

A cluster of colorful stars in shades of pink, purple, yellow, and red, scattered in the top-left corner of the page.

KATRINA LEE

THE
DISASTER
ZONE
WEDDING

A free guide to figure out
what to do

A large, dense cluster of colorful stars in shades of pink, purple, yellow, and red, scattered in the bottom-right corner of the page.

You or your celebrant are in a disaster zone and you are not together, what do you do now?

Firstly, its rare and most couples choose to cancel or postpone depending on the situation but just know that you dont have too.

With all the disaster zones of late, I thought I would share with you a guide to assist you. Because being prepared for anything is the best way to get through anything.

If you can contact and communicate with your celebrant, ask for your Notice of Intended Marriage to be transferred to another celebrant in your area or one that can get to you.

Any celebrant "in possession of the Notice of Intended Marriage" can solemnise your marriage. As long as your celebrant can communicate the notice can be electronically transferred.

If you have booked with me you will have recieved your ceremony as well and can use this to keep things as you wanted them. I keep all documents scanned for emergencies so you only need to ask and I can send everything you need.

I will also assist you in finding a substitute

You will need to show the substitute celebrant your documents

These are:

Proof of birth (passport or birth certificate)

Photo ID (eg passport, driver license, proof of age card)

Divorce or death certificate of former spouse if relevant

Change of name certificate if relevant)

They will prepare new certificates which means you will need to resign the Declaration of No Legal Impediment if you have already signed it.

The new celebrant will solemnise your marriage and register it should communications completely cut out.

What do you do if you cannot communicate with your celebrant?

If communication to your celebrant is cut off, you should find a substitute celebrant and explain the situation. If I am aware that this might happen I will endeavour to have a contact for you or several in the area that you can contact. I will also have sent the documents to you. However, if this hasn't happened, you will need to find a celebrant, start at this website

<https://marriage.ag.gov.au/>

Look under "list of commonwealth registered celebrants"

There are over 9000 listed so you should be able to find one.

You will need to complete a new Notice of Intended Marriage with the substitute celebrant

Ask your substitute celebrant to support your application for shortening of time and assist you with applying

One of the grounds for getting permission to marry with less than one month's notice (Shortening of Time), is wedding arrangements. Meaning the original arrangements have changed due to an event out of your control.

You will need to make an appointment to see a Prescribed Authority (that's a person who has the authority to grant shortening of time). Prescribed Authorities can be found at Births, Deaths and Marriages in the capital city of your state, or at a courthouse.

Some states require you to fill in a form.

You will need to take supporting evidence with you - your invoice that I send would do as well as the emails from me. You will also need to explain why the Notice of Intended Marriage isn't obtainable.

In my experience Prescribed Authorities are very compassionate and helpful, while there is a fee for shortening of time, it is not uncommon for that to be waived where the circumstances are particularly harrowing.

What happens if you are without your celebrant or your documents?

Rarely it happens where you arrived at your holiday/wedding destination early, expecting your celebrant to meet you there, but your celebrant now can't make it to you. Through accidents and emergencies or travel issues like flight delays. It does happen.

If you don't have your documents to show the substitute celebrant you will have a problem. Even if your original celebrant has been able to transfer the Notice, you must still show your substitute celebrant your identity documents.

If you have booked with me I will have sent you the documents we create in an email with your ceremony. But you will still need to show your birth certificate etc.

It is now legal for a celebrant to accept scans of all identity documents except your driver licence. So you can scan all your identification documents before you leave home and have them on your phone.

Make sure that you scan the originals. A scan of a JP certified photocopy is NOT acceptable for the purpose of marriage.

No witnesses? Not a problem.

In Australia anyone over the age of 18 can be a witness to your marriage.

So, if necessary, a couple of strangers can sign for you. I have had the photographer and hotel manager or wait staff sign on occasion.

We always hope that people won't need to be married under these circumstances but you find yourself in any of these situations at least now you have a plan.



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*Not your
average
celebrant*

Enquire

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