

**CHAPTER 71**  
**MARRIAGE**  
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**71.1. Purpose and Policy**

71.1-1. *Purpose.* It is the purpose of this law to exercise the sovereign right of the Oneida Tribe to regulate the rights and responsibilities relating to marriage.

71.1-2. *Policy.* Marriage is a foundation of Tribal society that stabilizes families which the Tribe acknowledges by recognizing the legal relationship of a union between two adults.

**71.2. Adoption, Amendment, Conflicts**

71.2-1. This law was adopted by the Oneida Business Committee by resolution BC-04-28-10-F.

71.2-2. This law may be amended pursuant to the procedures set out in the Oneida Administrative Procedures Act by the Oneida Business Committee or the Oneida General Tribal Council.

71.2-3. Should a provision of this law or the application thereof to any person or circumstances be held as invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions of this law which are considered to have legal force without the invalid portions.

71.2-4. In the event of a conflict between a provision of this law and a provision of another law, including the Administrative Procedures Act, the provisions of this law shall control. Provided that, nothing in this law is intended to repeal or modify any existing law, ordinance, policy, regulation, rule, resolution or motion.

71.2-5. This law is adopted under authority of the Constitution of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin.

71.2-6. *Rules.* If rules addressing a certain area of this law have not been enacted in accordance with Tribal law and the Commission is faced with a question, the Commission may, in its discretion, refer to other Indian tribal law or state law for guidance, to the extent that such law is not inconsistent with this or any other Tribal law.

**71.3. Definitions**

71.3-1. This section shall govern the definitions of words and phrases used within this law. All words not defined herein shall be used in their ordinary and everyday sense.

(a) "Commission" means the Oneida Tribal Judicial system, known as the Oneida Appeals Commission, which is the judicial arm of the Tribe.

(b) "Court of competent jurisdiction" means a court that has the power and authority to dissolve a marriage.

(c) "Department" means the licensing department of the Tribe that is responsible for administering and issuing licenses in accordance with Oneida laws.

(d) "Marriage" means the civil contract to which the consent of the parties capable in law of contracting is essential, and which creates the legal status of husband and wife.

(e) "Marriage document" means that document issued by the Department which includes the marriage license as well as information concerning the marriage ceremony, the signatures of the witnesses and officiating person(s), and proof of filing.

(f) "Marriage license" means that portion of the marriage document designated as such,

which is the authorization for the marriage to take place.

(g) "Officiating person" means the person or persons who perform the marriage ceremony.

(h) "Reservation" means all the land within the exterior boundaries of the Reservation of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, as created pursuant to the 1838 Treaty with the Oneida, 7 Stat. 566, and any lands added thereto pursuant to federal law.

(i) "Tribe" or "Tribal" means the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin.

#### **71.4. Marriages, Generally**

71.4-1. *Who May Marry.* A marriage may be contracted under this law between two (2) adults who:

- (a) have a marriage document issued by the Department;
- (b) are of the opposite sex;
- (c) have attained the age of eighteen (18), except as provided in 71.4-3; and
- (d) meet all other provisions under this law.

71.4-2. *Who May Not Marry.* Persons may not enter into marriage if they:

- (a) are currently legally married to another person; or,
- (b) have been legally divorced for less than six (6) months with a judgment of divorce from a court of competent jurisdiction; or,
- (c) are not legally competent; or,
- (d) are closer in relationship than second cousins, except first cousins may marry if both parties are fifty-five (55) years old or older.

71.4-3. *Minors.* Individuals under the age of sixteen (16) shall not marry. Individuals who meet the above requirements, except for 71.4-1(c) and are over the age of sixteen (16) but under the age of eighteen (18) may marry if they present:

- (a) written consent by their parent or guardian, signed and notarized before the person issuing the marriage license; or
- (b) proof that they have been legally emancipated.

#### **71.5. Marriage Document and Marriage Ceremony**

71.5-1. *Marriage Document.* The Department shall issue a marriage document to the applicants within five (5) business days after the application is filed if, in addition to the other requirements in this law, the following conditions are met at the time a marriage license is applied for:

- (a) Either (1) or (2) applies to the applicants:
  - (1) each applicant:
    - (A) is a Tribal member; or
    - (B) resides on the Reservation and is a member of an Indian tribe, band or community which is recognized by a state or the federal government.
  - (2) one of the applicants meets the requirements of (1)(A) or (B) and the other applicant consents to the Tribe's jurisdiction to issue the license. The completion of an application for a marriage license represents a person's consent to the Tribe's jurisdiction to grant the license.
- (b) Both applicants appear in person at the Department to complete the marriage license application.
- (c) The applicants provide any information necessary to complete the application, which

may include: social security numbers, birth certificates, proof of residence, proof of tribal membership, documentation of a judgment of divorce, annulment, or death certificates from most recent marriages, parents' full names, mothers' maiden names, date and place of marriage ceremony, and the name, address, and phone number of the officiating person(s).

