

Wedding Guide

February 18, 2015



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Roles Of The Best Man & Maid Of Honor

Being chosen as a best man or a maid of honor is a significant and meaningful honor. Those roles have evolved over the years, but these special participants must still perform some of the traditional duties of the past, including serving as the official witnesses to the ceremony. The following is a rundown of the various duties maids of honor and best men are now expected to handle once they're chosen for these distinguished honors.

PRIOR TO THE WEDDING: Before the wedding takes place, the maid of honor will closely assist the bride-to-be with many of the important decisions related to the look and the feel of the wedding. She typically accompanies the bride to dress shops to select gowns for the bride and bridesmaids. Much in the same manner, the best man will assist the groom-to-be with choosing tuxedos or suits and also with coordinating with the ushers to ensure they know when to go for fittings. Although the best man will serve as a sounding board for the groom, traditionally the bride and her bridesmaids have taken on the majority of the wedding planning, so the maid of honor can expect to play a larger role than the best man. The maid of honor may be asked to delegate certain assignments, such as helping to find wedding vendors or addressing invitations. She may go with the bride for makeup and hairstyle trials. Together with the bridesmaids, she will plan a bridal shower party and a bachelorette excursion. She may select a wedding gift for the couple and present it on behalf of all the wedding attendants or each can select their own. The best man will coordinate the bachelor party and may be asked to assist the groom with selecting a honeymoon site or to come along to book the trip. **WEDDING DAY:** On the day of the wedding, the maid of honor and the best man will act as a support system for the bride and groom. The maid of honor will help the bride get dressed and help iron out any mini-emergencies that should crop up. The best man will help ensure all of the ushers are dressed and get the groom to the wedding on time. During the ceremony, the maid of honor will hold the bride's bouquet while she participates in the wedding. The best man will keep the rings safe until they are needed. The maid of honor also will help adjust the bride's train and veil as she sits and stands during the ceremony. Both will sign the marriage certificate as witnesses. At the reception, the best man is expected to give a toast and the maid of honor may share some words as well. She also may accompany the bride to the restroom and assist her with managing the gown. **AFTER THE WEDDING:** The best man will be in charge of returning the tuxedos to the rental shop, if necessary. He also may drive the newly married couple to the airport so they can depart on their honeymoon. The maid of honor will assist the bride in changing out of her gown and into her travel clothes. Oftentimes the maid of honor takes the gown to the cleaners in the days following the ceremony so the dress can be preserved.

Be Smart About Wedding Beauty Preparation

All eyes are on the bride and groom on their wedding day. Feeling beautiful and dapper can boost a couple's confidence and ensure they look back on their wedding photographs and videos with pride. Certain beauty basics and makeup and hair strategies can help any bride look spectacular on her wedding day. The following are some dos and don'ts of wedding day beauty preparations.

DO employ the services of a professional hairstylist and makeup artist. Professionals have the experience and tools of the trade to help you to look your best. From contouring to make your face seem slimmer to enlarging the appearance of small eyes, some tricks of the trade are best left to the pros. **DON'T** forget to schedule a trial run. Make this appointment several months before the wedding day so you have ample time to work with your stylists and experiment with colors and hair arrangements to fit your personality and the style of your gown. **DO** allot enough time for the wedding day beauty appointment. If you will be going to a salon, block out two or more slots instead of one. This way the stylist does not overbook and will not feel rushed. Many brides opt to have stylists come to their homes. There may be an extra charge for this service, but it may be well worth the cost. **DON'T** make any drastic changes to your appearance right before the wedding. This includes changing your hair color or texture, extreme tanning, using colored contact lenses, or chopping off all of your hair. It's better to wait until after the wedding to change your style. **DO** bring a veil, headpiece, hair extensions, and any other accessories to your hair consult. This enables the stylist to practice working with these items. **DON'T** tweeze or wax brows too close to the start of the ceremony. Redness and swelling are common side effects of tweezing and waxing, and they can be difficult to mask with makeup. Instead, take care of hair removal a day or two prior to the wedding. **DO** exfoliate your skin prior to the wedding. This doesn't necessarily mean you should endure a harsh fruit acid peel or another procedure. You can exfoliate with a gentle washing of your skin with a nubby washcloth to remove any dryness and errant flakes. Moisturize well to ensure a smooth palette for makeup application. **DO** wear a little extra makeup than you are accustomed to wearing because it will show up better in photos. However, do not wear so much that you look clownish. A makeup artist can help you achieve the right balance. **DON'T** have bridesmaids wear makeup that is bolder than yours, especially red lips. No one should upstage the bride. **DO** experiment with any products you haven't used before to test for allergic reactions and see how well they wear. **DON'T** wear too much under-eye concealer or one that is too light of a shade. This can draw more attention to problem areas than remedy them. **DO** bring a pain relief medication in case a tight hairstyle or headpiece causes a headache. **DON'T** forget that men need a little help as well. Exfoliation and moisturization can help dry skin. Guys should use a new razor and plenty of cream before shaving to avoid irritation. A dusting of finishing powder can banish shiny noses and foreheads for photo-ready faces. Chances are more photographs will be taken of a newlywed couple than at any other moment in their lives. Certain beauty dos and don'ts should be followed so couples put their best faces forward.

