified translation if not in English/French), proof of dissolution of prior marriage if applicable.
- **Licence fee**: usually CAD 100–150; ceremony fees vary by province and officiant.
- The **marriage** must be performed by an authorised officiant (civil or religious registered with the province).
- The **officiant registers** the marriage with the provincial **Vital Statistics Agency**, which issues the marriage certificate.

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Marrying in France (with a Canadian citizen)

DOCUMENTS

- Valid passports/IDs for both spouses.
- Proof of residence in the commune (e.g., utility bill, lease, attestation).
- Birth certificates:

French spouse: extract issued within 3 months.

Canadian spouse: recent Canadian certificate (issued within 6 months),
legalised through Global Affairs Canada + French Consulate.

- Certified French translations of all Canadian documents by a sworn (assermenté) translator in France.
- Affidavit/attestation of single status (often required by the mairie in lieu of a Canadian “certificate of no impediment”).
- Divorce decree absolute or death certificate if previously married (must be legalised and translated).
- 2–4 witnesses with valid ID.

STEPS & TIMELINE

1. Contact the mairie to obtain the exact list of required documents and book a date.
2. Gather Canadian documents and complete the **legalisation chain** (Provincial Vital Statistics → Global Affairs Canada → French Consulate).
3. Have all Canadian documents translated into French by a sworn translator.
4. Submit the full file at the mairie; attend the pre-marriage interview (audition) if requested.
5. Publication of banns at the mairie for a minimum of 10 days.
6. Civil ceremony at the Town Hall with 2–4 witnesses.
7. Obtain the French marriage certificate (and livret de famille, if applicable).
8. If the Canadian spouse will reside in France: apply for a **long-stay visa (VLS-TS)**, then request the **Vie Privée et Familiale (VPF) residence card** after arrival.

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Marrying in the Canada (with a French citizen)

DOCUMENTS

- Valid passports/IDs for both spouses.
- Birth certificates for both spouses (French birth certificate must be translated into English or French by a **certified provincial translator**).
- Proof of address and immigration status in Canada (if applicable).
- Divorce decree absolute or death certificate if previously married (must be translated and, if required, legalised by French authorities).
- Marriage licence application form (completed and signed) and payment of the licence fee (~CAD 100–150, varies by province).
- In some provinces: parental/judicial consent if one spouse is under 18 (or 19 in certain provinces).

STEPS & TIMELINE

1. Choose the province/territory where the marriage will take place (rules differ between Ontario, Québec, British Columbia, etc.).
2. Apply in person for a **marriage licence** at the designated municipal office or service counter; pay the applicable fee.
3. Provide original documents and certified translations as required by the province.
4. The marriage licence is usually issued the same day and is valid for **30–90 days**, depending on the province.
5. Arrange a civil or religious ceremony with an **authorised officiant** (registered with the provincial Vital Statistics Agency).
6. Hold the ceremony in the presence of witnesses (number required varies by province, usually 2).
7. The officiant registers the marriage with the provincial Vital Statistics Agency.
8. Obtain the official Canadian marriage certificate (processing times vary by province, typically a few weeks).
9. If the French spouse will reside in Canada, apply for **spousal sponsorship** through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC); average processing time is ~12 months.

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Recognition in the other country

French marriage recognized in Canada

REQUIREMENT	HOW TO PROVIDE	WHERE	TIMING	NOTES
MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE	Obtain an official French marriage certificate (certified copy or extract)	From the mairie where the marriage was celebrated	Immediately after the ceremony	Must be a recent certified copy for administrative purposes in Canada
LEGALISATION	Legalise the French marriage certificate (since Canada is not party to Apostille Convention)	French Court of Appeal → Ministry of Europe & Foreign Affairs → Global Affairs Canada	2–6 weeks	Full legalisation chain required for Canadian use
CERTIFIED TRANSLATION	Translate the French marriage certificate into English or French	Certified translator recognised by a Canadian province	Few days	Attach the original + translation; use provincially regulated translators
USE IN CANADA	Present the translated, legalised French certificate	Provincial Vital Statistics, IRCC (immigration), Service Canada, banks, etc.	Case-by-case	No central registration: the marriage is recognised if valid in France

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Canadian marriage recognized in France