(d) The applicants swear under oath that the information provided is true and accurate and sign the application in the presence of a notary public.

(e) The applicants pay the required fee.

71.5-2. *Objections.* Any relative of the applicants, Department official, or applicant that objects to an upcoming marriage may file a petition and sworn affidavit with the Commission objecting to the marriage.

(a) The petition shall state grounds for the belief that a marriage license should not be issued to the applicants or a marriage license that has already been issued should be revoked.

(b) The Commission shall approve the petition only if the marriage, if conducted, would violate this law.

(c) If the petition is approved by the Commission, the applicants shall show cause why the license should be issued or why the license should not be revoked.

71.5-3. *Marriage Ceremony.*

(a) The applicants shall marry not less than six (6) days after the license is issued and not more than thirty (30) days after the license is issued. The marriage license shall contain notification of these time limits.

(b) If neither applicant resides on the Reservation, the marriage ceremony shall be held on the Reservation. If one or both of the applicants reside on the Reservation, the marriage ceremony shall be held on the Reservation or in Brown or Outagamie County. The ceremony shall be solemnized by an officiating person(s) with two (2) competent adult witnesses present.

(c) The parties shall vow by mutual declarations, before the officiating person(s) and witnesses, that they take each other in lawful matrimony.

(d) The parties, the officiating person(s), and the witnesses shall, at the conclusion of the ceremony, sign and date the marriage document.

(e) The officiating person(s) shall deliver the original completed marriage document to the Department within three (3) business days after the ceremony where it shall be file stamped and kept. The department shall deliver an official copy of the file stamped marriage document to the married couple and to the Wisconsin Vital Statistics Department within ten (10) business days after it is filed.

(f) The Department shall keep a marriage license docket and shall enter therein a complete record of the marriage applications and issuance of marriage licenses which shall be available for public inspection during regular business hours.

71.5-4. *Officiating Persons.*

(a) The following persons are authorized as officiating persons under this law:

(1) a traditional tribal practitioner or spiritual or religious leader who is commonly recognized as such by the Oneida community or other Indian community and registered with the Commission as such; or

(2) a Commissioner from the Commission or a tribal, federal, or state judge or

commissioner authorized to solemnize marriages under tribal, federal or state law;  
or

(3) the Tribal Chairperson or a person designated by the Tribal Chairperson at the request of the persons being married; or

(4) any ordained clergyperson of any religious denomination, society, or sect; or

(5) any person licensed by a religious body or appointed by a high-ranking clergy member, if the religious denomination, society, or sect allows the person to solemnize marriages; or

(6) the parties themselves, by mutual declarations that they take each other as husband and wife, in accordance with the customs, rules, and regulations of any religious denomination, society, or sect to which either of the parties belongs.

(b) Registration. The Commission shall establish guidelines for registering traditional tribal practitioners or spiritual or religious leaders who qualify as “officiating persons” under this law.

### **71.6. Marriages Conducted to Avoid the Law and Immaterial Irregularities**

71.6-1. If a person is prohibited from marrying another under this law and goes to another jurisdiction and there contracts a marriage that is prohibited under this law, such marriage shall not be recognized by the Tribe.

71.6-2. No marriage shall be contracted under this law by a party residing and intending to continue to reside in another jurisdiction, if such marriage would be void if contracted in such other jurisdiction. Every marriage celebrated in violation of this provision shall be void.

71.6-3. *Immaterial Irregularities.* A marriage shall be recognized as valid if the marriage is consummated with the full belief on the part of the persons so married that they have been lawfully joined in marriage, and:

(a) the officiating person(s) did not have the authority to solemnize the marriage; or

(b) the marriage license was issued by a department or person who did not have jurisdiction to issue the license; or

(c) the marriage license or application for the marriage license had an informality or irregularity; or

(d) either or both of the witnesses to the marriage were incompetent; or

(e) the marriage ceremony was solemnized outside of the Reservation boundaries, or Brown or Outagamie County, when applicable, or outside of the required time lines listed on the marriage license.

### **71.7. Penalties**

71.7-1. A person who knowingly violates this law may be penalized as follows:

(a) Any person who swears to a false statement to obtain a marriage license or to help another obtain a marriage license shall be fined no less than five hundred dollars (\$500.00).

(b) Any person who is not an officiating person who solemnizes a marriage ceremony shall be fined no less than one hundred dollars (\$100.00).

(c) The parties to a marriage and/or the officiating person(s) of a marriage conducted without a valid marriage license or without the presence of two (2) competent adult witnesses shall be fined no less than one hundred dollars (\$100.00).

(d) Any person who goes to another jurisdiction to avoid this law and contracts a marriage prohibited under this law shall be fined no less than five hundred dollars (\$500.00).

(e) Any person who violates any other provision of this law shall be fined no less than one hundred dollars (\$100.00).

*End.*

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