

Backyard Wedding Site & Infrastructure Checklist

Audit the property like a temporary venue - before contracts, rentals, and decor depend on it.

Treat the Property Like a Temporary Venue

A home becomes a workable wedding site only when every essential system can operate at the same time. Complete this review before assuming the property is ready.

VERIFY

Confirm what already exists and whether it can support the event safely under both the preferred and backup layouts.

ASSIGN

Give each system one responsible person. Shared concern is not the same as clear ownership.

BACK UP

Record the primary solution and the backup before contracts and guest promises depend on them.

EVERY PAGE SHOULD ANSWER

Question	Your answer
What must this system support?	
Who is responsible for confirming it?	
What is the primary solution?	
What is the backup if the first solution fails?	
What deadline or trigger activates the plan?	
Who must be told when the answer changes?	

LOCAL VERIFICATION MATTERS

Rules vary by address, city, county, HOA, lease, insurer, event size, alcohol service, tenting, and fire requirements. Use this checklist to organize questions, then confirm requirements with the appropriate official source.

Property & Event Snapshot

Record the basic facts that every vendor and infrastructure decision will depend on. Use the weather-backup layout when setting the true guest ceiling.

PROPERTY ADDRESS

HOMEOWNER / PROPERTY DECISION MAKER

WEDDING DATE & EVENT WINDOW

EXPECTED GUESTS / TRUE CEILING

PRIMARY CEREMONY AREA

PRIMARY RECEPTION AREA

WEATHER-BACKUP AREA

EMERGENCY ACCESS POINT

Property contact	Name	Phone	When to call
Homeowner			
Site lead			
Day-of lead			
Emergency backup			

Calculate Real, Usable Capacity

Capacity is not how many people can stand on the lawn. It is how many can arrive, sit, eat, use restrooms, move safely, and leave while vendors still have room to work.

Event zone	Surface / size	Planned use	Comfortable	Restriction
Ceremony seating				
Reception tables				
Dance floor				
Bar				
Catering / service				
Tent footprint				
Restrooms				
Guest walkways				
Vendor staging				
Weather backup				

PREFERRED-LAYOUT MAX

_____ guests

BACKUP-LAYOUT MAX

_____ guests

TRUE GUEST CEILING

_____ guests

REMOVE UNUSABLE SPACE

Exclude slopes, poor drainage, septic areas, pools, fragile landscaping, narrow gates, low branches, tent weights, service paths, and emergency access from the usable footprint.

Rules, Permits, Insurance & Restrictions

Do not treat a generic checklist as legal approval. Record the official source, answer, deadline, and owner for every rule that may apply to the property.

QUESTIONS TO VERIFY

- ☐ City or county event requirements
- ☐ Tent or temporary-structure requirements
- ☐ Fire access, occupancy, and egress requirements
- ☐ Noise limits and amplified-sound hours
- ☐ Parking and street-use restrictions

PROPERTY-SPECIFIC CHECKS

- ☐ Alcohol service requirements
- ☐ HOA, lease, deed, or property restrictions
- ☐ Homeowners or event insurance requirements
- ☐ Food-service or cooking restrictions
- ☐ Septic, well, or utility limitations

Rule / requirement	Official source	Answer / document	Owner	Deadline

Noise, Boundaries & Neighbor Impact

Good neighbor communication does not replace local rules, but it prevents avoidable friction and helps protect access, property lines, and the event end time.

PROTECT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- ☐ Confirm amplified-sound limits and cutoff
- ☐ Aim speakers away from nearby homes
- ☐ Set a music transition or earlier cutoff backup
- ☐ Keep guests and vendors inside property boundaries
- ☐ Protect private driveways, lawns, and mail access
- ☐ Assign one contact for neighbor concerns

COMMUNICATE EARLY

- ☐ Share the event date and expected window
- ☐ Explain delivery and setup timing
- ☐ Share the parking and shuttle plan
- ☐ Confirm where trucks may wait or unload
- ☐ Plan lighting that does not spill unnecessarily
- ☐ Schedule cleanup without overnight disturbance

Issue	Primary solution	Responsible	Backup
Sound			
Parking			
Deliveries			
Guest boundaries			
Cleanup			

Tent, Ground & Weather Cover

A tent can provide cover and define the event space, but it also creates requirements for sizing, anchoring, flooring, access, power, climate control, installation, and safe use.

