

38.4

Sealing Policies

Church members make sacred covenants with God as they receive temple ordinances. The temple sealing ordinances join families for eternity as members strive to honor the covenants they make when they receive the ordinance. Sealing ordinances include:

- Sealing of a husband and wife.
- Sealing of children to parents.

Those who keep their covenants will retain the individual blessings provided by the sealing. This is true even if the person's spouse has broken the covenants or withdrawn from the marriage.

Faithful children who are sealed to parents or born in the covenant retain the blessing of eternal parentage. This is true even if their parents cancel their marriage sealing, have their Church membership withdrawn, or resign their membership.

Members who have concerns about the eternal nature of the sealing ordinance and their associated family and spousal relationships are encouraged to trust in the Lord and seek His comfort.

Members should counsel with their bishop if they have questions about sealing policies that are not answered in this section. The bishop contacts the stake president if he has questions. Stake presidents may contact the temple presidency in their temple district, the Area Presidency, or the Office of the First Presidency if they have questions.

38.4.1

Sealing of a Man and a Woman

Need	Section
I was married civilly and want to be sealed to my spouse.	38.4.1.1
I am divorced from a previous spouse and want to be sealed to my current spouse.	38.4.1.2
My spouse to whom I was sealed died. To whom may I now be sealed?	38.4.1.3
I need to apply for a sealing cancellation or a sealing clearance.	38.4.1.4
I need to have a restriction against temple sealing removed.	38.4.1.5
My spouse and I were married for time only in the temple. Can we be sealed to one another?	38.4.1.6
To whom may my deceased family members be sealed?	38.4.1.7
How does divorce affect my sealing?	38.4.1.8

Need	Section
What are the effects of canceling a sealing?	38.4.1.9
How does resignation or withdrawal of Church membership affect my sealing?	38.4.1.10

38.4.1.1

Sealing of Living Members after Civil Marriage

A man and woman who were married civilly may be sealed in the temple as soon as circumstances permit if the following conditions are met:

- They both have been members of the Church for at least one year (see 27.3.1 and 27.2.1).
- They are prepared and worthy.

When issuing temple recommends for a couple to be sealed, priesthood leaders make sure the civil marriage is legally valid. See 26.3 and 27.3.

38.4.1.2

Sealing of Living Members after Divorce

Women. A living woman may be sealed to only one husband at a time. If she and a husband were sealed and later divorced, she must receive a cancellation of that sealing before being sealed to another man during her lifetime (see 38.4.1.4).

A living woman who is not currently married or sealed to another man may be sealed to a deceased husband from whom she was divorced in life. She must first receive signed consent from her former husband's widow (if there is one).

See chapter 28 for information about performing ordinances for a deceased spouse.

Men. If a man and woman were sealed and later divorced, the man must receive a sealing clearance before being sealed to another woman (see 38.4.1.4). A sealing clearance is necessary even if (1) the previous sealing has been canceled or (2) the previous wife is deceased.

A sealing clearance is needed only if a man is divorced from the woman who was most recently sealed to him. For example, if a man received a sealing clearance to be sealed to a second wife after a divorce, and then his second wife dies, he would not need another sealing clearance to be sealed again.

A living man may be sealed to a deceased wife from whom he was divorced in life. He must first receive signed consent from his former wife's widower (if there is one). He also must receive written consent from his current wife if he is married.

See chapter 28 for information about performing ordinances for a deceased spouse.

38.4.1.3

Sealing of Living Members after a Spouse's Death

Women. If a husband and wife have been sealed and the husband dies, the woman may not be sealed to another man unless she receives a cancellation of the first sealing (see 38.4.1.4).

A living woman who is not currently married or sealed to another man may be sealed to a deceased husband. If the marriage ended in divorce, see 38.4.1.2.

A living woman who is currently married may not be sealed to a deceased husband without First Presidency approval.

See chapter 28 for information about performing ordinances for a deceased spouse.

Men. If a husband and wife have been sealed and the wife dies, the man may be sealed to another woman if she is not already sealed to another man. In this circumstance, the man does not need a sealing clearance from the First Presidency unless he was divorced from his previous wife before she died (see 38.4.1.2).

A living man may be sealed to a deceased wife. If the marriage ended in divorce, see 38.4.1.2.

Before being sealed to a deceased wife, a man must receive written consent from his current wife if he is married.

See chapter 28 for information about performing ordinances for a deceased spouse.

38.4.1.4

Applying for a Sealing Cancellation or a Sealing Clearance

See 38.4.1.2 for information about the sealing of living members after a divorce. See 38.4.1.3 for information about the sealing of living members after a spouse's death.

Members of either gender may seek a sealing cancellation even if they are not preparing to be sealed to another spouse. A male Church member must receive a sealing clearance to be sealed to another woman after a divorce.

