

## Things you Should Know Before Hiring A Santa

Hiring a Santa Claus is easy but hiring a good one may not be. It is surprising how many aging men are finding that they have a white beard and the next thing you know...they are putting on a red suit and calling themselves "Santa Claus". So, to help you with your search I have compiled the following list of things you should know before you hire your Santa Claus. Everything stated here is my opinion and not from any guidebook that I know of.

1. Do not wait until the season (November & December) to begin your search. Many times, great Santa portrayers are booked year-to-year by their regular clients. It is not unusual for the experienced Santa to have 80% or 90% of his available times already accounted for with repeat clients. The other 10-20% will go quickly. If you wait until November to start looking for a Santa, you will still be able to find one but may not be happy with what you get. Great Santas book early.

2. Before calling and contacting various Santas, try and decide what type of Santa you need. A Photo Santa with chair visits for the children is much easier to find than a Performance-based Santa. A Photo Santa should look good, be very well groomed and have a pleasant personality with a sincere love of children. There should be a natural twinkle in their eyes and for you, the client, the primary concern here is a great "Santa Photo"

Performance-based Santas are all of that and more. These men are the entertainers of the Santa world. They are the perfect Santas for tree lightings, parties, entertaining large and small groups of children and of course, home visits! This type of Santa is a storyteller and can make the North Pole and Christmas come alive. They share stories about the reindeer, elves, toy making while creating the world of the North Pole for your children. When watching a performance-based Santa even the adults will believe again, and you will still get the Santa photos and more! Just imagine the wonder this creates for the children.

So when you start your search be sure to let the Santa know if you are looking for a Photo Santa or a Performance-based Santa. Performance-based Santas are typically the highest paid Santas.

3. A professional Santa will have liability insurance and a yearly background check. Copies of these documents should be available for every client to review before hiring. No one, representing an organization or company, should ever hire a Santa Claus without having copies of these documents on hand. In fact, no individual should hire a Santa without copies of these documents. If anything should happen, it's always a good idea to be able to show due diligence was performed before hiring your Santa Claus.

4. The professional Santa uses contracts with clients to spell out exactly what is expected of each of them. Truth be known, the reason for the contract is to put the clients mind at ease more so than for the Santa. There is nothing worse than

scheduling a neighborhood party only to have a no show from Santa due to a breakdown in communication. Always expect a contract when hiring a Santa. It will put your mind at ease as your event approaches.

5. There are many services available for finding a Santa Claus. The internet has made this job much easier. [www.GigSalad.com](http://www.GigSalad.com) [www.GigMaster.com](http://www.GigMaster.com) - two services that feature many Santas in any area of the country. You can also use your favorite search engine and simply type the words, Santa Claus. But if you enter just Santa Claus, on Google, you will get 54,900,000 hits. Let's try to narrow that down. Try Santa Claus in GA or whatever state you are in. Typically, this will reduce the number down to less than a million with GigSalad and Gig Master the top two hits. If you are looking for even tighter stats try Santa Claus in Atlanta or Santa Claus in your town. You will have a more workable list and can begin the contact process using the notes from above as a guide.

6. And finally....always request references. When requested, a reputable Santa will provide contact information for past customers who can give a statement about their satisfaction and the Santa's character. Even a new Santa can find people willing to testify to his character. When you think about it, all a yearly background check shows, is that a dishonorable man hasn't been caught yet. To protect your children, you should learn as much as possible about the man you are hiring to be your Santa Claus.

I wrote this guide to help people find the perfect Santa Claus for their family. In your search, you will find that there are some Santas that do not have the background checks and liability insurance. You may find that there are some Santas that don't use contracts. These Santas may be just fine and honorable men, so do your homework and always ask for references. But the standards of the Santa world are changing and to keep up with these standards, in my opinion, a Santa needs to change with the times.

If you found this information helpful, then **please share it**. Help your friends find a great Santa.

Santa Todd and Beth

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