



CHAPTER 51
ARTICLE 2 - MARRIAGE LICENSES

N.C.G.S. § 51-21.

Issuance of delayed marriage certificates.

SOURCE General Statutes of North Carolina, as published by the General Assembly	LAST AMENDMENT IN THIS TEXT c. 80, s. 12 — fourth act in the lineage	RETRIEVED 21 September 2026, 01:22 UTC	SOURCE FINGERPRINT a819d63732537c15e137665b - 37886300605ee66be2daa886 - 37f2579999880bbc
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In all those cases where a minister or other person authorized by law to perform marriage ceremonies has failed to file his return thereof in the office of the register of deeds who issued the license for such marriage, the register of deeds of such county is authorized to issue a delayed marriage certificate upon being furnished with one or more of the following:

The affidavit of at least two witnesses to the marriage ceremony;

The affidavit of one or both parties to the marriage, accompanied by the affidavit of at least one witness to the marriage ceremony;

The affidavit of the minister or other person authorized by law who performed the marriage ceremony, accompanied by the affidavit of one or more witnesses to the ceremony or one of the parties thereto.

When proof as required by the three methods set forth in subdivisions (1), (2), and (3) above is not available with respect to any marriage alleged to have been performed prior to January 1, 1935, the register of deeds is authorized to accept the affidavit of any one of the persons named in subdivisions (1), (2), and (3) and in addition thereto such other proof in writing as he may deem sufficient to establish the marriage and any facts relating thereto; provided, however, that if the evidence offered under this paragraph is insufficient to convince the register of deeds that the marriage ceremony took place, or any of the pertinent facts relating thereto, the applicants may bring a special proceeding before the clerk of superior court of the county in which the purported marriage ceremony took place. The said clerk of the superior court is authorized to hear the evidence and make findings as to whether or not the purported ceremony took place and as to any pertinent facts relating thereto. If the clerk finds that the marriage did take place as alleged, he is to certify such findings to the register of deeds who is to then issue a delayed marriage certificate in accordance with the provisions of this section.

The certificate issued by the register of deeds under authority of this section shall contain the date of the delayed filing, the date the marriage ceremony was actually performed, and all such certificates issued

pursuant to this section shall have the same evidentiary value as any other marriage certificates issued pursuant to law.

END OF SECTION TEXT

APPARATUS FOLLOWS — DERIVED, NOT ENACTED

APPARATUS I
4 ACTS

Amendment lineage

The State prints this history as a single parenthetical at the foot of the section. It is reproduced verbatim in the colophon and unpacked below in order of enactment.

1951		1960		1969
TICK HEIGHT = ACTS IN THAT YEAR		DASHED = RECODIFICATION, NOT AMENDMENT		
Nº	YEAR	ACT	CHARACTER	
01	1951	c. 1224	ENACTED	
02	1955	c. 246	AMENDED	
03	1967	c. 957, s. 10	AMENDED	
04	1969	c. 80, s. 12	AMENDED	

APPARATUS III

Citation

FULL SECTION

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 51-21 (1969).

Pinpoint keys are set in the left margin of the text rather than line numbers: subsection designators are stable across editions and paper sizes, line numbers are not.

COLOPHON

Provenance

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This is not the official text. The official text is published by the General Assembly of North Carolina.

HISTORY PARENTHETICAL, AS PRINTED BY THE STATE
(1951, c. 1224; 1955, c. 246; 1967, c. 957, s. 10; 1969, c. 80, s. 12.)

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