

FREE WEDDING OPERATIONS WORKBOOK

Wedding Day Logistics & Backup Workbook

Weather backup, transportation, and operational contingency plans in one clear handoff for the people running the wedding day.

TRIGGER • DECIDE • COMMUNICATE

Build the Decisions Before the Pressure

A backup plan works only when a trigger, deadline, owner, authority level, communication chain, and executable alternative are already written down.

WEATHER

Prepare infrastructure first, then define the forecast or safety condition that activates the indoor, tented, or comfort plan.

TRANSPORTATION

Plan each group as a movement with a route, capacity, loading time, arrival target, buffer, driver, and backup.

CONTINGENCY

Give common operational problems a response threshold, decision-maker, contact path, substitute, and recovery rule.

EVERY OPERATIONAL PLAN NEEDS

- ☐ A specific risk, not a vague worry
- ☐ A main plan and executable Plan B
- ☐ One named owner
- ☐ A contact sequence
- ☐ An observable trigger
- ☐ A final decision deadline
- ☐ Written authority to act
- ☐ A way to tell guests and vendors

THIS WORKBOOK COVERS OPERATIONAL RECOVERY

Medical emergencies belong with trained professionals and the venue's emergency procedures. This workbook organizes weather, movement, vendors, power, items, spaces, and timing.

ONE OPERATIONS LEAD RECEIVES THE FINAL HANDOFF AND ACTS WITHIN APPROVED LIMITS

Wedding Day Decision Map

Use this page as the front sheet for the complete workbook. It shows what can change, who can authorize it, and where the detailed instructions live.

OPERATIONAL AREA	PRIMARY OWNER	BACKUP OWNER	AUTHORITY LEVEL	DECISION	PAGE
Weather activation			Act / Consult / Inform		5-9
Transportation changes			Act / Consult / Inform		11-15
Accessibility / guest care			Act / Consult / Inform		18
Emergency response			Venue / professionals		19
Vendor delay / no-show			Act / Consult / Inform		20
Power / technical failure			Act / Consult / Inform		21
Missing or delayed items			Act / Consult / Inform		21
Venue / space problem			Act / Consult / Inform		22
Timeline delay			Act / Consult / Inform		22
Master contingency matrix			Final execution sheet		23

ISSUES THE LEAD MAY DECIDE WITHOUT THE COUPLE

ISSUES REQUIRING THE COUPLE'S APPROVAL

ONE PHONE NUMBER VENDORS SHOULD CALL FIRST

WHERE THE CURRENT WORKBOOK WILL BE KEPT

PART 01

Weather Backup Plan

Prepare the infrastructure, thresholds, safety rules, decision deadline, and communication chain before the forecast creates pressure.

THIS SECTION RESOLVES

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Rain and lightning | ☐ Heat and cold |
| ☐ Wind and structural stability | ☐ Indoor space, tent, flooring and power |
| ☐ Activation deadline | ☐ Vendor and guest communication |

DECIDE EARLY · HAND OFF CLEARLY

Define the Weather Risks and Triggers

Do not wait for a forecast to invent thresholds. Agree on the condition, observation source, deadline, owner, and exact backup while there is still time to reserve infrastructure.

Condition	Specific risk	Trigger / threshold	Source	Deadline	Owner
Rain					
Lightning					
Wind					
Heat					
Cold					
Other local condition					

FORECAST SOURCE EVERYONE WILL USE

PERSON MONITORING CONDITIONS

FINAL ACTIVATION DEADLINE

SAFETY CONDITION THAT OVERRIDES EVERY DEADLINE

Separate Rain Planning from Lightning Safety

Rain may allow a timed or partial adjustment. Lightning requires an immediate safety response based on current venue guidance and local conditions, even if the ceremony has begun.

RAIN PLAN

TRIGGER / PROBABILITY OR RADAR CONDITION

PRIMARY COVERED LOCATION

PLAN B LOCATION

MOVE / SETUP TIME

DECISION DEADLINE

OWNER

LIGHTNING PLAN

VENUE SAFETY RULE

IMMEDIATE STOP / MOVE TRIGGER

SHELTER LOCATION

ALL-CLEAR AUTHORITY

GUEST INSTRUCTION

OWNER

Area affected	Main plan	Rain Plan B	Lightning response	Lead
Ceremony				
Cocktail hour				
Reception				

Plan for Heat, Cold and Wind

These conditions may not cancel the event, but they change guest comfort, equipment safety, decor stability, service timing, and how long people can remain outside.