The process for seeking a sealing cancellation or sealing clearance is outlined below.

1. The member speaks with his or her bishop about the request.
2. The bishop ensures that:
 - a. The divorce is final.
 - b. The member is current in all legal requirements for child and spousal support related to the divorce.
3. If the bishop recommends that the sealing cancellation or sealing clearance be granted, he:
 - a. Fills out an Application to the First Presidency for the member using Leader and Clerk Resources (LCR). Leaders who do not have access to LCR instead use a physical copy of the Application to the First Presidency form. This form is available from the Confidential Records Office at Church headquarters.
 - b. Submits the application to the stake president.

4. The stake president meets with the member. The stake president verifies that:
 - a. The divorce is final.
 - b. The member is current in all legal requirements for child and spousal support related to the divorce.
5. If the stake president recommends that the sealing cancellation or sealing clearance be granted, he submits the application to Church headquarters using LCR. See 6.2.3 about the stake president's responsibility when submitting applications to the First Presidency.
6. If the request is approved, the First Presidency provides a letter stating that the sealing cancellation or sealing clearance has been granted.
7. After receiving the letter, the member may schedule an appointment for a temple sealing. The member presents the letter at the temple.

See 38.4.1.9.

38.4.1.5

Removing a Restriction against Temple Sealing

A person who commits adultery while married to a spouse to whom he or she has been sealed may not be sealed to the partner in the adultery without approval from the First Presidency.

A couple may seek approval after they have been married for at least five years. The process for making a request to remove a restriction against temple sealing is outlined below.

1. The couple meets with their bishop and stake president.
2. If these leaders feel that the restriction should be removed, they write letters to the First Presidency with their recommendations. Their letters should describe the applicants' temple worthiness and the stability of their marriage for at least five years. See 6.2.3 about the stake president's responsibility when submitting applications to the First Presidency.
3. The couple also writes a letter of request to the First Presidency.
4. The stake president submits all of these letters to the First Presidency. He may submit the request with an application for a sealing cancellation or sealing clearance (see 38.4.1.4).
5. If the request is approved, the First Presidency provides a letter stating that the restriction against temple sealing has been removed.
6. After receiving the letter, the couple may schedule an appointment to be sealed. They present the letter at the temple.

38.4.1.6

Sealing after Temple Marriage for Time Only

Couples who were married in a temple for time only are not usually sealed later. For such a sealing to occur, the woman must first receive from the First Presidency a cancellation of her previous sealing. If the bishop and stake president both feel that a cancellation is justified, the stake president submits an application to the First Presidency using LCR. See 6.2.3 about the stake president's responsibility when submitting applications to the First Presidency.

Time-only marriages in the temple are no longer performed (see 27.3.3).

38.4.1.7

Sealing of Deceased Persons

This section applies to deceased persons being sealed to spouses who are also deceased. If one of the spouses is still living, see 38.4.1.3.

Deceased Women. A deceased woman may be sealed to all men to whom she was legally married during her life. The following table shows when these sealings may take place.

She was not sealed to a husband in life	She may be sealed to all living or deceased men to whom she was married in life. If the man is living, his wife (if he is married) must give written consent. If the man is deceased, his widow (if any) must give written consent.
She was sealed to a husband in life	All her husbands must be deceased before she is sealed to other men to whom she was married. This includes former husbands from whom she may have been divorced. Each of the men's widows (if any) must give written consent.

Deceased Men. A deceased man may be sealed to all women to whom he was legally married during his life if (1) they are deceased or (2) they are living and are not sealed to another man.

Before a deceased man may be sealed to a deceased woman to whom he was married in life, the woman's widower (if there is one) must give written consent.

Deceased Couples Who Were Divorced. Deceased couples who were divorced may be sealed by proxy so their children can be sealed to them. See 28.3.5 if either the husband or wife had Church membership withdrawn or had resigned membership and had not been rebaptized at the time of death.

First Presidency approval is required before sealing a deceased couple who obtained a cancellation of their sealing in life.

38.4.1.8

Effects of Divorce

If a couple was sealed and later divorced, the blessings of that sealing remain in effect for individuals who are worthy unless the sealing is canceled (see 38.4.1.4 and 38.4.1.9). A member who remains faithful to temple covenants will receive every blessing promised in the temple, even if the person's spouse has broken the covenants or withdrawn from the marriage.

See 38.4.2.1 for information about children who are born after a divorce.

38.4.1.9

Effects of Sealing Cancellation

Once a sealing cancellation has been approved by the First Presidency, the blessings related to that sealing are no longer in force. Priesthood leaders counsel with members seeking a cancellation of a sealing to help them understand these principles. Leaders should honor members' agency in these decisions.