

## COVID-19 Checklist for Planning a Wedding

### Please note:

The following guidance applies from the [Roadmap to Reopen](#) which is a three-step plan to safely and cautiously reopen the province and gradually lift public health measures:

- [Step 1 - Ontario Regulation 82/20 \(Schedules 6-10\)](#)
- [Step 2 - Ontario Regulation 263/20](#) (Not yet updated by the province)
- [Step 3 Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) (Not yet updated by the province)

**Regulations will be amended as Ontario moves into each Reopening Step – it is strongly recommended that you check the Regulation for updates after the province has moved between Steps as well as closer to your wedding date for updates.**

The plan is based on the provincewide vaccination rate and improvements in key public health and health care indicators. Congratulations on your upcoming nuptials! This checklist will help guide the planning of your wedding to reduce the spread of COVID-19. When planning your wedding, adhere to the current public health orders. Work with your wedding vendors and/or wedding planner to ensure that you are making informed decisions and avoiding risks. Family or cultural expectations may need to be relaxed to protect the safety of participants.

### **A. Stay informed**

- Ask questions of the service providers you hire (e.g. ceremony and reception venues, florist, and food service vendor).
- Review your venue/vendor contracts and insurance policy.
- Check [www.wdgpUBLICHEALTH.ca](http://www.wdgpUBLICHEALTH.ca) for current information about COVID-19.
- Review [COVID-19 Guidance for Places of Worship](#)

### **B. Communicate with your partner and service providers**

- Maintain open communication with your partner and wedding planning services.
- Support each other and be flexible. Many businesses are impacted by the pandemic.
- Create a backup plan with a few alternative dates.
- Consider a virtual ceremony, outdoor ceremony, tented reception, a smaller indoor wedding, or delaying the event until public health measures are less restrictive.
- Adjust your wedding checklist to accommodate public health measures.
- Shop online or by phone for venues, flowers, and other wedding necessities.

## C. Limit the number of guests

- Limit in-person attendance in compliance with the provincial mandatory restrictions. Larger events can be scheduled after the pandemic.
- Consider having a drive-in ceremony where guests remain in their vehicles. Vehicles must remain two metres apart and can only contain members of the same household.
- Consider adding a virtual component to allow friends and family to participate. This may also benefit guests who cannot be there in person due to distance/ travel restrictions or are at higher risk for illness (e.g., age, health conditions).

## Capacity Limits

- Please refer to the [Religious services, rites or ceremonies, including wedding services](#) section of the Reopening Plan for wedding ceremony information.
- Please refer to the [Gatherings](#) section of the Reopening Plan for social gatherings before or after a service, rite or ceremony (e.g., wedding reception).

## D. Communicate with guests before the event

- Use technology to keep guests informed (e.g., wedding website, social media).
- Inform your guests about the precautions you are taking to keep everyone safe. Ask attendees to bring their own mask and have extras if people forget one.
- Encourage guests to stay home if they are feeling unwell.
- If hosting a virtual service, post instructions on how to access it online.

## E. Encourage physical distancing

- Space seating two metres apart and arrange by household.
- Post signs to remind guests to stay two metres/six feet from others they do not live with.
- Use floor markings to let guests know where to stand in the reception line.
- Remind guests to refrain from hugging, kissing and shaking hands. Instead, greet each other from a distance with a wave, a bow or a nod.

## F. Hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and face masks

- Wash your hands often and have hand sanitizer available.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cough or sneeze into elbow or tissue.
- A mask must be worn at all times when indoors and when physical distancing is difficult. Avoid adjusting your face mask when in use.
- The couple may remove their masks during the wedding ceremony.

- Masks may be removed by performers when behind a [physical barrier](#) (e.g. singing or playing wind/brass instrument), or engaging in physical activity (e.g. dancing).
- Children under the age of two years, children under the age of five years (either chronologically or developmentally) who refuse to wear a face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver, people whose ability to breathe in any way is inhibited by the face covering, and people that have any other medical reason they cannot wear a face covering safely, are exempted from wearing a mask. More information on mask exemptions can be found [here](#).

## G. Increase ventilation

- Increase ventilation by opening windows and increasing air exchange settings on HVAC systems, if possible.
- Ensure HVAC systems are properly maintained and replace filters as appropriate.
- Arrange furniture away from air vents and high airflow areas; direct fans upwards, away from people.

## H. Modify the wedding service and reception

- Host virtual services and celebrations, where possible.
- Where appropriate, consider using outdoor spaces.
- Avoid close contact or sharing of ceremonial objects or personal items.
- Create an online registration book for guests.
- Consider individual hand sanitizer and personalized masks as party favours or gift bags.
- Limit close group photos to people in the same household or have guests wear a mask, even when outdoors.
- Avoid activities that allow guests to congregate or share items (e.g. photo booths).
- Consider limiting alcohol service to prevent guests from relaxing physical distancing measures.
- Dancing among guests is not permitted. The couple's dance, and father-daughter, mother-son dances are permitted.

## I. Food and drink

**Stay informed about the current regulations on indoor and outdoor dining at restaurants and other food and drink establishments.**

Visit the [Reopening Ontario](#) website for more information.

## J. Singing, music and entertainment

Singing and musical wind instruments can project respiratory droplets further than two metres and are higher risk activities. Dancing, singing and the live performance of brass or wind instruments are prohibited where food is served.

- Congregational singing is strongly discouraged, even with masks.
- Use pre-recorded music or virtual performances. Avoid vocalists and wind instruments.
- Vocalist or musicians must perform behind a [barrier such as plexiglass](#). Musicians should physical distance from each other and guests, and wear a mask when not performing.
- If live or recorded music is used, keep the volume low so the officiant, guests and staff do not need to speak louder, or lean closer to hear the conversation.
- Performers and officiant should have their own microphone. Do not share microphones.

## K. Attendance list for contact tracing

- Encourage your guests to download the [COVID Alert app](#).
- If a guest becomes ill during the service/reception, ask them to go home and [self-isolate](#).
- Keep an electronic list of your guests and staff in attendance. Information collected is voluntary and can only be used by public health for COVID-19 contact tracing. The attendance list can be deleted after 30 days.

## More information

For more information, visit our website at [www.wdgppublichealth.ca](http://www.wdgppublichealth.ca) or call us at 519-822-2715

[WDG Public Health COVID-19 Guidance for Places of Worship](#)  
[Getting married during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) restrictions \(Ontario\)](#)  
[Ministry of Health Advice: Religious Services, Rites or Ceremonies](#)

## References

Toronto Public Health (2021). *COVID-19 Checklist for Planning a Wedding*. Retrieved on March 26, 2021 from <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/8e4c-COVID-19-Wedding-Planning-Checklist.pdf>

*Adapted from Toronto Public Health.*