HEAT

TEMPERATURE / HEAT-INDEX TRIGGER

SHADE AND COOLING PLAN

WATER STATIONS

SHORTENED OUTDOOR SEGMENTS

GUEST COMMUNICATION

COLD

TEMPERATURE / WIND-CHILL TRIGGER

HEATERS AND BLANKETS

WARM INDOOR OPTION

SHORTENED OUTDOOR SEGMENTS

GUEST COMMUNICATION

WIND

WIND / GUST TRIGGER

TENT RATING AND SIDEWALLS

SECURED DECOR AND SIGNAGE

UNSAFE ITEMS REMOVED

VENDOR NOTIFICATION

Condition	Decision deadline	Owner	Guest-facing wording
Heat			
Cold			
Wind			

Confirm Indoor Space, Tent & Power

A tent alone is not a complete backup. Capacity, sidewalls, anchoring, flooring, lighting, climate control, power, access, installation timing, and removal all need confirmed answers.

Infrastructure item	Main plan	Backup / correction	Provider	Deadline	CONFIRMED
Named indoor space					☐
Indoor capacity / layout					☐
Tent size and rating					☐
Tent sidewalls					☐
Anchoring / ballast					☐
Flooring / ground protection					☐
Lighting					☐
Heating / cooling					☐
Primary power					☐
Backup generator					☐
Installation access					☐
Setup / removal window					☐

EXACT LOCATION EVERYTHING MOVES TO

TIME AND LABOR REQUIRED FOR THE MOVE

Set the Weather Decision Chain

Once the trigger is met, the team should know who decides, who activates infrastructure, who contacts vendors, and how guests are redirected without contacting the couple for routine approval.

Order	Person / role	Contact	Action after activation	Backup contact
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

FINAL DECISION-MAKER & AUTHORITY

LATEST DECISION TIME

Audience	Method	Message owner	Exact message / instruction
Vendors			
Wedding party / family			
Guests before arrival			
Guests already on site			

PART 02

Transportation Plan

Turn every movement into a timed route with a group, capacity, driver, loading plan, arrival target, buffer, and usable backup.

THIS SECTION RESOLVES

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Groups being transported | ☐ Routes and venue access |
| ☐ Vehicle capacity | ☐ Loading and unloading |
| ☐ Backward-planned departures | ☐ Delay and breakdown backups |

DECIDE EARLY · HAND OFF CLEARLY

Map Every Group That Must Move

Plan by group, not only by vehicle. Every movement needs an origin, destination, required arrival time, headcount, accessibility needs, and one person who confirms departure.

Group	People	Origin	Destination	Required arrival	Movement
Partner / group 1					
Partner / group 2					
Wedding party					
Immediate family					
Guests					
Vendors / equipment					
End-of-night couple					
Other					

GUESTS NEEDING ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION

PEOPLE NOT INCLUDED IN ANY GROUP ABOVE

COUNT PEOPLE, BELONGINGS, AND EQUIPMENT

A vehicle that fits the passengers may not fit attire, mobility equipment, instruments, florals, or luggage. Confirm usable capacity, not the advertised seat count alone.

Verify Routes, Loading and Venue Access

Drive or professionally verify each route at the relevant time of day. Mapping estimates may not include bus access, turning space, loading time, event traffic, parking, or road restrictions.

Route / leg	Distance / drive	Load point	Unload point	Restriction / risk	VERIFIED
					☐
					☐
					☐
					☐
					☐
					☐
					☐
					☐

ACCESS CHECK

- ☐ Vehicle can enter and turn
- ☐ Load zone stays clear
- ☐ Accessible entrance confirmed
- ☐ Driver has venue contact

ROUTE CHECK

- ☐ Tested at relevant time
- ☐ Traffic / closure source chosen
- ☐ Alternate route mapped
- ☐ Parking instructions shared

Assign Vehicles, Drivers and Load Plans

Match the real headcount and mobility needs to usable capacity. If a vehicle makes multiple trips, each loop needs its own departure, loading, drive, unloading, and return time.

Vehicle / provider	Driver & phone	Usable seats	Assigned group	Trips	Backup

ITEMS THAT REQUIRE VEHICLE SPACE

ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE AND BOARDING PLAN

DO NOT BUILD THE PLAN AT MAXIMUM CAPACITY

Leave practical room for a last-minute passenger, personal items, slower boarding, and the fact that formal attire can make a full vehicle harder to load efficiently.

