

Marriage in Laos

**U.S. Embassy
Vientiane, Laos**

Decree No. 198/PM governing marriage between foreigners and Lao citizens went into effect on December 19, 1994. Enforcement of the decree began in late May 1995. The decree applies to all foreign citizens who wish to marry a Lao citizen. The steps outlined below describe the process to the best of the Embassy's knowledge. The process can be long and complicated. Procedures, timelines, and fees are subject to change without notice.

The Lao government will not issue a marriage certificate if the correct procedures have not been followed. Any attempt to circumvent Lao law governing marriage between foreigners and Lao citizens may result in deportation of the foreigner and denial of permission to reenter Laos.

Lao authorities advise American citizens interested in marrying Lao citizens to begin the process by contacting the Lao Embassy in Washington D.C. The marriage application forms for Lao citizens who wish to marry foreigners are available in Provincial offices. Lao citizens residing in Vientiane Capital can obtain the forms in the Municipality Administration Office.

The Lao decree governing marriage between foreigners and Lao citizens requires that the parties present the following documents:

Documents Required from a Lao Citizen

1. ຄໍາຮ້ອງຂໍແຕ່ງງານ -- Marriage application
2. ຊີວະປະຫວັດຫຍໍ້ -- Biographic information
3. ໃບຢັ້ງຢືນທີ່ຢູ່ -- Residence certificate
4. ໃບຢັ້ງຢືນຄວາມເປັນໂສດ -- Certificate that you are single
(If you have previously been married, you must also submit a divorce or death certificate to demonstrate that previous relationships have been legally terminated)
5. ໃບຢັ້ງຢືນສຸຂະພາບ -- Medical examination
6. ໃບແຈ້ງໂທດເລກ 3 -- Punishment record No. 3
(Valid for three months from the issue date)
7. ໃບພັນໝາຍຄູ່ບ່າວ-ສາວ -- Engagement certificate
8. ສໍາເນົາປຶ້ມສໍາມະໂນຄົວ, ບັດປະຈຳຕົວ -- Copy of the family book, ID card
9. ຮູບຂະໜາດ 3x4, 3 ແຜ່ນ -- 3 Photographs, 3x4cm size

Punishment Record No. 3 - This is the Lao citizen's police record. A Lao citizen residing in Vientiane Capital can apply for this document with the People's Court (ສານປະຊາຊົນ). Lao citizens residing elsewhere can apply for this document in the province's district court.

Documents Required from a Foreigner

1. **Marriage Application**
2. **Biographic Information**
3. **Residence Certificate**
4. **Certificate that you are single**
(If you have previously been married, you must also submit a divorce or death certificate to demonstrate that previous relationships have been legally terminated)
5. **Repatriation Guarantee and Financial Support**
6. **Medical Examination**
7. **Police Record**
(Valid for three months from the issue date)
8. **Certificate of Economic Status**
9. **Copy of passport and ID card or drivers license**
(Individuals working in Laos should submit their work permit)
10. **6 Photographs, 3X4cm size**
11. **Embassy agreement**
(Obtained from the Embassy in the form of a notarized document)

The Embassy provides notary services for items 3, 4, 5, 7 and 11. Typically these items can be combined into one document though some Lao offices may require separate documents for some of the items. Each notarized document from the Embassy costs \$50. Item 8 is proof of your employment, usually in the form of a job letter, and proof of your ability to support your Lao spouse.

All documents required for the marriage application should be in your native language. English documents must be translated into Lao by an official translation company.

Places to Go in Laos: The following process applies only to Vientiane Municipality. The process in other provinces may not be the same. If you submitted documents to the Lao Embassy in Washington D.C., you may have to begin the process by visiting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vientiane.

After collecting all the needed documents, you should expect to visit various government offices as follows. Each office may require a fee.

Village Chief Office: Obtain the village chief's signature for the Lao citizen's documents.

District Administration Office: Present the complete application. This office will issue a recommendation for marriage.

District Police Headquarters: This office will conduct an interview about your relationship and will then issue an Interview Report.

Municipality Police Headquarters, Foreigner Control Unit: At this office you must inform the police officials that you intend to get married. This office will report this information to the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Consular Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Present all of the documents for the acknowledgement stamps. There is a fee for each page that must be stamped. Fees for Lao citizens and

foreigners may be different. Normally, the officials will stamp only 5-6 important documents (not the whole application). The Consular Department will write a report for the Foreigner Control Department of the Ministry of Public Security.

Foreigner Control Department of Ministry of Public Security:

This office will create two requests (for the Municipality Administration office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Municipality Administration office:

After this office receives the request, you and your Lao partner will schedule an appointment to sign the documents and finalize the marriage certificate.