

# Wedding planning contract checklist

Your client contract protects both you and your client. **Never plan a wedding without a signed contract – not even for friends.** This checklist shows you what to include to protect your business and set clear expectations.



## 10 ESSENTIAL CONTRACT CLAUSES

### Scope of services

Define what you'll do and what you won't. Include specifics like timeline creation, vendor coordination, and day-of management. List services you don't provide to prevent scope creep.

### Payment schedule

Detail total cost, payment dates, and how clients can pay. Include your late fee policy and what happens when payments are missed. Specify cancellation fees and refunds.

*Example: 50% at signing, 25% 60 days before, 25% day-of*

### Cancellation policy

Define how either party can cancel. Include notice requirements and refund amounts based on timing. Protect yourself from last-minute cancellations.

*Example: 90+ days = 50% refund, 30-89 days = 25% refund, <30 days = no refund*

### Liability limits

Cap your liability at the total contract amount. Include protection for events you can't control. Make clear that clients handle vendor performance issues, not you.

*Liability = your legal responsibility for losses, damages, or injuries that occur during your services*

### Force majeure

Protect against disasters, venue closures, or government restrictions. Define how you'll handle costs and responsibilities during emergencies.

*Example: retain deposits for completed work; hold clients responsible for non-refundable vendor costs*

### Vendor coordination

Clarify that you connect clients with vendors but clients sign and pay vendors directly. Define your role when vendors mess up.

### Timeline responsibilities

State when you'll deliver timelines, what info clients must provide, and deadlines for decisions. Include consequences when clients delay that you cannot be guaranteed to resolve (e.g., catering shortages, limited vendor availability, etc.)

### Intellectual property

Address who owns design concepts, vendor lists, and planning documents (you) and who owns the specific wedding design (the client). Include photo usage rights and social media permissions for yourself (with client approval) so you can use these materials to market your business in the future.

### Termination rights

Define when either party can end the contract. Include notice requirements, final payments, and transfer of completed work.

*Example: Either party may terminate with 30 days written notice, with clients forfeiting deposits and paying for completed work.*

### Dispute resolution

Specify how you'll resolve conflicts (mediation, arbitration, or courts). State which state's laws apply and where lawsuits must be filed. Why this matters: Without this clause, a client could sue you in their home state, forcing you to travel and hire a lawyer there instead of handling it locally.

## Contract DO's

- **Use plain language** – Skip legal jargon. Clients should understand everything without a law degree.
- **Include specific dates** – “Reasonable time” creates confusion. Use actual dates.
- **Get signatures before work starts** – No contract means no planning. Period.
- **Keep signed copies accessible** – Store contracts digitally and send clients copies immediately.
- **Review contracts yearly** – Update your template based on experience and changing needs.

## Contract DON'T's

- **Unlimited liability** – Never accept unlimited liability. Cap it at contract value.
- **Vague scope** – Skip phrases like “other duties as needed.” Be specific about what's included.
- **No cancellation protection** – Always include cancellation fees to protect your income.
- **Client-provided templates** – Use your own contract. Client contracts favor them and expose you to risk.

---

## Important legal notice

This checklist provides general guidance only. It's not legal advice.  
Talk to an attorney to ensure your contract follows local laws and protects your business.

## How to use this checklist

1. **Download a contract template** from your preferred legal resource
2. **Compare it** to this checklist and add missing items
3. **Customize the language** for your business and location
4. **Get attorney review** before using it
5. **Update regularly** based on experience and needs