

Planning An Outdoor Event

We urge you to use this information as a guide and continue to refer back to these questions and their answers. Often the choices you make in developing your plan will enable you to make more specific choices later on.

6 Months Ahead

Determine your budget

- How much are you willing to spend on the overall event?

What is the occasion? Does your event have a theme?

Where and When?

- Time of year
- Day or evening event?
- Weekday or weekend?

Perhaps the most important factor to consider when planning an outdoor event is the weather. You may require tenting to protect your guests from the sun or rain. Heating may be necessary for an evening gathering in summer or an early spring or fall event. Tenting will offer protection from the elements, but if it is snowing outside, it is difficult to make the tent feel like another room in your house. In our climate, each season dictates different requirements.

If you are planning to theme this event you will need to determine your theme at an early stage so you can tie the theme into all your plans - ie. invitations rentals, decor, and food.

5 Months Ahead

- Research any possible permits/licenses that may be required. What is needed to apply? How long does it take to process?

4 Months Ahead

- Seek proposals from all suppliers involved - caterers, rental dealers, entertainment, florists, and invitations
- Are you creating a theme for this event? If yes, you should also get a proposal from a decor/prop company
- Create your guest list

3 Months Ahead

- Book a rental company. If you are using tents for this event, they should be reserved at this stage. Tenting creates a certain mood or effect at your party. Availability may be a concern if planning your event in peak seasons
- Check the cancellation policy for tents and other outdoor equipment - ie. heating.

Different companies will have different requirements. Do not assume. Please ask questions about deposit and cancellation!

- Set up an appointment for a site inspection
- Book a caterer

2 Months Ahead

- Conduct site inspection with rental company and caterer to design layout and flow. The tent rental company will use this site inspection to assess the space available, make recommendations and attempt to eliminate any possible problems
- Do you need a floor under your tent? (a kitchen tent will require a floor!)
- Consider your power requirements. Do you have sufficient power for entertainment, food and beverage?
- Book a florist and/or decor company
- Book entertainment

6 Weeks Ahead

- Apply for necessary licenses and permits

4 Weeks Ahead

- Mail invitations (if inviting guests by mail)

3 Weeks Ahead

- Invite guests by telephone if not using regular mail

2 Weeks Ahead

- All RSVP's due. This still allows time to follow up invitations by phone
- Prepare a production schedule detailing when each suppliers will be arriving with their product on site. This schedule may start as early as 2 days before the event (depending on the complexity of the installation)

1 Week Ahead

- Confirm final numbers with rental company and make final decisions about heaters, tent walls etc.
- Confirm final numbers with caterer
- Plan seating arrangements if necessary
- Contact all neighbours, by phone or letter and inform them about your event, when it is happening (date and time) and a phone number to contact you with any questions. This is a courtesy you should always extend!

1 Day Ahead

- Arrange for delivery of rentals and tent installation, if you are using them. (If the installation is complicated or a floor is being laid, the rental company may want to arrive 2 days before the event)

Day Of The Reception

- Attempt to stay on your production schedule
 - The festivities begin!
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