TENT STRUCTURE

- ☐ Professional site evaluation completed
- ☐ Guest count and real layout shared
- ☐ Terrain and drainage evaluated
- ☐ Underground utilities or staking limits confirmed
- ☐ Weights, anchors, and wind limits confirmed
- ☐ Sidewalls included if needed

MAKE THE TENT USABLE

- ☐ Flooring or walkways planned
- ☐ Lighting and power plan confirmed
- ☐ Heating, cooling, or ventilation confirmed
- ☐ Installation and removal access confirmed
- ☐ Setup and inspection timing confirmed
- ☐ Backup exists if the tent cannot operate safely

Decision	Primary solution	Responsible	Backup
Cover			
Flooring			
Sidewalls			
Climate			
Unsafe weather			

Weather Triggers & Activation Plan

Agree on the trigger, solution, backup, decision owner, and activation deadline before the forecast becomes stressful. For lightning, identify real shelter before guests arrive.

Risk	Trigger	Primary solution	Backup	OWNER / DEADLINE
Rain	Forecast or active rain at the agreed decision time	Tent / covered layout	Named indoor or alternate plan	
Lightning	Local safety trigger or immediate unsafe conditions	Move indoors immediately	Pause outdoor activity	
Heat	Conditions unsafe or genuinely uncomfortable	Shade, water, shorter outdoor time	Move key segments indoors	
Cold	Temperature likely to shorten guest comfort	Heaters, layers, warm spaces	Move segments indoors	
Wind	Conditions exceed safe limits for structures or decor	Secure, weight, simplify	Move or remove affected setup	

WEATHER DECISION MAKER

GUEST COMMUNICATION METHOD

PLAN FOR THE WHOLE EVENT

Confirm where guests eat, where vendors work, how walkways and restrooms function, and how much time is needed to move or reset the event.

Build a Professional Power Plan

Residential service may not support catering, refrigeration, sound, lighting, restrooms, and climate equipment at once. Collect vendor requirements, then use a qualified professional for the site plan.

System	Equipment / load information	Primary source	Backup	Confirmed by
Catering				
Refrigeration				
DJ / band / sound				
Lighting				
Restroom trailer				
Heating / cooling				
Bar / ice				
Other essential system				

SITE SAFETY

- ☐ Dedicated circuits or distribution confirmed
- ☐ Generator size and placement professionally confirmed
- ☐ Generator outdoors, dry, and away from doors, windows, and vents
- ☐ Fuel, runtime, and safe refueling plan confirmed

FAILURE PLAN

- ☐ Cables protected from weather and foot traffic
- ☐ Essential systems identified for backup
- ☐ Emergency shutoff and qualified contact known

Emergency, Fire & Medical Readiness

Prepare the property for a fast, coordinated response. Confirm the exact address, access route, equipment, authority, and backup before guests or vendors arrive.

EMERGENCY ACCESS

- ☐ Street address visible after dark
- ☐ Gate and driveway instructions shared
- ☐ Emergency lane and turnaround remain clear
- ☐ Exact site pin and nearest cross street recorded
- ☐ Responders can reach the tent, house, and key event zones

FIRE, CO & ELECTRICAL

- ☐ Correct fire extinguishers selected and placed
- ☐ Cooking and open-flame locations verified locally
- ☐ Generator outdoors, dry, and away from openings
- ☐ Fuel storage and safe refueling plan confirmed
- ☐ Electrical shutoff and qualified contact known

MEDICAL RESPONSE

- ☐ First-aid kit and AED location confirmed
- ☐ One sober response lead is named
- ☐ Guest medical and access needs handled privately
- ☐ Emergency address and calling instructions printed
- ☐ Vehicle or EMS access cannot be blocked
- ☐ Team knows who calls and who meets responders

INCIDENT RESPONSE MAP

INCIDENT	FIRST ACTION	LEAD	CONTACT / ESCALATION	BACKUP
Medical				
Fire / smoke				
Power failure				
Severe weather				
Security / guest emergency				

A TENT IS NOT LIGHTNING SHELTER

If thunder is heard, move everyone to a substantial enclosed building or hard-topped vehicle. A tent, patio, pavilion, or open garage is not adequate lightning shelter. Follow current local safety guidance before resuming.

