



Sprit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment Wedding Planning Newsletter #10

Officiate/Officiant Timeline

Keeping track of time is important when planning a wedding...Use the following officiant timeline to maximize your schedule...

12 months before: If you are planning to be married at a house of worship but the priest, minister, or rabbi won't be performing your service, begin interviewing prospective officiant.

This is also valid for civil ceremonies.

10 months before: Select your officiant.

4 to 6 months before: Attend pre-wedding counseling classes if required or necessary.

1 to 2 months before: Write vows, if you're planning to recite your own at your ceremony.

1 month before: Meet with officiant to go over vows and special ceremony details. Apply for your marriage license.

2 weeks before: Confirm wedding date, time, location, and ceremony details with the officiant.

Day before: Give the wedding license to the officiant. Conduct wedding rehearsal and attend Rehearsal Dinner.

Wedding Day: Give the officiant's fee to your best man so he can give it to the officiant after the ceremony.

Officiant Styles

Understanding and identifying the various styles associated with weddings is important...Here is a look at Officiant styles...

There are generally two types of officiants for wedding ceremonies: Traditional and Multi-Denominational.

Traditional: This type of officiant is usually recognized for a single religious style of wedding ceremony such as Catholic, Jewish, Latter Day Saints, etc.

Multi-Denominational: This type of officiant is recognized to be able to perform a variety of styles of wedding ceremonies, including dual-faith ceremonies. Make sure to check with your prospective officiant about which faiths he or she is accredited for ceremonies.

What to Look For

It is sometimes difficult to know what makes a quality wedding vendor...we've provided a guide to help you identify the key things to look for...

Inspecting the credentials and accreditation of a prospective officiant is important for the lawful recognition of your wedding.

Degrees: Check the educational background of an officiant. You most likely will want someone with a degree from a seminary or similar school.

Presentation: How the officiant looks during your consultation can give you an idea of how they will be on your wedding day. They should dress conservatively and have a neat appearance. The formality of your wedding should have little bearing on the officiant's wedding day attire.

Speaking Skills: The officiant should be able to converse with you effectively and without nervousness considering they may be speaking in front of several hundred people on your wedding day.

Public Address Style: You should choose an officiant that fits your style, whether that's traditional and conservative; or contemporary and creative; or even dramatic. Their style of public address is not their conversational style, so we recommend you see them performing a ceremony in order to fully understand how they will conduct your wedding.

New Trends

Wedding trends change and evolve with each New Year...we've provided a run-down of the newest, hottest trends in wedding ceremonies...

Pre-wedding counseling is a good idea to help each of you understand the level of commitment and compassion you must have to make a marriage work. Check with your officiant to see if there are counseling options available through them.

Many couples are writing their own vows for their wedding ceremony. If this way of truly personalizing your ceremony is important, make sure to choose an officiant who accepts this. The officiant may have some suggestions to even further personalize your special words.

Lots of couples include special readings, performances or rituals within their ceremony that individualize their wedding day experience. Your officiant may also have ideas to help you. This is also a nice way to pay respect to multiple religions if your wedding is combining faiths.

Thematic weddings are growing in popularity with each season. Officiants are performing ceremonial vows on sky dives, scuba dives, and literally anything you can imagine. Finding an officiant of this ability takes more interviewing!

Wedding ceremonies are not limited to a church or a synagogue. Officiants can perform your ceremony in places like your parent's backyard, a beach, a boat, the park, community center, country club, or resort.

Package/Options

Understanding the typical wedding officiant packages and options is important...Here is a look at what is usually available for weddings...

Package

A standard package calls for the officiant to perform a rehearsal ceremony and the actual ceremony, usually held a day apart.

Depending on the nature of the travel, some officiants expect travel reimbursements.

Options

Pre-wedding Counseling: This is sometimes a required part of a wedding ceremony for certain religions. It is also a good option that helps to address the upcoming changes in your lives together. It can help ease the nervousness of taking “the plunge”.

On-location Ceremony: If you’re planning a ceremony out in nature or at a remote, special location, you need to consider the travel plans of your officiant and spouse, if applicable.

