



high point EVENTS

*One of a series of Resources from High Point Events
to help you plan an exceptional wedding*

Wedding Week Timeline

Don't look now...but the wedding is upon you! After months and months of planning, you're headed into the last week, and your "to-do" list has outgrown your smart phone's memory. Based on many years' experience helping brides, MOB's (mothers-of-the-bride) and assorted others create exceptional weddings, we've put together a sample of what that last week might look like. We chose to base this sample on a wedding at which the bridal party is spending the night before and the night of the wedding at a hotel, and the ceremony and reception are at two different locations on a Saturday night.

Each wedding is unique, of course, so each wedding timeline will be unique. Thinking about all these details in advance and writing them down in your own timeline, however, will ensure that the week of the big event goes as smoothly as possible for everyone involved. Once your timeline is finalized, print it out to give both families and the bridal party members, as well as the vendors who will supply your wedding needs.

Make a list of Important cell phone numbers for the day of the wedding itself as part of your timeline planning. It is always important for your vendors and key members of the bridal party to have everyone's phone number. This way, instead of everyone calling you, they can call the correct person directly on the big day. Include on your list of numbers those of the bride and groom, as well as the those of the wedding coordinator, the catering contact, the transportation and site coordinators, the bakery providing the cake, the photographer and/or videographer, the DJ and/or other musicians, the florist, the minister or whoever is performing the ceremony, etc.

Tuesday

Do you need to make any grooming appointments? Do you need to take anything to the coordinator, caterer, and/or baker? Do you need to pack for your honeymoon or find your passport? Do you have the marriage certificate? How will the photographer get from the hotel to the ceremony to the reception? Have you given a copy of the finalized list of pictures to be taken before/after the ceremony to the photographer and to both families? Do you need a final check-in with the person performing the ceremony?

Wednesday

Do you need to clean out your car? Do you have other appointments scheduled for today? Have you confirmed your appointments for later in the week? Does everyone involved know the time and place of the rehearsal as well as of any other events for the wedding weekend?

Thursday

Do you have cash to tip everyone? Do you have final payment checks written and placed in envelopes addressed for each vendor? Have you packed for the night before and the night of the wedding? Have you

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taken everything you need to all the important places? Here is what most people wind up taking someplace during the final week:

- Favors
- Cake-cutting set and toasting glasses
- A basket, bowl or box for cards (and checks) from guests for the gift table
- Cake topper
- Alphabetized and color-coded place cards
- Separate place cards for the head table
- Diagram with table-seating assignments, high chairs, special meals, etc.
- Copy of lineup of bridal party for introductions
- Hotel gift bags for guests spending the night
- Baskets or other items for ladies' and men's restrooms
- Decorations - for the rehearsal dinner, ceremony, reception, other events
- Family photos to be displayed at the rehearsal dinner and/or reception
- Guest book and pen (Don't forget the pen! In fact, take two pens!)
- Programs for the ceremony and/or reception
- Unity candle
- Memorial signs and/or candles
- Printed directions for guests showing the easiest route to the reception

Friday

Today holds manicure/pedicure appointments for the bridal party and, later in the day, the on-site rehearsal for the ceremony. Whether you're having a traditional dinner following the rehearsal or are going non-traditional with a picnic beforehand, don't forget to take any gifts you may be presenting to the bridal party and parents. This is also a good time to tell everyone when and where they're supposed to be the next day: to get hair and make-up done, to have lunch, to catch the shuttle from the hotel to the ceremony, and to have formal pictures taken after the ceremony. Now is also the time to remind people when they need to check out of the hotel on Sunday.

Saturday

(This sample timeline is based on a ceremony starting at 5 p.m. followed by reception elsewhere. Do a trial run to calculate your own times based on how far apart the hotel, ceremony and reception are. Always allow lots of extra time for unexpected traffic and problems! Don't forget that, depending upon arrangements with various vendors, you may be expected to make final payments and/or distribute gratuities at various points during the day.)

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| 11 a.m. | Hair and make-up start for bridal party and mothers. |
| 12 noon | Lunch delivered to bridal party. (Don't forget to eat - it will be a long day, and no one wants anyone to faint at the ceremony!) |
| 1:30 p.m. | Photographer arrives to start shooting by 2 p.m. |
| 4:15 p.m. | Shuttles depart with Ring Bearers, Flower Girls and their families. (It's extra important to tell people who are taking the shuttle where and when they are supposed to leave so the bride's limo stays on time.) |
| 4:15 p.m. | Groom, Groomsmen, Parents of the Groom leave in limo for ceremony. |

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- 4:30 p.m. Bride, Bridesmaids, Parents of the Bride leave in limo for ceremony.
- 5:05 p.m. Ceremony begins. (Ceremonies never start on time!)
- 5:35 p.m. Ceremony ends.
- 5:45 p.m. Formal pictures begin. This process moves along much more quickly if everyone knows in advance who is to be in what picture and if you've asked a friend who's not in the pictures to get people lined up for the next shot.
- 6:10 p.m. Both sets of parents leave ceremony/picture site for reception.
- 6:30 p.m. Cocktail hour begins at reception site.
- 6:30 p.m. Formal pictures finish at ceremony site and everyone leaves for reception.
- 7:30 p.m. Guests are seated in dining area.
- 7:40 p.m. Bridal party is introduced as they enter reception. (Be sure the DJ has a clear copy of all the names and *knows how to pronounce them.*)
- 7:45 p.m. Host greeting - This is a good time for the day's hosts, whether this is the bride's parents, the groom's parents, the bridal couple, or a combination, to make a speech welcoming everyone. A welcome is always a great way to start the reception on a high note.
- 7:50 p.m. First dance - This is the only time at the reception where everyone has their undivided attention on the bridal couple, so it's a great place for the first dance.
- 7:55 p.m. Blessing
- 8:00 p.m. Plated salads
- 8:05 p.m. Dinner buffet starts.
- 9:00 p.m. Dinner completed.
- 9:10 p.m. Other "spotlight" dances, like Father/Daughter Dance and Mother/Son Dance
- 9:20 p.m. General dancing begins.
- 10:00 p.m. Toasts from bridal party
- 10:10 p.m. Ceremonial cutting of the cake
- 10:50 p.m. Bouquet and garter toss
- 11:00 p.m. Bar closes.
- 11:25 p.m. Last dance
- 11:30 p.m. Reception ends and guests depart. Has everyone been paid or tipped? Are all the tuxes, shoes, ties, cufflinks, etc., accounted for and ready to be returned? Has someone retrieved any personal pictures or decorations that have been displayed? Who will ask the caterer for the top layer of the wedding cake to take home to freeze? Who will transport the gifts and cards, and to where? Have flowers and centerpieces been given to guests or otherwise distributed? Is everyone ready to crash yet?

Sunday

If you plan to see out-of-town family and guests before they leave, a low-key brunch at the hotel or at someone's house is a good way to thank everyone for coming. Do you need to go back and pick anything up from the ceremony and/or reception sites? Who will take care of getting your wedding finery back to your house? Who will return the men's tuxes and when are they due back?

Once all the details are out of the way, it's time to relax and enjoy these first special days of marriage, knowing that you and your guests made a lasting memory together, thanks to your careful planning.