

COVID-19 Checklist for Planning a Wedding

Congratulations on your upcoming nuptials. When planning a wedding during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to stay informed. Having the facts will help you plan a safer gathering, for you and the people around you. This is a summary of important considerations to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when planning and hosting a wedding celebration. Work with your wedding vendors and/or wedding planner to ensure that you are making informed decisions and avoiding risks.

Your event must adhere to the current public health orders on gathering limits, with preference given to outdoor events to minimize the risk. Having more guests, with closer interactions and longer time spent together, increases the risk of spreading COVID-19. Higher rates of community spread will also increase the risk of spreading COVID-19 at local events.

A. Staying informed

- Ask questions of the service providers you hire (e.g. ceremony and reception venues, florist, and food service vendor).
- Review your venue/vendor contracts and insurance policy.
- Check the City's [website](#) for current information and guidance about COVID-19.
- Review the [COVID-19 Guidelines for Indoor & Outdoor Events & Gatherings](#) and [COVID-19 Guidance for Places of Worship](#) for more information.

B. Communicating with your partner and service providers

- Maintain open communication with your partner and wedding planning services.
- Support each other and be flexible. Many businesses are impacted by the pandemic.
- Create a backup plan with a few alternative dates.
- For in-person events, limit attendance.
- Options to consider: a virtual ceremony, outdoor ceremony, tented reception, a smaller indoor wedding, or delaying the event until public health measures are less restrictive.
- Family and cultural expectations may need to be relaxed to protect the safety of participants.
- Some rituals and practices may also need to be modified.
- Make adjustments to your wedding checklist to accommodate public health measures.
- Go digital to shop for venues, flowers, and other wedding necessities, and to schedule appointments.

C. Selecting venues and limiting number of guests

The provincial government has set gathering limits, under the [Reopening Ontario Act](#), to support physical distancing measures. The regulations apply to both private and rented facilities.

The number of guests permitted are based on the venue type:

- outdoor gathering, up to 100 people
- indoor gathering, up to 50 people, including receptions held at a restaurant
- performers and staff do not count towards the gathering limits
- religious services, rites and wedding ceremonies are limited to 30% of room capacity
- indoor events cannot be combined with an outdoor event to increase gathering size
- see table summary below for permitted limits by venue to assist with your planning.

All Events

Physical distancing is critical to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Hired performers who sing or play a brass/wind instrument must be separated from guests by a barrier.

Outdoor events

Mask should be worn when physical distancing is hard to maintain.

Outdoor event with NO food or drinks	Outdoor event with food or drinks	Drive-in / drive thru event
Maximum of 100 people. Guests can mingle and must maintain 6 feet distancing. Wear a mask when physical distancing is difficult (e.g. going to the washroom). No dancing unless by a performer.	Maximum of 100 people. No more than 10 people per table. Stay seated at all times, except to use the washroom or leave. No mingling. No dancing.	No maximum. Cars must be parked, 6 feet from each other. Can't leave the car except for the washroom. Wear a mask when going indoors to use the washroom.

Indoor events

Masks or face coverings must be worn at all times except when eating.

Indoor event with NO food or drinks	Indoor event with food or drinks	Religious service, rite or ceremony in a place of worship with NO food or drinks
Maximum of 50 people. Guests can mingle and must maintain 6 feet distancing. A mask must be worn at all times. No dancing unless by a performer.	Maximum of 50 people. No more than 10 people per table. Stay seated at all times, except to use the washroom or leave. No mingling. No dancing.	Up to 30% of the room capacity, based on ability to physically distance. Limit the number of people in a choir. Congregational singing is strongly discouraged.

- Consider adding a virtual component to allow additional friends and family to participate. This may also benefit guests who cannot be there in person due to distance/ travel restrictions or are at higher risk for illness due to age and health conditions.
- For in-person events, arrange seating by [social circles](#). A social circle has a limit of 10 people. A person cannot belong to more than one social circle. A social circle can interact with each another without physical distancing.