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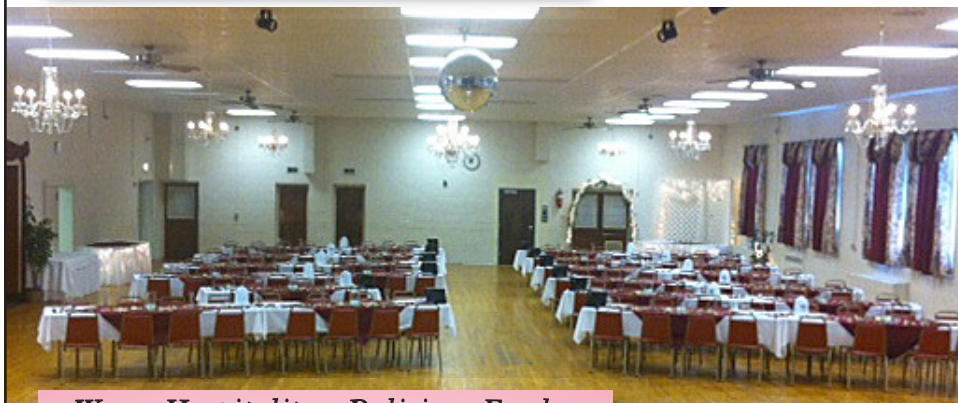


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Wedding Invitations & Postage Tips

Whether a couple is planning a lavish wedding or a more low key affair, the wedding invitations are an essential part of keeping guests informed about the big day.

While couples can now share details of their wedding through email or even digital invitations, it's still more appropriate to go the traditional route and send paper invitations. In addition to the cost of the invitations themselves, couples need to factor postage into their wedding budgets. It may not seem like much, but the cost of postage can add up quickly. The following are a few postage pointers for couples about to tie the knot.

- Choose envelopes wisely. The size of your envelopes contributes to the cost of the postage necessary to mail your invitations. Postal services have specific size and shape parameters that govern postage. Envelopes that are oddly shaped or fall outside of these strict measurements are usually susceptible to additional postage charges. That's because the envelope cannot run through standard sorting machinery and must be hand-processed.

- Consider the weight. Mailings that exceed one ounce will require additional postage, even if they are in standard envelopes. Invitations, with their various components and thick card stock, typically weigh

more than one ounce. Never purchase postage in advance, as you will not know what the completed invitation costs prior to mailing. Always weigh the invitation with all inserts included to get an accurate estimate of postage. Then purchase stamps accordingly.

- Get to know your local postal employee. Many postal employees, especially those who work at the smaller branches, grow accustomed to seeing the same customers over and over. They can be very helpful and good resources when it comes to saving money on postage. Strike up a conversation with the person behind the counter and ask advice on the best way to mail invitations and ensure they arrive looking beautiful. Choose an off-peak time so the postal employee can give you his or her full attention and will not feel rushed by a line forming behind you. The employee may suggest hand-canceling envelopes, which means the invitation will be processed by hand rather than run through machinery to avoid damage.

- Stamp the return envelope. Invitations typically include response cards that guests will send back to confirm if they will be attending the festivities. To facilitate the RSVP process, stamp the response card.

- Prep invitations six to eight weeks in advance. Invitations should be

mailed nearly two months prior to the wedding. This allows guests to plan and respond accordingly.

- Double-check envelopes before sending. Ensure that postage is sticking well and that envelopes are well-sealed. In addition, verify that you have the most current addresses for recipients. If invitations get returned to sender, they can cost you even more time and money to resolve any issues.

