

Essential Questions for Every Bride-to-Be: Vendor Edition

Availability:

- Is (the date desired) available?*
- (If not) What dates are available in the month I'm considering?*
- What are the rates for different days or timings within the weekend we're discussing (Friday, Saturday, Sunday; morning, afternoon or evening)?*
- Can you hold this date for us? (*Hotels should not charge to reserve this wedding date for 1-2 weeks.)*
- How many other weddings are booked that day?*

Logistics:

- How many people can this location/hall accommodate?
 - a. *(If needed) are there options for expansion or reduction?**
- Do you offer sites for ceremony here? What is the maximum occupancy of the ceremony site?*
- Is the site close to that of the reception hall?
 - a. *(If far) is there a shuttle or other transportation options available?*
 - b. *(If booking a ceremony site at venue) Where can guests congregate/socialize in interim between ceremony and reception? Is there a cocktail hour room?**
- How do you allot parking for guests? Is it complimentary? Are there an adequate number of spots?*
- Do you have a bride's changing area?*
- Do you set aside a time/date for a wedding rehearsal?*
- Do you have a preferred vendors list? Are we restricted to these vendors or can we hire our own?*
- Is live music/DJ and dancing permitted and feasible in the space? Are there any noise restrictions?*
- Do you offer any sound equipment and speakers we can use for the event? Are they available to rent?*
- Where are the bathrooms located in relation to the hall? Are there an adequate number for our number of guests?*
- Is there signage available to help direct my guests?*
- Do you have liability insurance in case of any emergencies?*
- (If you have guests with disabilities) is the site handicap accessible?*
- What is the hotel's plan or policy for rain or inclement weather?*
- (If using your own vendor for décor) are there any restrictions or limitations as far as décor? What is your policy regarding candles?*
- How early can my vendors arrive and setup the venue?*
- Who is responsible for cleaning up (plates, décor takedown, etc.)? Is there a time restriction on clean-up?*
- At what time must my guests leave the facility? Is there a penalty if they leave past this time?*
- Are there any special limitations or restrictions for my photographer? Are there any areas that are not permitted for photography? Are there limitations in terms of flash usage?*
- What's the cancellation policy?*
- (If you're having a winter wedding) ask if the venue offers coat check service. (If not) is there an area that can be used and staffed for that purpose?*

- Is a Fire Marshall necessary or required for the event given our number of guests?*
- Does your venue offer tables, linens, chairs, plates, silverware and glassware? Are there any fees for these? If I must get these items from an outside vendor, are there any special limitations to consider?*

Payment:

- What is the venue's rental fee and what is included in this value? Are there any discounts for off-season dates?*
- Do you offer any payment plans? When are the payment/installments due?*
- What if any are the other associated costs with the rental, like cleaning fees, overtime penalties, and gratuity/service fees?*
- Is our deposit refundable? Is there a penalty for cancellation?*
- What is the final date to make any changes?*
- Is there a fee for using outside vendors?*
- Is there a minimum or maximum rental time required?*
- Is there a corkage fee?*
- Are there any penalties for not meeting any food and beverage minimum?*
- How much is the food and beverage cost per person? Is there an additional service charge?*

Food & Drinks:

- Is there an in-house caterer? Do we have to use that caterer?
 - a. *For in-house caterers, does your menu cater to audiences with dietary restrictions?*
 - b. *Do you offer options for vegetarians?*
 - c. *(If applicable) Would you be able to use Kosher or Zabihah meat?**
- If I hire my own caterer, then can they use the kitchen facilities?*
- (If applicable) Do you have a liquor license? What is your pricing for alcohol?*
- (If applicable) Will you allow us to bring our own liquor?*
- Do you allow outside cake vendors or are we required to use a preferred cake vendor? Is there any cake-cutting fee? Do you offer special cake-cutting utensils?*

Staff:

- Does your venue offer any facility point person before and/or during the wedding?*
- Is there a separate fee for on-site coordination? What services are included with our rental?*

Extras:

- (If you're booking a hotel), are there any complimentary rooms or a honeymoon suite offered for the newlyweds and/or their parents?
 - a. *Do you offer discounted room blocks that we can reserve for our guests?*
 - b. *Is parking complimentary for guests who reside at the hotel?**
- Take pictures of the location, rooms, entrance, etc. so you can recall the details of each venue.*
- If you love the venue, ask your point person to prepare a proposal with details on pricing and policies. Have them include any additional taxes and service fees to get a rough estimate for the venue.*