D. Communicating with guests before the event

- Use technology to keep guests informed, such as a wedding website or social media.
- Inform your guests about the precautions you are taking to keep everyone safe, and to help them prepare for the wedding ceremony and/or reception.
- If hosting a virtual service, post instructions on how to access it online.
- Ask guests to [self-screen](#) for symptoms of COVID-19 before they arrive. For guests who are self-isolating, for the reasons listed below, ask them to stay home and participate online:
 - returning from travels outside of Canada in the past 14 days;
 - feeling unwell, or have symptoms of COVID-19; or
 - have been in close contact with someone who is sick or has COVID-19.
- Remind guests to bring their own mask or face covering. Plan to have some extra masks available as a backup.
- Ask guests to [greet each other from a distance](#) with a smile, wave, or send virtual hugs/wishes in lieu of physical hugs, kisses and handshakes.

E. Prevention measures to keep everyone safe

- Tape off or space seats to maintain a two metre/six feet distance for people not in the same social circle.
- Use floor markers by the receiving line for guests to stand two metres/six feet apart.
- Avoid touching face with unwashed hands.
- Have hand sanitizer available by the entrance and in high traffic areas.
- Ensure your venue(s) to post signs encouraging guests to practice safety measures:
 - [Physical distancing](#), frequent [handwashing](#) and [respiratory etiquette](#)
 - Toronto [mask bylaw](#), [how to wear a cloth mask](#) and [use of washrooms](#).

F. Toronto mask bylaw

- A mask must be worn at all times when indoors, except when eating.
- Avoid adjusting your face mask when in use.
- The couple may remove their masks during the wedding ceremony.

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- Masks may be removed by performers when behind a [physical barrier](#) (e.g. singing or playing wind/brass instrument), or engaging in physical activity (e.g. dancing).
- Children under two years of age, people with health issues that make wearing a mask difficult, and those who are unable to put on a mask without assistance, are exempted from wearing a mask. More information on mask exemptions can be found [here](#).

G. Modify the wedding service and reception

- Where appropriate, consider using outdoor spaces.
- Avoid close contact or sharing of ceremonial objects or personal items between members of different social circles.
- Avoid activities that allow guests to congregate or share items (e.g. photo booths).
- If hiring performers, they must maintain a two metre/six feet distance from each other and from guests, except if required for the performance.
- Singer or players of brass/wind instruments must perform behind a barrier (e.g. plexiglass).
- Performers or officiant should have their own microphone. Do not share microphones.
- Keep music volume low, so the officiants, guests and staff do not need to speak loudly or lean closer to communicate.
- Create an online registration book for guests.
- Consider individual hand sanitizer and personalized masks as party favours or gift bags.
- Place gift bags at each seat for guests.
- Photographers / videographers must a keep two metre/six foot distance from others and wear a mask.
- Limit close group photos to people in the same social circle or have guests wear a mask, even when outdoors.
- Consider limiting alcohol service to prevent guests from relaxing physical distancing measures.
- Guests must remain seated at all times, including during the couple's dances, performances and speeches.
- The couple's dance, and their parents (e.g. father-daughter, mother-son) are permitted.
- Dancing among guests are not permitted.

H. Food at the reception

- Potluck, buffets, and self-serve food stations are not permitted.
- Do not share items such as utensils, salt/pepper shakers, water pitchers, or wine bottles.
- Family-style meals are not recommended at this time.
- Assign seating, keeping family households and social circles together.
- Guests are to remain seated during food service, except to use the washroom or to leave. Guests are not permitted to walk around to socialize.

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- Guests may remove their mask when eating, but should put the mask back on when going to the washroom or when leaving.

I. Attendance list for contact tracing

- Encourage your guests to download the [COVID Alert app](#).
- If a guest becomes ill during the service/reception, ask them to go home and [self-isolate](#), and call Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000 or their health care provider for further direction.
- Keep an electronic list of your guests and staff in attendance. Information collected is voluntary, and can only be used by public health for COVID-19 contact tracing. The attendance list can be deleted after 30 days.