- Do a test run. You may want to send a complete invitation to yourself just to see how it arrives in the mail. This way you can check the level of damage and have an opportunity to make any changes, such as adding a piece of vellum to prevent ink from smudging or to place bows or adornments in another area.

- Give your mail carrier a heads-up. Let your assigned mail carrier know that response cards will be on the way. They tend to be small and can get lost in among other letters and mail. A small token of gratitude, such as a gift card, for your mail carrier may ensure all of your response cards arrive.

A wedding just isn't the same without the guests. Make sure friends and family are well informed about the wedding by sending out invitations in advance and ensuring the proper postage will get those invites where they need to go.

Hidden Expenses That Can Sink Your Wedding Budget

In the days of yore, the responsibility of paying for a wedding fell to the bride's parents. But that tradition has largely fallen by the wayside in recent years, when more and more couples have used their own savings to finance their weddings. Few couples enter the process of planning their weddings unaware of just how expensive weddings can get, but costs can easily begin to escalate if couples are not careful. Couples know that certain wedding expenses, such as the cost of booking a reception hall, will eat up a large portion of their budgets. But there are some hidden expenses that couples must build into their budgets to avoid finding themselves in debt as they walk down the aisle as husband and wife.

- Taxes: Sales tax might not seem so significant when you're buying everyday items, but the taxes add up quickly when paying for a wedding. Before signing contracts with any vendors, couples should get the price including sales tax written into their contracts, as failing to do so may result in a several thousand dollar surprise when the time to pay

up arrives.

- Gratuities: Gratuities are another potentially hefty expense that often takes engaged couples by surprise as they start to plan their weddings. Some reception halls build gratuities for staff into their estimates, and these tips for the staff can be as high as 25 percent at some venues. But even if gratuities for reception hall staff are already accounted for, don't forget to include tips for additional vendors the day of the wedding. Couples may be expected to tip the florist, photographer, band or deejay and even the reception hall maitre d' if his or her gratuity is not included in the aforementioned staff tip. Brides-to-be typically tip their hairstylist and makeup artist on the day of the wedding as well.

- Postage: Couples who plan to invite guests via email or online invitations can skirt the cost of postage. But many couples still prefer traditional paper invitations, which include return envelopes that tradition suggests should also be stamped. Save-the-date cards have grown in popularity as well, and these cards must also be

stamped and mailed. Depending on the size of your guest list, postage can cost several hundred dollars before you mail your last invitation. And don't forget to save some money for postage to mail thank-you cards once the big day has come and gone.

- Overtime: Overtime fees for reception hall staff and additional outside vendors are typically written into contracts, but few couples imagine needing more than the predetermined allotment of time noted in their contracts. But it's better to be safe than sorry, as unanticipated events such as a misplaced wedding license or heavy traffic on the way to the venue can force the party to start late and thus extend past its deadline. Set aside some money for overtime so you don't find yourselves scrounging for dollars or charging the extra few hundred dollars on your credit cards. Weddings are expensive, and even more so when hidden fees start to make their presence felt. Couples who build such fees into their budgets will find it easier to avoid breaking the bank than those who don't.

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Tips For Selecting Wedding Day Flowers

What would a wedding day be without flowers? The beauty and the aroma of fresh-cut flowers can create a welcoming atmosphere and complement the beauty and the style of a wedding wardrobe. Flowers are often the first things that guests see upon arriving for the ceremony, and they may even be something guests take home at the end of the night. Flowers create an air of romance, and most couples want to make flowers - whether fresh or silk - an integral part of their wedding day. As with any decision when planning a wedding, choosing the right flowers requires some research and a basic knowledge of which flowers will convey the message and the theme of your wedding. The number of colors, textures and combinations that can be created are so numerous that couples may feel the decision on the floral arrangements is best left to the florist. Experts advise that a couple start looking for a florist at least six months before the wedding, especially if the wedding will take place during the peak season of May through September. Get recommendations from friends as to which florist they used or find out if your wedding planner or banquet hall manager recommends a particular florist. Some catering halls have agreements with florists, and they work together.

- * Browse magazines to get ideas of what you like. You also may be able to find a florist through an advertisement or if he or she has been featured in publications. Keep a scrapbook of the colors, types of flowers and arrangements and any other ideas that attract you so you will be able to present this information to the florist.

