

Apostilles and Certifications

Most European countries require an Apostille or Certification of your marriage license and the signatures thereon if you are married outside your country.

The California Secretary of State provides authentication of public official signatures on documents to be used outside the United States of America. The country of destination determines whether the authentication is an Apostille or Certification.

Apostilles and certifications only certify to the authenticity of the signature of the official who signed the document, the capacity in which that official acted, and when appropriate, the identity of the seal or stamp which the document bears. The Apostille or Certification does not validate the contents of the document.

The California Secretary of State authenticates signatures on documents issued in the State of California signed by a notary public or the County Clerks or Recorders.

Detailed information about Apostilles and Certifications can be found at the following site: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/business/notary/authentication.html>

If your country requires an Apostille:

1. Obtain a certified copy of your marriage license from the County Clerk Recorder's Office that issued your license which may be obtained on the day you marry if you walk your license in to the Recorder's Office and pay a \$10.00 fee. Or you may request certified copies by mail once you get to your home country.
2. Send the following to The Secretary of State's Main Office: 1500 11th Street, Sacramento, Ca. 95814 USA (Phone: 1 916-657-5448)
 - a) A certified copy of your marriage license.
 - b) A check or money order for \$20.00 payable to the Secretary of State
 - c) A cover letter requesting an Apostille, the country you need it for, and provide your name, address, phone number and the address to which the Apostille should be sent.

To expedite the process, use Fed Ex for your communications.