WEDDING VENUE GUIDE PART 1 OF 2

LegalShield

Fall in love with the venue. Then read the contract.

Your venue contract was written by the venue. Here's what to know and ask on the tour.

1 On the tour | 2 The contract arrives | 3 Negotiate | 4 Sign

KNOW THIS

What most couples miss

Promises on the tour don't count.
What the coordinator says usually isn't binding. Get it in the contract.

A renovation usually isn't an act of God.
If the venue cancels to renovate, you should usually get your money back.

"Nonrefundable" often isn't.
In most states, a court limits the venue to what it actually lost.

The paper after a cancellation is usually a release.
Signing it can cost you your refund. Read it first.

ASK THIS

Ask every venue the same six questions

Touring more? Print another page.

	Venue 1	Venue 2	Venue 3
1 **What's the all-in price for our wedding?** **You want to hear:** Every fee on paper, gratuity included.			
2 **When is each payment due, and when does our deposit stop being refundable?** **You want to hear:** Dates and amounts, in the contract.			
3 **Is any renovation, construction or sale planned around our date?** **You want to hear:** A plain "no," or the plan in writing.			
4 **If we cancel or move the wedding, what do we lose?** **You want to hear:** A refund schedule tied to dates.			
5 **If you cancel, what do we get back, and how fast?** **You want to hear:** Your money back, by a set date.			
6 **Who has to sign?** **You want to hear:** As few names as possible.			

If you hear this, take a breath.

"Sign today to hold the date."
"Don't worry, that never happens."
"We'll add that later."
"The deposit is nonrefundable, period."

Got the contract? Turn the page.

Created by Ben Farrow, managing partner of Anderson, Williams & Farrow, LLC, a LegalShield provider law firm with offices in Montgomery, Alabama, and Jackson, Mississippi.
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WEDDING VENUE GUIDE PART 2 OF 2

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The contract arrived. Slow down.

What to ask, what to circle and what to negotiate before you sign.

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ASK THIS

What most couples don't ask

"Can we change this?"

Yes. Every line is open until you both sign.

"Who's allowed to cancel our wedding, and how will you tell us?"

A phone call from someone without authority may not count. Get the name and the method in the contract.

"If you cancel, who pays the difference for another venue?"

Ben's view is the venue that canceled should cover it, within reason.

"What happens to our caterer and DJ if you cancel?"

Their contracts are separate. You may still owe them, so read those too.

"What does our wedding insurance cover?"

Ask your insurer. "Cancel for any reason" coverage is broader and costs more.

CIRCLE THIS

Five things to find

Cancellation. What you owe if you call off or move the wedding, and what they owe if they cancel.

Notice. How the venue has to tell you about a change. In writing, from someone with authority.

Damages limit. Check whether the cost of another venue is left out.

Act of God. Courts read it narrowly. A decision to renovate usually doesn't count.

Signatures. Whoever signs is on the hook, even if parents are paying.

NEGOTIATE THIS

You can ask for anything

If a venue wants your wedding, it will look for a way to say yes. Try asking for:

- A refund schedule tied to dates.
- A deadline for your refund if they cancel.
- Every promise from the tour, in the contract.

How. Strike it, initial it and get the venue to accept the change.

Before you sign, decide what you'd walk away over. Could you live with losing this money? If not, have an attorney read it.

> "The nonrefundable clause in a contract is always suspect."
>
> **Ben Farrow, LegalShield provider attorney**

If the venue cancels your wedding

- Gather the contract, receipts and the notice.
- Don't sign anything until you've read it.
- Look for a comparable venue. Track the cost.
- Answer in writing. Then call an attorney.

Wedding deposits are big. Have an attorney read it first. LegalShield members can ask their provider law firm.

Scan for Ben's full guide

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