

Rain Plan Checklist for Outdoor Weddings

Build the backup plan before you need it - so rain, wind, heat, or a sudden forecast change does not turn into wedding-day chaos.

Couple: _____	Wedding Date: _____
Venue: _____	Outdoor Ceremony Time: _____
Weather Decision Contact: _____	Backup Location: _____

1. Decide Who Makes the Weather Call

- ☐ Name one person who has final authority to move the ceremony or reception indoors.
- ☐ Set a specific deadline for making the weather decision.
- ☐ Confirm whether the venue has its own weather policy or mandatory decision time.
- ☐ Decide what forecast conditions trigger the backup plan: rain, thunderstorms, high winds, extreme heat, cold, or unsafe ground conditions.
- ☐ Make sure the couple, venue, planner / coordinator, DJ, photographer, caterer, florist, and rental company all know who makes the final call.

2. Confirm the Backup Ceremony Space

- ☐ Make sure the indoor / covered backup space can hold the full guest count.
- ☐ Confirm chairs, aisle space, altar / arch placement, and wedding-party staging.
- ☐ Check whether the backup space still allows a processional and recessional.
- ☐ Confirm power is available for ceremony sound and microphones.
- ☐ Check sightlines so guests can see the ceremony.
- ☐ Confirm heating / air conditioning and ventilation.
- ☐ Ask how quickly venue staff can move or reset the ceremony.

3. Tent, Flooring & Ground Conditions

- ☐ Confirm whether a tent is already included, rented, or must be ordered separately.
- ☐ Make sure the tent is properly rated, installed, and secured by a professional rental company.
- ☐ Confirm sidewalls are available if wind-driven rain is possible.
- ☐ Consider solid flooring or a dance floor if grass could become muddy or uneven.
- ☐ Check drainage around the tent and ceremony area.
- ☐ Keep entrances and walkways from becoming slippery or muddy.
- ☐ Confirm tent heaters or fans are allowed and safely positioned if needed.

4. Power, DJ & Electrical Protection

- ☐ Keep DJ, sound, lighting, and power equipment completely protected from rain and moisture.
- ☐ Confirm covered load-in and setup options for vendors.
- ☐ Use proper outdoor-rated power distribution and ground-fault protection where required.
- ☐ Keep extension cords and power connections away from standing water and guest walkways.
- ☐ Confirm the venue has a safe backup power location if the outdoor setup must move.
- ☐ Make sure the DJ can relocate quickly enough to avoid delaying the ceremony or reception.
- ☐ Do not assume a pop-up canopy alone is adequate protection for electrical entertainment equipment in severe weather.

5. Guest Communication Plan

- ☐ Tell guests in advance that the wedding is outdoors and suggest appropriate footwear / clothing.
- ☐ Put the backup location on the wedding website if appropriate.
- ☐ Decide who will send a text, email, or website update if the location changes.
- ☐ Make sure signs or staff direct guests to the correct entrance if the plan changes.
- ☐ Provide umbrellas or covered walking routes when practical.
- ☐ Have towels or mats available at entrances on wet days.
- ☐ Consider elderly guests and anyone with mobility limitations when choosing the backup route.

6. Photography & Video Backup

- ☐ Ask the photographer to identify indoor portrait locations before the wedding day.
- ☐ Choose a covered outdoor location for photos if rain is light.
- ☐ Have clear umbrellas available if you want outdoor rain photos.
- ☐ Protect dresses, shoes, and equipment from mud and wet ground.
- ☐ Build extra time into the photography schedule if locations must change.
- ☐ Confirm any restrictions on photography inside the backup space.

7. Florals, Decor & Rentals

- ☐ Confirm which decorations can be moved indoors quickly.
- ☐ Use weather-resistant decor outdoors whenever possible.
- ☐ Make sure arches, signs, floral stands, and lightweight decor are secure in wind.
- ☐ Ask who is responsible for moving chairs, flowers, signs, and ceremony decor.
- ☐ Confirm whether wet linens, chairs, or rentals create extra cleaning or replacement charges.
- ☐ Keep backup table layouts and room diagrams available.

8. Catering & Food Service

- ☐ Confirm whether cocktail / refreshment service can move indoors.
- ☐ Protect food, buffet lines, desserts, and beverage stations from rain, wind, heat, and insects.
- ☐ Make sure catering staff know the backup layout and serving location.
- ☐ Confirm whether kitchen access changes under the rain plan.
- ☐ Allow additional setup time if tables or service stations must be relocated.

9. Transportation, Parking & Walkways

- ☐ Check whether parking areas become muddy, flooded, or difficult in heavy rain.
- ☐ Provide a covered drop-off location if possible.
- ☐ Confirm shuttle pickup / drop-off points under the backup plan.
- ☐ Add extra travel time for wet roads and slower guest loading.
- ☐ Make sure outdoor paths, ramps, stairs, and entrances are safe and well-lit.
- ☐ Have a plan for moving the wedding party between buildings or photo locations without ruining attire.

10. Weather Emergency Triggers

Condition	Our Trigger / Limit	Action
Light rain		
Heavy rain		
Thunder / lightning		
High wind		
Extreme heat		
Cold temperatures		
Flooding / muddy ground		
Other		

11. Rain Plan Communication Contacts

Role	Name	Phone	Needs Update?
Venue			☐
Planner / Coordinator			☐
DJ / MC			☐
Photographer			☐
Videographer			☐
Caterer			☐
Florist			☐
Rental / Tent Company			☐
Transportation			☐

12. Wedding-Day Go / No-Go Checklist

- ☐ Latest forecast reviewed from a reliable weather source.
- ☐ Venue conditions checked in person if possible.
- ☐ Ground, walkways, tent, and parking conditions are safe.
- ☐ No dangerous lightning / thunderstorm or wind conditions are expected during outdoor use.
- ☐ All electrical equipment can remain dry and safely powered.
- ☐ Backup space is fully ready before guests arrive.
- ☐ Vendors have received the final location and timeline.
- ☐ Guests know where to go.
- ☐ Someone is assigned to help elderly / mobility-limited guests.
- ☐ The couple understands the decision and can focus on enjoying the day.

Our Rain Plan - Final Notes

Final weather decision time: _____

Person making the final decision: _____

Outdoor plan remains in place if: _____

We move to the backup plan if: _____

Guest notification method: _____

Vendor notification method: _____

Planning Tip: A good rain plan is not a disappointing second choice - it is a fully planned version of the wedding that can be activated quickly and safely. Make the decision rules before emotions and time pressure are involved.