Post-wedding Counseling: This is a follow-up service that can be instrumental in interpreting the changes and differences in your life together. Receiving an outside perspective from someone that you respect can sometimes give you a new approach to dealing with the situation.

Keys to Success

Here are some expert tips to make sure your wedding officiant experience is the best it possibly can be...

If you plan to write your own vows, share them with your officiant before the ceremony. They may be able to find an appropriate reading on that theme. If you’re trying to keep your vows secret from your significant other, then contact the officiant when you’ve got some time alone. This will give you the chance to “tune up” your vows without giving away your secret.

If you are planning to have a Rehearsal Dinner, it is customary and respectful to invite your officiant and his or her spouse, if any.

If you are getting married abroad, make certain to check the credentials of the officiant and any legal requirements you may need to fulfill in order to be recognized as lawfully married in the U.S.

It is also a good idea to invite your officiant to your reception. Some may not be able to attend as they have other weddings to perform but it is always nice to ask them anyway.

Officiant Questions

When you meet with your prospective wedding officiant, you’ll want to ask all the right questions...we’ve provided a list of what you should make sure to ask when you first speak with him or her about your wedding...The attitude and responses will speak volumes about whether you’ll want to include that officiant in your “Dream Team”...

Religious Ceremony

1. Are you available on our date?

2. If our wedding is at another location other than your place of worship, will you travel, and what are your requirements?

3. For our first meeting, which documents do we need to bring?

4. Are there any special rules or restrictions, i.e. music, readings, videotaping, etc.?

5. Are you willing to have personalized vows, readings, poems, and/or music?

6. Do you plan to give a sermon or speech?

7. How would you describe your style?

8. Can we attend one of your ceremonies in advance? We highly recommend you dress appropriately and attend a ceremony this person is officiating so that you know exactly what his or her ceremony is like.

9. Do we need to fulfill any pre-wedding counseling?

10. How much is your ceremony fee?

11. Can you provide your thoughts on our vows and/or potential readings?

12. Can you provide assistance with any family conflicts over the ceremony?

13. Do we need to bring our marriage license to the wedding?

14. What day should our rehearsal be held?

15. Can you attend the Rehearsal Dinner and/or the Reception?

Civil Ceremony

1. Are you available on our wedding date?

2. Will you travel to our ceremony site?

3. How would you describe your style?

4. Can we attend one of your ceremonies in advance? We highly recommend you dress appropriately and attend a ceremony this person is officiating so that you know exactly what his or her ceremony is like.

5. Do you have any suggestions for civil ceremony sites?

6. Is there a standard officiant's fee? Should the fee be a donation?

7. How many years have you been performing weddings?

8. Why do you perform weddings?

9. Do you have any sample vows, ceremonies, or wordings we can see?

10. Can we personalize our ceremony by writing our vows, using special music, etc.?

11. Will you be available for a rehearsal of the ceremony?

Things to pay attention to

Knowing the pitfalls and traps ahead of time can help save you money, time, and your sanity...Here's a list of things to avoid when planning your wedding ceremony...

- ✓ Make certain you allow enough time to get your marriage license before your ceremony.
- ✓ It is a good idea to go at least one month in advance to apply in person for it.
- ✓ Check with your local governmental agencies for marriage licensing.
- ✓ If you're planning a ceremony that requires travel, make certain to clarify all of the officiant's needs like lodging and travel costs, if necessary.
- ✓ If you're having an outdoor ceremony, make certain that you address a contingency plan with your officiant ahead of time. This plan should include alternate ceremony and/or reception site. Your officiant is one of the people you should consult with for any weather-oriented concerns.

- ✓ If you are trying to personalize your wedding ceremony, make sure to not pack too much into it. Especially if your ceremony is outdoors in the sun, your guests will grow distracted and uncomfortable if it goes on too long. You can practice your wedding ceremony with the officiant to get an idea of its running time.
- ✓ Keep track of the marriage license. With all the confusion of your wedding day, consider giving your marriage license to your Best Man to hold onto until it's time to sign it.

