

Hikone City Partnership Oath System

1. Objective

The city of Hikone, based on the philosophy of the Hikone City Declaration of Respect for Human Rights City, aims to promote the development of a society where everyone's human rights are respected.

In order to materialize a society in which each and every one of us can live the way we are, it is essential to recognize diversity in individual values. On the one hand social acceptance of gender and sexual diversity has been slowly taking root in recent years, but on the other hand it is believed that many sexual minorities are still suffering discrimination and prejudice against them.

In response to those circumstances, the city of Hikone initiated the Partnership Oath System with a view to encouraging understanding of sexual minorities and improving their ability to take part in society where each Hikone resident embraces diverse individuality and values. Please bear in mind that this oath system generates no legal rights or obligations.

2. Overview

Under this system, regardless of gender in the family register, couples in which one or both partners are of a sexual minority can jointly proclaim that their significant other is their life partner and make a pledge to cooperate with each other while living together with a sense of mutual responsibility as each other's partners for life. In so doing, they will receive certification from the city government. Couples who want to be certified by the city government do not necessarily have to be living together at the time of signing the oath papers.

This system has been established by the city to honor the free will of couples as partners. Please note that this system is different from a marriage in the civil law and does not entitle couples to have any legal status or rights.

3. Name of the System

Hikone City Partnership Oath System

4. Eligibility Criteria

Couples wish to make an oath under the Hikone City Partnership Oath System must meet all the following conditions.

- (1) Both or either partners must belong to sexual minorities.
- (2) Both or either partners must be residents of Hikone City.
- (3) Both neither must be married nor in a partnership with other individuals.
- (4) Both must not be in a kinship that precludes marriage in accordance with the Civil Code, with the exception of the case that they are in adoptive kinship.
- (5) Both must be adults.

(Japan's civil code defines the age of adulthood at 20 years old. It is expected, however, the legal age of adulthood in Japan will be lowered from 20 to 18 years old after April 1, 2022.)

5. Procedure

- (1) Schedule an Appointment for the Desired Oath Date and Time by Email, by Phone, or in Person
(Couples can make an oath under the partnership oath system between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM on weekdays, excluding weekends, national holidays, and the New Year's holiday period from December 29 to January 3.)
- (2) Sign the oath papers in front of the city officials in charge and submit it with other required documents.
- (3) Receive the Hikone City Partnership Oath Acceptance Certificate and Hikone City Partnership Oath Acceptance Card (hereafter referred to as the acceptance card).

6. Requisite Documents

- (1) A certificate of residence or certificate of items stated in resident register.
- (2) Document that verifies an unmarried status (a certificate of the family register, a single status certificate, etc.)
As for foreign nationals, a certificate of legal capacity to contract marriage etc. and Japanese translation of the same certificate is required.
- (3) Identification (Driver’s license, My Number card, residence card, etc.)
- (4) In addition to those listed in the preceding three times, documents the mayor deems necessary.

7. Documents to Be Issued

- (1) Hikone City Partnership Oath Acceptance Certificate
- (2) Hikone City Partnership Oath Acceptance Card

8. Using an Alias

If there is a special reason, the use of an alias is permitted for this oath system.

9. Returning Certificates, etc.

If any of the following happens, those who have made an oath and got approved must return their certificates, etc.

- (1) Couples have dissolved their partnership.
- (2) Both partners are no longer residents of Hikone City.
- (3) A partner has deceased.
- (4) Either both or a partner no longer meet the conditions set for this oath system.

10. Invalid Certificates, etc.

If any of the following happens, partnership oaths become invalid.

- (1) Information written on the oath papers is doctored.
- (2) Certificates, etc. are falsified and misused.
- (3) Those wishing to make an oath do not meet all the criteria at the time of submitting the oath papers.

11. Government Services Available to Those Who Have the Partnership Oath Certificate and Card

Government Service	What’s Available
An Application for the Certificate of Ambulance Transportation	An application can be filed by a partner
An Application for the Disaster Certificate (Fire)	An application can be filed by a partner
An Application for City-Run Housing	Eligibility to move in is given to a partner
Receiving Consolation Payments for Families of Deceased Crime Victims	Conditions for payments can apply to a partner.

Hikone City will expand government services available to those who have the Partnership Oath Certificate and Card.

12. Regarding Co-ordination and Co-operation with Private Companies

More and more services offered by private companies (such as family discount on a cell phone plan, receiving life insurance benefits, home loan, etc.) are becoming available to couples who have pledged a partnership oath and been approved by a municipal government. The city of Hikone continues to work closely with private companies and help couples who have pledged a partnership oath to gain more information of services increasingly available to them.

13. Start Date

2021, October 1

14. Notes

The city of Hikone continuously strives to further spread awareness of the main purpose of this partnership oath system for the equal treatment of people of all sexual orientations and genders.