

South Africa - Marriages and Divorces 2024

Statistics South Africa

Report generated on: May 26, 2026

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Identification

SURVEY ID NUMBER

ZAF_2024_MD_v01_M

TITLE

Marriages and Divorces 2024

ABBREVIATION OR ACRONYM

2024 MD

COUNTRY

Name	Country code
South Africa	ZAF

STUDY TYPE

Other Household Survey [hh/oth]

ABSTRACT

The Marriages and Divorces (MD) dataset is one of three primary sources of marriage and divorce statistics in South Africa. Unlike the other two sources (population censuses and household sample surveys), the MD dataset is compiled from administrative data and based on continuous recording (i.e. from civil registration systems and administrative records). Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) regularly publishes a series of data on marriages and divorces, with the first dataset in the series beginning in 2006. The most recent dataset in the series is MD 2024.

Marriage data: Data on marriages for citizens and permanent residents are obtained from registered marriage records that are collected through the civil registration systems of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). South Africa recognises three types of marriages by law: civil marriages, customary marriages, and civil unions. Before 2008, marriage data only covered civil marriages. The registration of customary marriages and civil unions began in 2003 and 2007 respectively. However, from 2008 onwards, Stats SA began publishing available data on customary marriages and civil unions.

Divorce data: Data on divorces are obtained from various regional courts that deal with divorce matters. The data are based on successful divorce cases that have been issued with a decree of divorce by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJCD) and the Office of the Chief Justice. Divorce cases come from marriages that were registered in different years as well as divorce cases that were filed in different years but whose divorce decrees were granted in the relevant year of collection.

NOTE: Although both the data on marriages and divorces are collected in the same year, the data files from each cannot be merged because there is no to link the records at the individual level

KIND OF DATA

Administrative records data [adm]

UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Individuals

Version

VERSION DESCRIPTION

Version 1: Edited, anonymised data for public distribution.

VERSION DATE

2026

VERSION NOTES

DataFirst downloaded this version from the StatsSA website on 8th May, 2026

Scope

NOTES

The marriage data is provided to Statistics South Africa by the South African Department of Home Affairs (DHA) from their marriage registration database based on registration forms. The province of registration of marriages and unions recorded may not necessarily be the province or place of usual residence of the couple. Hence, registration of the marriage can take place at any DHA office. The divorce data is obtained by Statistics South Africa from the South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development from administrative records on divorces granted for civil marriages by its divorce courts.

Coverage

GEOGRAPHIC UNIT

The lowest level of geographic aggregation covered by the data is province

UNIVERSE

The data covers all civil marriages, civil unions and customary marriages that were recorded by the Department of Home Affairs and all divorce applications that were granted by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development in 2024 in South Africa.

Producers and sponsors

PRIMARY INVESTIGATORS

Name	Affiliation
Statistics South Africa	Government of South Africa

PRODUCERS

Name	Affiliation	Role
Department of Home Affairs	Government of South Africa	Data producer
Department of Justice and Constitutional Development	Government of South Africa	Data producer

Data collection

DATES OF DATA COLLECTION

Start	End
2024	2024

DATA COLLECTION MODE

Other [other]

DATA COLLECTORS

Name	Abbreviation	Role	Affiliation
Department of Home Affairs	DHA	Marriage registration	Government of South Africa
Department of Justice and Constitutional Development	DOJCD	Divorce data	Government of South Africa

Access policy

CONTACTS

Name	Email	URL
DataFirst Support	support@data1st.org	Link

ACCESS CONDITIONS

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CITATION REQUIREMENTS

Statistics South Africa. Marriages and Divorces 2024 [dataset]. Version 1. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa [producer], 2026. Cape Town: DataFirst [distributor], 2026. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25828/nbz2-1504>

ACCESS AUTHORITY

Name	Affiliation	Email	URL
DataFirst	University of Cape Town	support@data1st.org	Link

LOCATION OF DATA COLLECTION

DataFirst data repository

ARCHIVE WHERE STUDY IS ORIGINALLY STORED

Statistics South Africa's Isibalo site

Metadata production

DDI DOCUMENT ID

DDI_ZAF_2024_MD_v01_M

PRODUCERS

Name	Abbreviation	Affiliation	Role
Datafirst		University of Cape Town	Metadata producer
Development Data Group	DECDG	The World Bank	Metadata adapted for World Bank Microdata Library

DATE OF METADATA PRODUCTION

2026-05-13

DDI DOCUMENT VERSION

Identical to a metadata (zaf-statssa-md-2024-v1) published on DataFirst microdata repository (<https://www.datafirst.uct.ac.za/dataportal/index.php/catalog>). Some of the metadata fields have been edited.

Data Dictionary

Data file	Cases	Variables
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