



So, you were planning your dream wedding, the best day of your life, for 2020, I really feel for you – that sucks! Sending you a big (socially distanced) hug!

Whilst we never could have foreseen this, and I know you are probably as confused as I am with regards to your options, and without a crystal ball, this is what we are working with right now. I will do my best to help provide whatever insights and advice I can.

In general the industry is being flexible where they can, of course they are also struggling right now as well, so we can try to reach a compromise that means you still get to have the day of your dreams (if a little later or different than you planned) and they still get business.

Restrictions are changing all the time, and sometimes can change on the day, as happened recently, so flexibility has to be the key here.

Your ceremony may be in a different place to your reception, so you may have to work on two different scenarios. Event planners have to have a COVID plan, and with that, it may allow a little more in terms of numbers, and will depend on if your ceremony is inside or outside, and in a public or private space.

Whatever the numbers, there are some basic provisos you need to follow. Each person must be well and not suffering any flu-like symptoms at all, and social distancing must be maintained. This means no hugs or kisses except between guests who are living together already, and strict adherence to guest numbers.

The maximum number rule may not automatically apply to the reception. Ask your vendor what their COVID safe plan is and the size of the venue.

Since July 24th 2020 guests can no longer stand when eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, cafes, pubs, licensed clubs, RSL clubs, function centres and licensed premises in hotels. Where there is a bar serving alcohol, you are permitted to leave your seat to obtain the drink, providing you immediately return to your seat.

No buffets are allowed at entertainment venues, which basically covers everywhere a typical wedding reception is held including function centres, restaurants, cafes etc. Food must be served to your table.

Dance floors are not allowed currently, including at wedding venues such as halls, function rooms etc The venue hosting a wedding may allow the couple getting married to dance with each other and/or their parents, but the guests may not participate in dancing on the dance floor. That means no Nutbush or Macarena!

Lastly check in with your venue regarding styling options such as cutlery and glassware.

Phew – so now we have that out of the way, let's look at options:

CHANGING OR CANCELLING YOUR WEDDING

If you really do not want to give up on your dream, I would suggest postponing it until 2021, although there is no guarantee that it will be “back to normal” then, so you still may need to make compromises.

I definitely suggest you postpone and not cancel the whole shebang. If your wedding date is in 2020, check with all your vendors and ask what their specific policies are and check what dates they may be available for next year etc. The majority of wedding venues and vendors are very understanding in helping you change dates. Remember also to be flexible, as it may be hard to get all the original vendors on the same date again, due to the amount of people trying to rebook for one of the 52 Saturdays in a year! Consider a weekday wedding where you are more likely to have choice! They can be really cool!

If you do cancel totally, it is almost certain you will lose all/any deposits you've paid. Also, depending on how close the cancellation is to your original date, and depending on their contracts, you may incur additional costs.

ALTERNATIVES

One popular alternative is to still have a very small legal ceremony on your original date, with just your family and closest friends, adhering to all the restrictions, and then doing it all again with a renewal of vows next year! It means you get to still celebrate on your wedding day, and have the full event have with all the trimmings, wear your dress and celebrate in style a year later! Again, check with your vendors. I know that, as a celebrant, I am very happy to accommodate this option. Remember that you can also live stream your ceremony for those that cannot attend. But what an excuse for 2 celebrations (and of course 2 dresses)!

HONEYMOON

Given that I am somewhat biased, if you do postpone or split the event in to two, you could also have two “honeymoons”! Clearly international travel is off the table right now, but taking a short break here after your wedding happens can be a beautiful option, and provide much needed support to local businesses, then see what options you have for a different honeymoon next year. In either case – book through your local travel agent!

INSURANCE

Unfortunately, very few, if any, policies will cover loss in a pandemic, so it makes sense to try and rebook and recoup as much as you can by postponing rather than cancelling.

THE OTHER SIDE TO ALL OF THIS

I understand you are going to be upset and frustrated – we all are. You are entitled to feel sad, for what might have been, and you are not alone in this. Even if you postpone, don't give up and stop planning. When it happens, it will be maybe even more special because of the lead-up. Reflect on the important things and people.

Ultimately remember one of my favourite quotes. “A wedding is a party not a performance. If at the end of the day you're married to the one that you love, then everything went perfectly!”

We will get there – together. In the meantime, sending you love and strength – stay safe!