

## Wedding Rehearsal Guide

1. Review the couple's notes from your meeting. Make sure you're aware of any deceased parents or divorced parents and potentially strained relationships. Every now and then someone is rude and it's good to know that it's because that person is stressed out due to a strained relationship and that it has nothing to do with you, personally. Divorced parents who still don't get along can easily bring down the positive vibe.
2. Bring printed copy of ceremony to rehearsal. On the last page or wherever there's space, write down the couple's parent's names (sometimes last names are different), any children's names, coordinator's names, photographer's name, DJ's name. Occasionally coordinators email out a timeline to the vendors and this info is often on that timeline. It always impresses people when you walk up to introduce yourself and you know their name.
3. Introduce yourself to EVERYONE at rehearsal and write names down. Members of the bridal party are prospective clients, parents sometimes give gratuity and fellow vendors give referrals. Also, you'll need to know the name of the person/persons holding the rings so you can invite them up during the ceremony.
4. Ask the coordinator how she/he likes to run the rehearsal. Normally she'll line everyone up in the places they'll be standing during the ceremony, practice walking out, then walking back in and lining up, then the officiant runs through the bullet points of the ceremony, then everyone will practice walking back out again.
5. When running through the main points, instruct the couple:
  - To hold hands during their ceremony and to face each other.
  - Not to feel obligated to stare at you and that it's actually a little weird if they're staring at you the whole time. Make certain that they know to look at each other while exchanging vows and rings.
  - Ask them to please refrain from having a conversation during their ceremony. It happens, and it's difficult to do your best when being ignored.
  - Explain that you'll open by speaking to their guests and thank them for coming. Tell your couple that you might move around a little, to find friendly faces in the crowd to speak to, and for them not to move or try to get out of your way as you move around a little bit.
  - Then you'll turn and speak to them both directly.
  - If they've chosen imagery, practice walking over to the table. The groom can lead the bride so he doesn't step on her dress or they can each step to their own side of the table and meet behind it.
  - Make sure couple stands behind the table, **FACING THEIR GUESTS**. Always avoid having their backs to their guests and photographer, if possible.



-If parents or kids are involved, have them stand on each side of couple, behind the table used for imagery, also facing the guests.

-If guest readers attend the rehearsal, make sure they know to either come up and take your spot standing in between the bride and groom, where you'll hand off the mic. If there's another microphone on a stand set off to one side, make sure they know that's where they'll stand to read. I usually have guest readers take my spot so they're able to easily hug the couple after reading.

-Practice ring exchange. If their best man is holding both rings, have him take your spot in between the couple so there's a great photo of the three of them from the aisle. If the best man and maid-of-honor will each hold a ring, ask the couple to simply turn around and take the ring from them both.

-Have fun at their rehearsal. When you practice the pronouncement, actually yell out, "Kiss the bride!" Usually the bridal party will cheer and then you'll all practice walking out.

6. Ask the coordinator, "Where will we recess to sign their marriage license?" That will politely plant the seed that signing the license comes before anything else after their ceremony.

Photographers are sometimes guilty of grabbing the couple and disappearing for photos, and I've been forced to wait for over an hour. This will prevent that from happening.

7. Ask all other vendors for business cards, in case you need to reach them. If you don't have a business card to give them, let them know that you'll email your contact info over once you get home. If the other vendors don't have cards, make sure you've at least written down their names.

8. Be sure to say goodbye to your couple before leaving the venue and tell everyone that it was nice meeting them, and that you look forward to seeing everyone at the ceremony!

9. I often joke with the bridal party and tell them to, "Have fun at the rehearsal dinner, but to behave themselves because we need them to be their best at the ceremony."

