

WHAT TO ASK WHEN TOURING A WEDDING VENUE

(Your Complete Checklist)

VENUE NAME:	
CONTACT INFO:	

Budget and Fees (The Money Questions)

What is the total venue rental fee, and how much is the deposit?

Are there mandatory gratuities or service fees?	If so, what is the exact percentage?
☐ YES ☐ NO	%

What does the initial deposit cover, and what are the payment due dates?

Do you charge extra for a ceremony fee? <i>Wedding Coordinator Tip: Some venues charge a base rental fee to reserve the space and then an additional fee to rent the venue specifically for a wedding. This extra charge is known as a ceremony fee, and it covers things like chair rentals, site setup, and take down.</i>

Insurance and Cancellation

What is the cancellation and refund policy?

Are we required to purchase wedding liability insurance?

Wedding liability insurance protects you in case of property damage, injuries, or other accidents that occur during your wedding. Venues typically require this, but it's a smart idea regardless. Be sure to purchase from a reputable insurance broker, and read the fine print about what your policy covers.

What is the contingency plan for extreme weather or unexpected closures?

Having an outdoor ceremony? You'll want to make sure you have a backup plan in case the storm of the century blows through.

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Logistics and Capacity (The Day-of Details)

What is the maximum capacity for a seated dinner/cocktail hour?

#

How many bathrooms are available?

#

Is there a dedicated space for the bride and groom to get ready?

Getting ready on-site can save you a lot of stress and tricky travel logistics. At Spring Mill Manor, for example, we offer beautifully decorated bridal suites for you and your bridal party to make all the preparations you need before the ceremony.

Can we hold both the ceremony and reception on-site?

Some venues (like Spring Mill Manor) let you host your ceremony and reception on-site, while others may be reception-only.

Timing and Access

What are the exact hours included in the rental package (start/end time)?

How early can vendors access the space for setup?

How late must music stop?

The last thing you want is for the band or DJ to cut off the music when everyone is dancing the night away. This question is essential if your venue is in an area with noise restrictions.

Is there an option to extend the rental time, and what is the cost per hour?

Vendor and Policy Rules

Do you require us to use in-house catering, or is there a preferred list?

Before you choose a caterer, it's important to ask about the venue's policies. Some venues, like Spring Mill Manor, offer exclusive in-house catering to ensure the highest quality experience and seamless service.

What are the bar package options?

Are we allowed to supply our own alcohol or non-alcoholic beverages?

Is there a cake-cutting fee?

Some venues charge a cake-cutting fee if you provide your own cake not made by the venue. The fee is typically a few dollars per guest, though it varies by venue.

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Decorations and Vendors

Are there any restrictions on decor (candles, sparklers, hanging items)?

Wedding Coordinator Tip: Many venues don't allow open flames due to fire safety and liability concerns. But many can also provide safe alternatives, like bubble "guns" instead of sparklers.

Are we required to choose from a list of approved or preferred vendors?

Many venues partner with specific vendors for flowers, decorations, or table settings. Working with these preferred vendors can make the planning and day-of smoother.

Do you offer tables, chairs, and linens, or will we need to rent them?

Can I see the chairs and tableware we will be using?

☐

YES

☐

NO

Staffing and Accessibility

Who is the primary contact on the day of the wedding (venue coordinator, manager)?

How many staff members are included to service the event?

What is the parking situation, and is valet service available?

Staffing and Accessibility

Is the venue fully ADA compliant (ramps, elevators, restrooms)?

Is the venue climate-controlled (A/C, heating)?

Are there designated smoking areas?

FROM THE COORDINATOR'S DESK:

Questions Couples Always Forget

DO YOU OFFER ANY SPECIAL DISCOUNTS?

Your venue may offer discounts in certain cases, so it never hurts to ask. Spring Mill Manor, for instance, is proud to offer military discounts to show our appreciation for service members.

HOW FAR IN ADVANCE CAN WE BOOK?

Some couples are surprised at how far in advance it's advisable to book the venue. Our answer is: as far as possible!

WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS FOR A SEND-OFF?

If you want to do a send-off at the end of the reception, be sure to ask if the venue has the space and facilities you'll need.

DO YOU ALLOW CHILDREN AT THE VENUE?

Venue policies can vary when it comes to children. So make sure you ask if you're planning to invite the whole family.

RED FLAGS TO LOOK FOR WHEN TOURING A WEDDING VENUE

Asking the right questions is crucial when you're choosing a venue. But it's also important to know some red flags to watch out for during the tour. If you notice any of these, it's best to keep looking:

- *Hidden fees or unclear pricing*
- *Unrealistic promises*
- *Inadequate facilities (parking, accessibility, bathrooms, general capacity, etc.)*
- *Poorly maintained*
- *Rude or unhelpful staff*