Build Every Departure Backward from Arrival

Start with when the group must be in place. Subtract parking or unloading, drive time, a realistic buffer, loading, and any waiting window to find the actual departure time.

Group / route	Must arrive	Unload / walk	Drive	Buffer	Load	Depart

MOVEMENT WITH THE SMALLEST BUFFER

HOW THAT BUFFER WILL BE PROTECTED

Fixed anchor	Cannot move because	Latest safe arrival
Ceremony start		
Portrait time		
Reception entrance		

Define the Trigger for a Transportation Change

A late vehicle is manageable when the point person knows when to call, how long to wait, what alternate vehicle can work, and which schedule segment may absorb the delay.

Failure / delay	Trigger to act	Primary response	Backup	Owner	Contact
Driver not responding					
Vehicle late to pickup					
Vehicle breakdown					
Route blocked					
Capacity shortfall					
Guest misses shuttle					
Accessible vehicle unavailable					
End-of-night vehicle absent					

BACKUP DRIVER / PROVIDER

RIDESHARE / TAXI FEASIBILITY AND LIMIT

A BACKUP MUST MATCH THE GROUP

A rideshare may solve one person's missed pickup but not a full shuttle, wheelchair access, or equipment transport. Match each fallback to the actual movement.

PART 03

Wedding Contingency Plan

Give common operational problems an observable trigger, executable backup, named owner, contact path, and authority to act.

THIS SECTION RESOLVES

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Contact chain and authority | ☐ Vendor delay and no-show |
| ☐ Power and technical failure | ☐ Missing or delayed items |
| ☐ Venue and space problems | ☐ Timeline recovery |

DECIDE EARLY · HAND OFF CLEARLY

Set the Contact Chain and Decision Authority

Problems should move toward the operational lead, not directly to the couple. Write the order, define unreachable backups, and state what each person may decide without approval.

Order	Role / person	Phone	Receives calls from	May decide	Backup
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

OPERATIONAL DECISIONS THE LEAD MAY MAKE

IRREVERSIBLE / PERSONAL DECISIONS RESERVED FOR THE COUPLE

IF THE PRIMARY LEAD IS UNREACHABLE

HOW THE COUPLE WILL BE INFORMED AFTER ACTION

Keep Access and Guest Care Operational

Accessibility is an operational requirement, not a last-minute courtesy. Confirm the real route, responsible owner, backup, and communication plan before guests arrive.

VERIFY BEFORE GUESTS ARRIVE

- ☐ Accessible arrival, parking and drop-off
- ☐ Continuous route to every essential space
- ☐ Seating, sightline and standing alternatives
- ☐ Accessible restroom and service-animal plan

PROTECT THROUGHOUT THE DAY

- ☐ Sensory, volume and lighting needs
- ☐ Hydration, food and medication timing
- ☐ Private rest space and caregiver access
- ☐ Accessible transportation backup and owner

ACCESS & GUEST CARE PLAN

AREA	NEED OR BARRIER	PRIMARY PLAN	BACKUP	OWNER	VERIFIED
Arrival / parking					
Routes / surfaces					
Seating / sightlines					
Restrooms					
Sensory environment					
Food / medication					
Rest / private space					
Accessible transport					
Service animal / caregiver					

FIELD-CHECK THE REAL ROUTE

Walk slopes, thresholds, surfaces, elevators, restrooms, seating transfers and actual distances. A website promise is not a field verification.

Protect Life Safety Before Protecting the Timeline

Venue procedures and trained professionals govern an emergency. This page does not replace them; it records accurate contacts, access, stop-work triggers, communication, and handoff.

CALL / ESCALATE

Local emergency number
Venue security / emergency contact
Exact address and responder access point

STOP / MOVE

Person authorized to stop the event
Evacuate or shelter trigger
Assembly or protected location

COMMUNICATE

Staff communication channel
Guest instruction owner
Family / couple notification protocol

INCIDENT RESPONSE MAP

INCIDENT	IMMEDIATE ACTION	PROFESSIONAL / VENUE LEAD	OPERATIONS OWNER	GUEST MESSAGE	RESUME AUTHORITY
Medical emergency					
Fire / smoke					
Severe weather					
Security concern					
Missing person / child					
Access barrier					
Power / electrical hazard					
Food allergy reaction					
Transportation incident					

EMERGENCY ADDRESS & ACCESS POINT

DO NOT DELAY CARE FOR PRIVACY OR TIMING

Give responders accurate details, keep routes clear, pause operations, and document the handoff. Do not announce a diagnosis or speculate publicly.

