WEDDING REHEARSAL CHECKLIST

The rehearsal is an important and exciting part of the whole wedding process. As a celebrant, I enjoy working with couples to use the rehearsal as an opportunity to put the finishing touches to their ceremony and iron out any logistical or procedural issues. The following is the 10-Step Program that I generally use to make the run-through comprehensive, painless and enjoyable:

**1.  General**introduction**: review of rehearsal with bride & groom + others.**

**2.  Proposed physical staging of ceremony:**

* Identify the “best ceremony spot” (ie where the bride, groom and celebrant will be positioned)
* Furniture/props: including canopies, chairs and Registry Table
* Format for Groomsmen and Bridesmaids
* PA system/Musician(s)

**3.  Bridal**procession**:**

* Arrival order: bridesmaids/flower girls/ bride & escort?
* Music for arrival (if required)
* Groom to stand forward to acknowledge bridesmaids?
* Bride and escort: “handover” process?

**4.  Readings:**

* Identify readers and respective readings
* Where they stand?

**5.  PA system:** instruction on mic use for Bride & Groom + Readers

**6.  Main Ceremony:**

* Finalize any last-minute changes
* Check pronunciations
* Identify any pre-ceremony announcements – eg phones/cameras etc
* Vows: discuss timing + microphone (ie each hold mic or celebrant to hold it?)
* Exchange of Rings: discuss procedure with ring-bearer and couple
* Any further announcements?
* Form of final marriage announcement e.g. Mr & Mrs?
* Confirm witnesses

**7.  Music arrangements:** content/sound system/ who is responsible?

**8.  Marriage document signing procedure:** 3 forms require 5 signatures: bride, groom, the witnesses and celebrant; who takes possession of the commemorative certificate?

**9.  Recession:** discuss details

**10. Other issues**

* If applicable, sign declaration document at rehearsal (this to be signed within 14 days of ceremony). Sign BDM marriage certificate application (if celebrant is processing this for you). Celebrant to check original i.d. documents (if outstanding).
* Veil or no veil?
* Bouquet: who’s in charge of handover/return?
* Weather issues / contingencies
* Responsibility for flower girls / page boys?

HANDY TIPS FOR THE BIG DAY

**SUN/WIND:** If outdoors, check ceremony venue at a similar time of day for angle of the sun. Look at options if the weather is windy.

**VEILS:** If bride is wearing a veil over her face, then escort can lift it back before shaking groom’s hand and kissing bride, then offering bride’s hand to groom. If outdoors, on a very windy day, and the veil is a distraction bride and groom can change positions.

**BRIDE’S SHOES:** Maybe practise walking on them at rehearsal to get used to them?

**BRIDE’S PROCESSION**: Shoulders back, big smiles and pause, take your time – acknowledge guests and your escort – there’s no rush!

**READINGS:** Ask your reader/s if they would be kind enough to practise their reading/s a couple of times out loud before the ceremony.  (note: most people speak too quickly.)

**USING A MICROPHONE:** Always keep the microphone angled close to the mouth (speaking a little louder than normal when outdoors.)

**PHOTOGRAPHS:** Try to angle each other’s hands to the camera when placing each other’s rings. Groom should place one hand under bride’s and take enough time for a lovely photo. Same with ‘The Kiss’ – if you don’t get it right for the camera and remember, then you can always just do it again!!!

**RINGS:** If a little tight, nerves and excitement can make them even tighter, maybe lubricate beforehand with a little soap or Vaseline. Don’t force if not behaving, just wiggle it on a bit later. Note: if receiving rings before placement, often bride’s ring fits on groom’s curled little finger and groom’s ring fits on bride’s curled thumb.

**BRIDE’S BOUQUET:** Hold just below the waist (much more flattering in pics). Don’t forget to ask your bridesmaid or someone to give it back to you before the recession.

**LITTLE CHILDREN:** If they are guests, try to get someone or something to entertain them. If in the wedding party and they get restless just let them sit down with their family.

**MUSIC:** If using an i-pod make sure you have enough downloaded for pre-ceremony (at least half an hour) and signing (about 5 mins) plus post-ceremony. Rehearse bride’s procession and wedding party recession. IMPORTANT: music should fade and stop just before ceremony begins. Discuss devices and be careful of devices sitting in full sun for a long time. If possible bring two. If your device has a passcode – please don’t forget to share with your music person.

**HANKY or TISSUES:** Just in case of a few tears (of joy)!!

**EMERGENCY CONTACTS:** Who will be at the venue I can contact if I am late or run into any issues (That may or may not be in the wedding party) Please make sure both wedding parties have a designated person who is able to make or receive calls

Notes:

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