References

Checking the reputation, credentials, and service record of a prospective wedding officiant is important before you hire them...

There are several resources available to check the references of a particular wedding officiant:

- ✓ Family and friends who have recently been married.
- ✓ Better Business Bureau (B.B.B.).
- ✓ Local Resorts/Country Clubs.
- ✓ Other local wedding vendors.

Contract/Payment

Knowing what to include in a contract with a wedding officiant is important...We've created a list of important points to consider...

Contract

- Name and contact information for you and the officiant.
- Wedding date, time, and location.
- Donation or fee for officiant.
- Name of organization the check should be made payable to.
- Total estimated cost.
- Deposit amount due.
- Balance and balance due date.
- Cancellation and refund policy.
- Name of acceptable substitute in case of emergency.
- Officiant's signature.
- Your signatures.

Payment

Most Officiants require full payment before your wedding day. Some will ask for a 50% deposit upon booking and the remaining 50% due after your ceremony.

Backup Plans

Having a "Plan B" is always a good idea when it comes to planning your wedding...Here's a look at some ways to cover your bases...

- ✓ In case of emergency, it is a good idea to have contingency plans in place for a Backup Location and Backup Officiant:

- ✓ Backup Location: Be sure to tell your officiant where the backup location is in case of inclement weather. Give him or her an emergency number to call to confirm. Having the officiant late is tragic!
- ✓ Backup Officiant: Keep your second choice wedding officiant's information nearby in case of last minute change of plans.

Checklists

Timeline

- Interview Officiants
- Book Officiant
- Attend Pre-wedding Classes
- Write Vows
- Apply for Marriage License
- Ceremony Details Meeting
- Confirm Wedding Information
- Give Wedding License to Officiant
- Wedding Rehearsal
- Wedding Rehearsal Dinner
- Give Officiant's Fee to Best Man
- Pay Officiant

New Trends

- Personalizing Your Ceremony
- Thematic Wedding
- Alternate Locations

What to Look For

- Check Officiant's Credentials
- Evaluate Officiant's Presentation
- Consider Speaking Skills
- Public Address Style
- Determine Travel Needs
- Perform Ceremony Rehearsal
- Perform Ceremony
- Pre-wedding Counseling
- Post-wedding Counseling

Packages/Options

- Share Vows with Officiant
- Invite Officiant & Guest to Rehearsal Dinner
- Check Foreign Wedding Requisites
- Invite Officiant & Guest to Reception Dinner

Keys to Success

- Get Marriage License
- Address Officiant Travel Costs
- Ceremony Contingency Plan
- Watch Ceremony Length

- Give Marriage License to Best Man
- Sign Marriage License

References

- Family References
- Friend References
- Check BBB/Visit BBB online
- Check with Resorts and Country Clubs
- Check with Other Vendors
- Check with Past Clients

Contract/Payment

- Review Contract
- Revise Contract
- Sign Contract
- Pay Deposit
- Pay Balance

Backup Plans

- Backup Location
- Backup Officiant

Officiant Budget = _____

Worksheet

Deciding on the themes and styles of your wedding is a complex task...Here's a worksheet to help you plan out your ideal wedding officiant experience...

This is always a good idea. Some officiants require it, others offer it.

Pre-Wedding Counseling

- Religious Ceremony
- Civil Ceremony

Wedding Ceremony Style

- This ranges considerably according to the religion and style of the officiant. Find out what elements are included and if there is any flexibility.

Wedding Ceremony Location

- House of worship
- Resort
- Country Club
- Private home
- Beach
- Park
- International

Wedding Ceremony Content

- This is a recommended run-through for the bridal party and officiant to help familiarize everyone with what to expect. Some ceremonies are quite involved with participation of the entire bridal party, so it's best for everyone to be comfortable with what happens and when.

This guide is provided by Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment to assist new couples as they navigate their way through the year leading up to their wedding day. Included are only suggestions and ultimate decisions need to be made by the couple. Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment is not responsible for negative outcomes as a result of following guidelines.