**SET UP DETAILS**

**Here are details to consider when it comes to setting up.** And because what goes up must come down, it also includes some details about clean up as well.

There is a lot more information about set up in Topic 8 Layout & Decor of the Wedding Planning Resource Library if you need help figuring out what and how to set things up. And Topic 7 Helpers discusses things to consider if you have helpers for big things like set up.

**SET UP DETAILS**

* **Think about areas that you may want to add a little decor or flowers to like the bar, bathroom, guest book table, etc. and plan to have some extra decor for those.** These are areas that are often overlooked in wedding planning, but become obvious during set up that you’d like to spruce them up.
* **It’s a good idea to set up as far in advance as possible.** Set up always takes longer than people think, so make sure to leave as much time as possible for it. And get as much as you can done before the wedding day.
* **Set up is one area where the more helpers you have, generally the better.** I typically recommend having a minimum of 3 people on set up - more if there’s a lot of set up to be done.
* **For guests who are helping with various wedding tasks, remember the 3-or-1 Rule:** they either get one large job or 3 small jobs. This way no one person is overburdened with too much work.
* **Often parents are willing to help out, but they will have lots to do on the wedding day just being part of the wedding party.** They will need plenty of time to get ready, and will want to enjoy the ceremony and reception as much as you do. So help them avoid the temptation to take on a lot of tasks throughout the wedding day by only having them do a minimal amount.
* **If you bought tablecloths online, check to see if they are thin.** Try them on a table at home beforehand to see how they look**.** If they are really thin, you may want to put craft paper on the table first before putting down the tablecloth to cover up any stains on the tables.
* **In general, open up and inspect everything you purchase at home** before going to the venue so you can see if anything is missing, broken, or unexpected.
* **It’s a good idea to have an extra tablecloth or two on hand.** Often an extra tablecloth will be needed to cover up an unexpected table or one will get dirty by accident. I wouldn’t necessarily rent an extra linen just to have on hand if they are expensive, but if it’s easy enough, it’s never a bad idea to bring extra linens.
* **If you have an extra small table at home, that is good to bring, too.** Often something will come up during set up that could use a little table, so I suggest having that on hand if possible.
* **Pack extra decor and other helpful items.** Walk around your house, and grab things that you think could be helpful or go well with your overall vibe. This way if you discover a few gaps in your plan as you set up, you have some other items to chose from on hand.
* **If you have votives, drop a teaspoon of water in the votive holder before placing the candle in.** This way the wax will pop right out during clean up and not stick to the glass.
* **If you have candles to be lit,** the long grill lighters are by far the easiest/best to use.
* **If you can, organize your decor at home, so it’s easy to get started with set up when you get to the venue.** Keep like items together (e.g., ceremony items in one box or set of boxes, cocktail hour in another, and reception in another). Label boxes, so you know what’s in them with a quick glance.
* **It’s a good idea to bring extra items like scissors, tape, ribbon, etc.** See the Packing List next week for more items that often help with set up.
* **Don’t lose the linen bags.** Rental companies will send bags to put the dirty linens in at the end of an event. They can be easy to misplace during set up, so keep an eye for the linen bags and then put them somewhere safe where they can be easily found when clean up starts.
* **Figure out what can be set up beforehand and what will *need* to be set up on the day of.** Often DIY venues will tell you that you can set up before the wedding day (which is great), but know that typically there are a lot of finishing touches that always *have* to wait to the wedding day. Being able to differentiate between items that can be set up before the wedding day and the ones that will have to be set up on the wedding day is important to creating an accurate Wedding Day Plan. Particularly, items going outdoors and food and drink items generally all have to be set up *on* the wedding day.
* **If you have rentals, count everything to make sure it’s all there as soon as the rentals arrive.** It’s not uncommon for something to be missing, so the sooner you find out, the better.
* **Is there anything that will need to be created at the venue, like an arbor?** If so, leave more than enough time to do this to work out any kinks that come up in the process.
* **If you have linens, will they need to be ironed or will they be good to go on arrival?** If they’re rentals, you likely won’t need to iron them. But if they’ve been ordered online, you’ll likely want to iron or steam them or get the wrinkles out in the dryer beforehand. This is time consuming, so plan for it if it applies to your wedding.
* **Know set up can be messy.** When set up is done, there’s generally trash that needs to be cleaned up, the floor may need to be swept, and if you’re DIY-ing your centerpieces there may be lots of flower stems and leaves to pick up. So plan to clean up from your set up as well.
* **Remember some things will need to be “set up” during the actual wedding.** Candles may need to be lit, dessert items placed out etc., so don’t forget those items as well.
* **Decide if you want people to be able to enter the reception space during cocktail hour.** If not, decide how you will keep people out because some people will generally to exploring, wander in, and put their personal items at their seat. If you don’t want people to enter, also think about at what point you would change your mind (e.g., if the temperatures were on the colder side).
* **If you are having heaters, they will need to be turned on well in advance of when people will actually enter the space.** Talk to your rental company or venue about what time they recommend, and then make sure to include that time in your Master Timeline.

**CLEAN UP DETAILS**

* **Know what needs to be cleaned up immediately after the ceremony, cocktail hour, or reception.** Think of things that are important to you like ceremony props and gifts, and things that you don’t want to leave overnight like food and trash. What, if anything, can wait until later?
* **It’s not a pretty job, but you may want to have someone keep an eye on the bathrooms and empty the trash in there during the course of the reception if need be.**
* **Think about whether you want guests to take flowers, centerpieces, extra dessert, etc. as this will help with clean up.** If so, have the emcee announce that guests should take these things at the end of the night, have a sign letting people know what to take, or have a non-guest point person encourage people to take things with them when they leave.
* **If you have rentals or things that you’ve borrowed from other people, know how they need to be returned.** Rental companies usually have guidelines for how items have to be returned, and if you don’t follow them, they charge you extra money.
* **Make a clean up plan.** When it will happen, and who will help?Remember, everything that goes up for your wedding has to come down, and typically it’s a lot. The best time to do clean up is when it doesn’t interfere with important things like saying goodbye to guests, a brunch the next day, etc.
* **If you’re really organized, think about how you’d like things packed up,** so you don’t end up with a bunch of stuff thrown in boxes.