REQUIREMENT	HOW TO PROVIDE	WHERE	TIMING	NOTES
MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE	Obtain a certified copy of the Canadian marriage certificate	Provincial Vital Statistics Agency (Ontario, Québec, etc.)	After ceremony	Ensure you request the long-form certificate with parents' names for transcription in France
LEGALISATION	Authenticate and legalise the Canadian certificate (Canada not party to Apostille)	<u>Step 1:</u> Provincial authority → <u>Step 2:</u> Global Affairs Canada → <u>Step 3:</u> French Consulate in Canada	4–8 weeks	Full legalisation chain is mandatory for French recognition
FRENCH TRANSLATION	Provide a sworn French translation of the Canadian marriage certificate	Court-sworn translator in France (traducteur assermenté)	Few days	Attach original + translation; only sworn translators in France are accepted
TRANSCRIPTION IN FRANCE	Submit legalised + translated certificate for registration in French records	French Consulate in Canada or SCEC Nantes	1–3 months	Transcription creates the French civil status record and allows delivery of a livret de famille

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Special cases & red flags

- **Canada not part of the Hague Apostille Convention** → all Canadian documents must go through **full legalisation** (Provincial → Global Affairs Canada → French Consulate). This can take several weeks.
- **Provincial differences** → marriage rules vary between provinces (e.g., minimum age, licence validity, fees). Always check the exact province where the marriage will be celebrated.
- **Marriage licence validity** → usually 30–90 days depending on the province; if the marriage is not celebrated within this period, a new licence must be obtained.
- **Religious ceremonies** → valid only if performed by an officiant registered with the provincial Vital Statistics office. A purely religious wedding without civil registration has no legal effect in either France or Canada.
- **Translations** → France requires **sworn (assermenté) translators**; Canada requires **certified provincial translators**. Wrong type of translation may cause rejection.
- **Immigration delays** → spousal sponsorship to Canada typically takes around 12 months; French VLS-TS procedures are shorter (~3 months), but both require careful preparation.
- **Foreign divorces** → a prior Canadian divorce must be recognised in France before a new marriage is possible; a prior French divorce must be duly certified and translated for use in Canada.
- **Transcription delays** → Canadian marriages recognised in France require transcription at SCEC Nantes, which can take 1–3 months before issuing a livret de famille.

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Checklists

FRANCE

1. Contact the mairie to obtain the exact list of required documents and book a date.
2. Collect recent civil status documents (birth certificates, divorce/death certificates if applicable).
3. For the Canadian spouse: request official certificates from the provincial Vital Statistics office.
4. Have Canadian documents authenticated by the provincial authority, then legalised by **Global Affairs Canada** and the **French Consulate**.
5. Arrange sworn French translations (traducteur assermenté) for all Canadian documents.
6. Provide an affidavit/attestation of single status if requested by the mairie.
7. Submit the complete file to the mairie; attend the pre-marriage interview (audition) if required.
8. Ensure publication of banns at the mairie for at least 10 days.
9. Hold the civil ceremony with 2–4 witnesses;
obtain the French marriage certificate and livret de famille.
10. If the Canadian spouse will reside in France: apply for a **long-stay visa (VLS-TS)**
and later request the **VPF residence card**.

CANADA

1. Choose the province/territory where the marriage will be celebrated (rules and fees differ).
2. Verify immigration/visa status of the French spouse if required.
3. Collect passports/IDs, birth certificates, and any prior divorce/death certificates.
4. Translate French documents into English or French using a provincially certified translator.
5. Apply for a **marriage licence** at the municipal/provincial service counter;
pay the fee (~CAD 100–150).
6. Confirm licence validity period (30–90 days depending on province).
7. Select an authorised officiant (civil or religious registered with the province).
8. Hold the ceremony with witnesses (usually 2 required).
9. Ensure the officiant registers the marriage with the provincial Vital Statistics Agency.
10. Obtain the official Canadian marriage certificate; if the French spouse will immigrate, prepare the **spousal sponsorship application** to IRCC (~12 months processing).

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Templates

This section provides **official resources and sample documents** commonly required :

Use the hyperlinks below to access the official template or instruction page.

1. France – Statutory Declaration / Attestation of Single Status

Often requested by French mairies when marrying a Canadian citizen, in lieu of a Canadian “Certificate of No Impediment”.

 [Access the Attestation sur l'honneur template \(Service-Public\)](#)

2. Canada (Ontario) – Marriage Licence Application

Form and guidance for obtaining a marriage licence in Ontario.

