



Weddings - These tips are not all inclusive. You may have additional questions related to your specific group event.

Getting Started

- Introduce both families and officially announce the engagement.
- Start a budget.
- Start a guest list.
- Consider whether you want to hire a wedding planner.
- Create a gift wish list and sign up for one or more gift registries.
- Decide on the wedding attendants.
- Determine a date and time of the wedding, and if possible a set of alternative dates and times.
- Decide on the wedding destination.
- Will you be having the engagement party, ceremony, and reception at the hotel?
- Will guest rooms be needed? If so how many?
- Will food & beverage be needed?
- Will audio/visual equipment be needed?
- Break down your hotel portion of the wedding budget to allow for:
 - Guest rooms
 - Meeting space
 - Food & beverage
 - Audio / visual equipment rental
- Determine the event(s) schedule.

Parties

- Consider having an engagement announcement party.
- Sign up for one or more gift registries.
- Give shower hostess(es) guest list.
- Begin thank-you notes for showers and early gifts.
- Consider booking a bachelor/bachelorette party.
- Buy attendant gifts.
- Consider scheduling an attendant's party.

- Consider booking a day-after brunch.
- Ask the hotel when names for all of the guest rooms are due by.

Selecting a Destination Hotel

- Contact Visit Chicago Southland for meeting/hotel facility information. Visit Chicago Southland will be glad to assist with bids and facility selection.

Guest Rooms

- What is the breakdown number of singles, doubles, and suites? Inquire about the different room types offered by the hotel.
- Are these counts estimates or exact?
- How many people will occupy each room?
- Be sure to reserve the bridal suite.
- What is the budgeted guest room rate?
- Are connecting rooms required or would you prefer to have rooms with no connecting doors?
- Determine how guest room reservations for the group will be made. Will each attendee be responsible for making their own reservations or will reservations be handled by one person?
- Ask the hotel to create a free customized personalized online group page for the event. Give the URL to team members allowing them to book their reservations quickly and easily.
- OR use the group code, supplied by the hotel.
- Ask the hotel when names for all of the guest rooms are due by.

Event Space

- Use the meeting arranger (available thru Visit Chicago Southland) to determine the appropriate meeting room size needed for the meeting.
- Determine the full duration of the event.
- Determine the number of people attending.
- What kind of seating arrangement is needed? (Reception or Banquet)
- Determine what type of Audio/Visual equipment is required for entertainment and speakers.
- Will a podium be needed?
- Is a stage required or any special lighting?
- Will a dance floor be needed?
- Will you have a DJ or a band?
- Will flower arrangements, candles, or centerpieces be delivered for the tables?
- Will extra tables be needed for gift bags?

Food and Beverage

- Determine the number of people to be served at the event.

- Will the hotel be making the cake or will you provide your own?
- Determine menu and beverage choices.
- Arrange for your wedding planner and hotel representative/caterer to meet.
- Schedule taste testing for all food and beverage that will be served.
- What is the hotel's outside food and beverage policy? What are the liability insurance needs?
- Advise the hotel of any special dietary requirements for people attending the event.
- Determine the food and beverage service charges.
- Prepare two lists for the seating plan one in alphabetical order and one in order by table number.
- Will placement cards be provided?

Hotel Billing and Payment

- Is an advanced deposit required? If so, is there a payment schedule?
- Who will be authorized to make changes that would involve extra costs from the hotel?
- Would you like to set up a master bill with the hotel? If so, what charges will be added and who is authorized to make those charges?
- Who is responsible for the payment of guest rooms?

Additional Basic Hotel Planning Tips

- Is transportation available to and from airport? Is there a schedule or will you need to make reservations? Is there a charge?
- Let property know of accessibility special needs for guests' rooms, public areas or function rooms.
- Ensure hotel is fully aware of the delivery and collection times planned by all outside vendors.
- Check the available parking at the hotel. Is there a cost?
- If the ceremony is not being held at the hotel, how close is the hotel to the venue?
- Make sure your guests have a map from the ceremony venue to the hotel.

Rehearsal Dinner

- Select rehearsal dinner time and location.
- Meet with caterer, chef and planner to choose the dinner menu and beverages.
- Order and send out dinner invitations.
- Determine parking and transportation.

Ceremony

- Start researching wedding gowns.
- Send out a save-the-date email.
- Consider buying wedding insurance.

- Send an engagement photo to the local newspaper.
- Visit bridal salon and try on gowns.
- Find a florist.
- Find a wedding photographer and/or videographer.
- Order gown and veil.
- Select bridesmaids' dresses.
- Select wedding favors.
- Buy gown accessories (shoes, jewelry, purse).
- Choose an officiant.
- Purchase wedding rings.
- Select groom's tux and groomsmen attire.
- Place order for invitations.
- Purchase wedding favors and accessories.
- Send out invitations.
- Select makeup artist and hair stylist.
- Finalize ceremony details (music, readings, solos, etc).
- Have gown fitting(s).
- Apply for marriage license.
- Look into name change, if applicable.
- Consider something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue.

Honeymoon

- Determine budget.
- Start investigating destinations.
- Choose and book honeymoon destination.
- Determine if passport, visa, immunizations will be needed.
- Make a travel checklist.
- Purchase traveler's checks.
- Make plans for pets, plants and paper pickup, etc.
- Reconfirm plans (flights, rental cars, etc).

After the Wedding

- Get your gown cleaned and properly stored.
- Preserve your bouquet, if applicable.
- Freeze the top layer of your wedding cake for your first anniversary.
- Complete name change kit.
- Meet with photographer and/or videographer.

Notes