Bathrooms, Water & Accessibility

Confirm restroom capacity, privacy, plumbing or septic limits, potable water and handwashing, accessible facilities, lighting, delivery access, and the complete guest route.

BATHROOM OPERATION

- ☐ Existing bathroom count and location
- ☐ Guest capacity verified with provider or professional
- ☐ Plumbing / septic limitations confirmed
- ☐ Private rooms protected from guest traffic
- ☐ Handwashing and supplies planned
- ☐ Cleaning or servicing during the event assigned

ACCESSIBLE GUEST ROUTE

- ☐ Step-free or appropriate accessible route
- ☐ Accessible restroom option confirmed
- ☐ Accessible parking / drop-off connected to route
- ☐ Ground surface stable and adequately lit
- ☐ Tent, dining, bar, and restroom routes connected
- ☐ Weather backup preserves accessibility

Need	Primary solution	Responsible	Backup
Bathroom quantity			
Accessible facility			
Guest route			
Water / power			
Service / cleanup			

Can the Caterer Operate Here?

A residential kitchen is not automatically a catering kitchen. Ask the caterer what they need to prepare, hold, serve, clear, and remove the menu safely at this property.

PREP & FOOD SAFETY

- ☐ Menu matches the property's real capabilities
- ☐ Off-site prep versus on-site cooking confirmed
- ☐ Prep and plating area defined
- ☐ Refrigeration and hot holding confirmed
- ☐ Potable water and handwashing confirmed
- ☐ Cooking equipment and applicable rules confirmed

SERVICE & CLEANUP

- ☐ Dedicated power needs included
- ☐ Service route does not cross guest arrival
- ☐ Staff parking and arrival confirmed
- ☐ Dishware / rental handling confirmed
- ☐ Food, grease, wastewater, and trash plan confirmed
- ☐ Rain and wind backup protects service

Operational need	Primary solution	Responsible	Backup
Prep			
Temperature control			
Water			
Power			
Service path			

Furniture & Equipment Inventory

Backyard weddings often require more rental categories than traditional venues. Confirm quantities only after the layout, weather plan, delivery access, and pickup window are real.

Category	Quantity / specification	Provider	Delivery / pickup	Backup
Tent / cover				
Flooring / walkways				
Ceremony chairs				
Dining tables				
Reception chairs				
Linens				
Tableware / glassware				
Bar				
Lighting				
Heating / cooling				
Restrooms				
Catering equipment				
Waste containers				

CONFIRM THE TOTAL RENTAL SYSTEM

Check setup labor, delivery fees, damage rules, weather decisions, substitution terms, pickup timing, and who counts and signs for items at both delivery and return.

Deliveries, Trucks & Setup Access

A property may fit the wedding but still fail as a delivery site. Confirm vehicle size, gate width, turning space, surface conditions, overhead clearance, unloading, and vendor sequencing.

PHYSICAL ACCESS

- ☐ Gate and driveway widths measured
- ☐ Turning radius and exit route confirmed
- ☐ Low branches and overhead lines checked
- ☐ Soft ground, slopes, and load limits checked

TRAFFIC CONTROL

- ☐ Truck waiting and unloading area assigned
- ☐ Guest route kept separate from service route
- ☐ Emergency access remains open
- ☐ Weather changes to ground access considered

Vendor / delivery	Vehicle / access need	Arrival window	Unload location	Site contact
Tent				
Restrooms				
Rentals				
Caterer				
Entertainment				
Florist / decor				
Waste / cleanup				

Parking, Drop-Off & Guest Movement

The guest experience begins at arrival. Count legal, practical spaces first, protect neighbors and emergency access, then decide whether off-site parking, shuttles, valet, or rideshare is needed.