- * Establish your flower budget prior to sitting down with the florist. Get an estimate on the floral arrangement and then tweak your needs according to your budget. Many florists can modify arrangements and find a middle ground with regard to cost. Selecting flowers that are in-season will result in more affordable rates than if you desire exotic or out-of-season blooms.

- * Once you've hired the florist, you can come up with a wedding flower worksheet that establishes all of your needs. The florist may ask for specific information, such as photos of the bride's gown as well as the colors and styles that the wedding party will be wearing. A good florist knows that a bouquet should not overpower or detract from the beauty of the bride. The florist may want to mimic textures from the dress, such as beading, with smaller flowers or berries within the arrangement. The groom's boutonniere is traditionally one of the flowers from the bride's bouquet so that the look is cohesive.

- * Ceremony flowers may be traditional, and some houses of worship have strict guidelines as to what can and cannot be used. However, reception flowers can be where you show off your creativity and whimsy. After all, this is a party and it should be fun. You may want to give the florist more freedom of expression with regard to reception centerpieces and flowers that adorn other areas of the room.

- * To give the impression that there are more flowers than there really are, use fragrance and filler as your tools. Fragrant flowers can fill up the room with a welcoming aroma. Look for frangipani, lilies, hyacinths, jasmine, and sweet peas for a big impact. Florists know how to stretch arrangements by using greenery and other filler to lend bulk without too much extra cost.

- * Experienced florists will know how long it takes certain buds to open and show off their maximum beauty. Therefore, expect a florist to be working on your floral arrangements as much as a week before the wedding date - purchasing containers, cleaning flowers and waiting for certain ones to open fully. Minimize changes close to your wedding date as most things will already be started. Flowers are one component of the wedding that will help achieve the magic and beautiful atmosphere couples desire.

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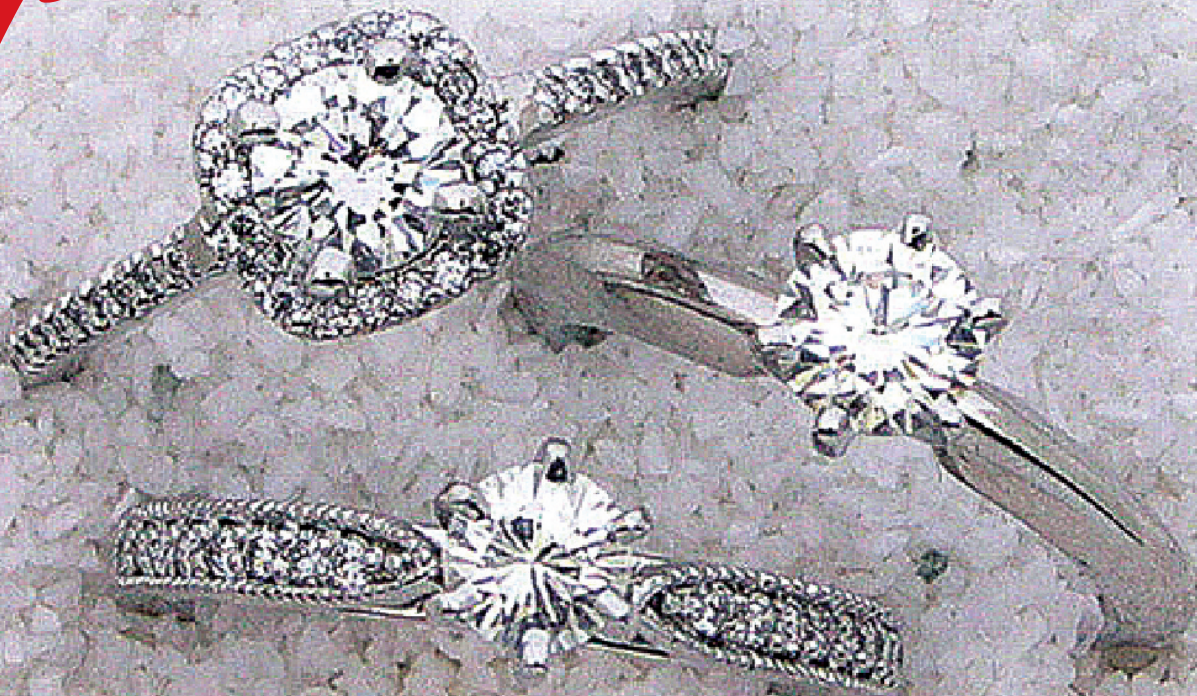
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