 [Ontario: Getting married — marriage licence application](#)

3. Canada (Québec) – Marriage Information & Licence Application

Provincial civil status information and downloadable forms for marriage in Québec.

 [Directeur de l'état civil: Marriage & civil union](#)

4. France/Canada – Sworn & Certified Translation Services

Official directories to find recognised translators:

 [Find a sworn translator \(Service-Public tool\)](#)

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Official Sources

TOPIC	AUTHORITY / URL	NOTES
GENERAL MARRIAGE IN FRANCE	Service-Public: Getting Married in France	Overview of French civil marriage rules
TRANSCRIPTION OF A FOREIGN MARRIAGE (FRANCE)	Service-Public: Mariage d'un Français à l'étranger	Required to register a Canadian marriage in France
LEGALISATION / APOSTILLE (FRANCE)	Service-Public: Légalisation d'un acte public étranger	Guidance on legalising French civil status documents
CANADA — GENERAL INFO ON MARRIAGE ABROAD	Government of Canada: Marriage overseas	Federal guidance for Canadians marrying abroad
IRCC — SPOUSAL SPONSORSHIP	IRCC: Sponsor your spouse, partner or child	Immigration route for French spouse moving to Canada
ONTARIO MARRIAGE LICENCE	Ontario.ca: Getting Married	Provincial guidance and licence application
QUÉBEC CIVIL STATUS — MARRIAGE	Directeur de l'état civil: Marriage & civil union	Québec guidance and forms
LEGALISATION OF CANADIAN DOCUMENTS	Global Affairs Canada: Authentication of documents	Authentication of Canadian civil documents for use in France

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Glossary & Notes

TERM	DEFINITION / NOTES
APOSTILLE	International certificate authenticating public documents under the Hague Apostille Convention (1961) . Since January 2024 , Canada issues apostilles (via Global Affairs Canada and certain provinces), replacing the old legalisation process.
BANNS OF MARRIAGE	In France, public notice displayed at the mairie for at least 10 days before the marriage can take place.
MARRIAGE LICENCE (CANADA)	Official authorisation to marry, required in every Canadian province/territory (valid 30–90 days). Replaces the French “banns” system.
TRANSCRIPTION	Procedure by which a foreign marriage (e.g., celebrated in Canada) is registered in French civil records by the SCEC Nantes or the French consulate. Grants access to the livret de famille .
SCEC (NANTES)	<i>Service central d'état civil</i> in Nantes, the authority responsible for recording marriages and other events involving French citizens abroad.
ATTESTATION SUR L'HONNEUR	Sworn declaration of single status often required by French mairies when marrying a foreign national (used when the foreign authority does not issue a “certificate of no impediment”).
CERTIFIED TRANSLATION	Translation produced by a recognised professional translator: in France, a sworn translator (traducteur assermenté) ; in Canada, a provincially certified translator (e.g., OTTIAQ in Québec, ATIO in Ontario).
VLS-TS (VISA LONG SÉJOUR VALANT TITRE DE SÉJOUR)	French long-stay visa that acts as a residence permit; typically required by the Canadian spouse moving to France.
VPF (VIE PRIVÉE ET FAMILIALE)	Residence card in France, granted after the VLS-TS, for spouses of French nationals.

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Annexes

ANNEX	TITLE	FILE
1	France — Attestation sur l'honneur (statutory declaration)	Service-Public.fr – Attestation
2	Canada (Ontario) — Marriage Licence Application	Ontario.ca – Getting married
3	Canada (Québec) — Marriage & Civil Union	Directeur de l'état civil – Québec
4	Global Affairs Canada — Apostille/Authentication	Global Affairs Canada – Authentication
5	France — Transcription of foreign marriage	Service-Public.fr – Transcription
6	IRCC — Spousal Sponsorship	IRCC – Sponsor your spouse

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Legal Disclaimer & Thank You

This Cross-Border Marriage Kit has been carefully researched and compiled to provide practical guidance for international couples.

However, it does **not constitute legal advice**.

- Laws and procedures may change at any time.
- Requirements may vary depending on the specific **State** or **French municipality** involved.
- Always verify your situation directly with the **competent civil authorities**, embassies, or consulates before submitting documents.
- LexAtlas cannot be held liable for any administrative delays, changes in law, or outcomes arising from the use of this guide.

For complex or exceptional cases (previous marriages, immigration complications, name changes, adoption, or nationality issues), we strongly recommend consulting a qualified attorney or notary.

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