Arrival need	Capacity / time	Primary solution	Responsible	Backup
On-site parking				
Off-site parking				
Shuttle / transport				
Rideshare drop-off				
Accessible parking				
Vendor parking				
Emergency route				
End-of-night departure				

ARRIVAL EXPERIENCE

- ☐ Guest directions sent before the wedding
- ☐ Parking signs and attendants assigned
- ☐ Accessible drop-off connects to a stable route

PROTECT ACCESS

- ☐ Shuttle loading does not block traffic
- ☐ Backup driver or transportation contact recorded
- ☐ Neighbors' driveways remain clear

Waste, Cleanup & Breakdown

Plan event cleanup and property recovery as separate responsibilities. Name owners before the reception begins and confirm when every vendor, rental, and waste stream leaves.

Cleanup stream	Primary solution	Responsible	When	Backup
Trash				
Recycling				
Food waste				
Grease / liquid disposal				
Catering equipment				
Bar leftovers				
Personal decor				
Rental staging				
Restroom pickup				
Final property sweep				

BEFORE THE LAST HELPER LEAVES

- ☐ Food and alcohol stored or removed
- ☐ Private rooms checked
- ☐ Neighbor-facing debris removed
- ☐ Walkways and exits clear
- ☐ Rentals counted and protected
- ☐ Keys, gates, lights, and utilities handed back

Return the Property to Normal

Property recovery continues after rentals leave. Document the condition before setup, assign inspection responsibility, and decide who resolves damage or cleanup that appears the next day.

Area	Pre-event condition	Recovery solution	Responsible	Backup
Lawn, mud, and drainage				
Landscaping and trees				
Irrigation / septic areas				
Driveway and delivery path				
Indoor bathrooms				
Furniture and flooring				
Pool / water features				
Neighbor-facing areas				

BEFORE SETUP

- ☐ Take dated property photos
- ☐ Move and label household items
- ☐ Mark protected or off-limits areas

AFTER BREAKDOWN

- ☐ Complete homeowner walkthrough
- ☐ Record damage before repairs
- ☐ Confirm final vendor / rental claims

Site & Infrastructure Control Sheet

Transfer the confirmed answer for every system. Blank or vague rows identify what must be solved before the property can function as a venue.

SYSTEM	STATUS	RESPONSIBLE	PRIMARY SOLUTION	BACKUP
Capacity	Open / Confirmed			
Rules / permits	Open / Confirmed			
Noise / neighbors	Open / Confirmed			
Tent / cover	Open / Confirmed			
Weather activation	Open / Confirmed			
Power	Open / Confirmed			
Emergency / fire / medical	Open / Confirmed			
Bathrooms / water	Open / Confirmed			
Accessibility	Open / Confirmed			
Catering	Open / Confirmed			
Rentals	Open / Confirmed			
Truck access	Open / Confirmed			
Parking / arrival	Open / Confirmed			
Waste	Open / Confirmed			
Cleanup	Open / Confirmed			
Property recovery	Open / Confirmed			

Is the Property Ready to Operate?

A property is ready when essential systems work together under both the preferred and backup plans, responsibilities are clear, and unresolved issues have real deadlines.

BEFORE CONTRACTS

- ☐ Capacity works in both layouts
- ☐ Rules and restrictions verified
- ☐ Tent and weather solution viable
- ☐ True infrastructure cost understood

BEFORE FINAL WEEK

- ☐ Vendors have access and power details
- ☐ Parking and guest instructions complete
- ☐ Owner and backup named for every system
- ☐ Cleanup and recovery scheduled

BEFORE GUESTS ARRIVE

- ☐ Emergency access, response lead, and safety equipment ready
- ☐ Restrooms, lighting, and walkways ready
- ☐ Weather decision communicated
- ☐ Day-of lead holds the current plan

UNRESOLVED SITE ISSUES

Issue	Owner	Deadline	Backup if unresolved

SITE LEAD APPROVAL

FINAL WALKTHROUGH DATE

NOTES & LOOSE ENDS

Notes

Use this space for measurements, questions, contacts, and anything you want to revisit.