Prepare for Vendor Delays and No-Shows

A delay becomes disruptive when the team waits without a response threshold. Record confirmed arrival windows, escalation times, vendor-owned backups, substitutes, and the schedule adjustment allowed.

Vendor	Confirmed	Trigger to call	No-show	Backup / substitute	Owner
Venue / coordinator					
Officiant					
Photo / video					
Catering / bar					
Florals / decor					
Music					
Rentals					
Transportation					

FIRST VENDOR DELAY THAT CHANGES THE TIMELINE

PERSON AUTHORIZED TO APPROVE A SUBSTITUTE

CONFIRM EACH VENDOR'S OWN CONTINUITY PLAN

Ask who covers the work if the assigned professional is ill, delayed, or unable to attend. A vendor's internal backup should be known before a same-day problem occurs.

Protect Power and Critical Items

Identify what stops working if power fails and what the day cannot continue without. Assign backups, carriers, inventory checks, and substitute authority before setup begins.

Power-dependent	Primary	Backup	Test	Critical item	Primary	Backup /	READY
Ceremony sound			☐	Marriage license			☐
Reception sound			☐	Rings			☐
Lighting			☐	Vows / readings			☐
Catering equipment			☐	Attire essentials			☐
Heating / cooling			☐	Personal heirlooms			☐
Charging / communications			☐	Setup / emergency kit			☐

GENERATOR / ELECTRICIAN CONTACT & ACTIVATION RULE

INVENTORY OWNER, TIME & LOCATION

Missing item response	Decision
Wait / search limit	
Approved substitute	
Person who may purchase / replace	
Moment that continues without it	

Recover the Space and Schedule

Decide which spaces may change, which schedule anchors are fixed, and where time can be recovered. The goal is to protect the guest experience without renegotiating the entire day.

Venue problem	Trigger	Plan B	Lead	Timeline issue	Trigger	Recovery	Lead
Room not ready				Getting ready late			
Capacity / layout conflict				Photos running late			
Access problem				Ceremony delayed			
Restroom issue				Cocktail hour extended			
Setup conflict				Dinner service late			
Space unavailable				Reception running late			

Schedule segment	Protect / shorten / move	Maximum change	Who approves
Ceremony start			
Portraits			
Cocktail hour			
Toasts			
Dinner service			
Open dancing			
Exit			

THE FIXED ANCHOR THE TEAM WILL PROTECT FIRST

Complete the Operational Contingency Matrix

Transfer the final decisions from the detailed pages into this single execution sheet. Use real names, times, phone numbers, and thresholds.

RISK	TRIGGER	MAIN PLAN	PLAN B	DEADLINE	OWNER	CONTACT
Weather activation						
Transportation delay						
Accessibility barrier						
Emergency handoff						
Vendor delay						
Vendor no-show						
Power failure						
Missing item						
Venue / space problem						
Timeline delay						
Other critical risk						

A ROW IS READY ONLY WHEN SOMEONE CAN ACT FROM IT

Replace vague notes such as 'call someone,' 'watch the weather,' or 'find another option' with a named person, observable trigger, executable backup, real deadline, and verified contact.

Wedding Day Operations Handoff

Review this page with the person running the day. The handoff is complete when the lead can find every plan, contact every owner, and act within the agreed authority.

WEATHER

☐ Triggers approved

☐ Infrastructure confirmed

☐ Decision deadline set

☐ Guest message ready

TRANSPORTATION

☐ Groups and routes verified

☐ Capacity confirmed

☐ Buffers protected

☐ Backup contacts ready

CONTINGENCY

☐ Contact chain & authority shared

☐ Access plan field-verified

☐ Emergency procedure handed off

☐ Vendor and system backups known

Final handoff item	Owner	Backup	Location / contact	Verified
Current workbook				☐
Master vendor contacts				☐
Venue emergency procedure				☐
Keys / access credentials				☐
Critical items				☐
Weather source				☐
Transportation contacts				☐

PRIMARY OPERATIONS LEAD

FINAL HANDOFF DATE & TIME

Notes

Use this space for final phone numbers, changed thresholds, updated routes, vendor instructions, or decisions that still need to reach the operations lead.