

Wedding Day Timeline Template

A complete 4 PM ceremony example with owners, locations, recovery categories, and practical handoff notes. Replace the sample details with your own before sharing it.

FIXED	Contract, access, ceremony, service, or hard-stop time	COMPRESSIBLE	Can tighten only with the named authority's approval	BUFFER	Protected recovery time	CUTTABLE	Optional item to remove first when approved
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Time	Activity	Owner	Location	Notes + recovery cue
9:00 AM 9:15 AM	Venue access opens FIXED	Venue contact	Service entrance	Confirm keys or access codes, parking, loading route, and the onsite contact.
9:15 AM 10:30 AM	Rentals and production load-in COMPRESSIBLE	Rentals / production	Service entrance	Photograph delivered inventory and prioritize guest-facing setup first.
10:00 AM 12:00 PM	Floral and decor installation COMPRESSIBLE	Florist / decor	Ceremony and reception spaces	Install ceremony essentials first and identify room-flip pieces.
10:00 AM 1:15 PM	Hair and makeup services COMPRESSIBLE	Hair / makeup	Getting-ready suite	List the service order and a 1:15 PM final-person finish target.
11:00 AM 11:30 AM	Catering and bar load-in FIXED	Catering / bar	Kitchen and bar access	Confirm kitchen access, final counts, dietary notes, and vendor meals.
12:15 PM 12:30 PM	Photographer and videographer arrive FIXED	Photo / video	Getting-ready location	Confirm parking, gear route, coverage end time, and primary contact.
12:30 PM 1:15 PM	Details and room coverage COMPRESSIBLE	Photo / video	Suite and reception room	Gather rings, stationery, attire, flowers, and personal details before coverage begins.
1:15 PM 1:45 PM	Wedding party gets dressed COMPRESSIBLE	Wedding party lead	Getting-ready suite	Keep bouquets, accessories, water, and personal items in one place.
1:45 PM 2:00 PM	Travel buffer to portraits BUFFER	Planner / transportation	Travel route	Verify vehicles, traffic, parking, and the covered backup portrait location.
2:00 PM 2:15 PM	First look COMPRESSIBLE	Photographer	Portrait location	Keep the location private and confirm video is positioned before the couple arrives.
2:15 PM 2:45 PM	Wedding party portraits COMPRESSIBLE	Photographer / wedding party lead	Portrait location	Use a priority shot order so optional combinations can move later if needed.
2:45 PM 3:15 PM	Immediate family portraits COMPRESSIBLE	Photographer / family wrangler	Portrait location	Stage named groups before their turn; the couple should not locate missing relatives.
3:15 PM 3:30 PM	Couple hidden and ceremony reset BUFFER	Planner / venue	Ceremony staging	Move the couple out of guest view and complete the final ceremony readiness check.
3:30 PM 3:55 PM	Guest seating opens FIXED	Ushers / venue	Ceremony space	Confirm reserved seating, programs, water, and the accessible entrance route.

Time	Activity	Owner	Location	Notes + recovery cue
3:50 PM 4:00 PM	Processional lineup and final cue check FIXED	Coordinator / officiant / audio	Ceremony staging	Verify order, rings, license, microphones, music, and the single cue caller.
4:00 PM 4:30 PM	Ceremony FIXED	Officiant / ceremony lead	Ceremony space	Start only after the authorized ceremony lead confirms participants, sound, and guest route are ready.
4:30 PM 5:30 PM	Cocktail hour FIXED	Catering / bar	Cocktail area	Open the guest route, bar, food service, and reception-room work window.
4:35 PM 4:50 PM	Marriage license and private reset COMPRESSIBLE	Couple / officiant / coordinator	Private room	Confirm custody of the license, offer water, and protect a short private pause.
5:10 PM 5:25 PM	Reception room final check FIXED	Venue / catering / DJ	Reception room	Check tables, place settings, lighting, sound, entrances, and an accessible path.
5:30 PM 5:40 PM	Guests seated for dinner COMPRESSIBLE	Venue / ushers	Reception room	Release tables or sections in the agreed order and resolve seating questions away from the couple.
5:40 PM 5:45 PM	Grand entrance FIXED	DJ / MC	Reception room	Line up the wedding party and verify names and pronunciations before announcing.
5:45 PM 5:50 PM	First dance FIXED	DJ / photo / video	Dance floor	Confirm the couple, music track, lighting, and camera teams are ready.
6:00 PM 7:00 PM	Dinner service FIXED	Catering captain	Reception room	Confirm guests are seated, the kitchen is ready, and dietary meals are accounted for.
7:00 PM 7:20 PM	Toasts COMPRESSIBLE	MC / speakers	Reception room	Confirm speaker order, names, microphone, and the catering clearance cue.
7:20 PM 7:35 PM	Parent dances COMPRESSIBLE	DJ / family	Dance floor	Confirm participants, song order, and photo and video readiness.
7:35 PM 7:45 PM	Cake cutting COMPRESSIBLE	Catering / photo / video	Cake table	Bring the couple only after the knife, plates, service plan, and cameras are ready.
7:45 PM 7:55 PM	Optional anniversary dance CUTTABLE	DJ / MC	Dance floor	Remove this first if the timeline is late and the couple or authorized lead approves.
7:55 PM 9:45 PM	Open dancing COMPRESSIBLE	DJ / band	Dance floor	Record band breaks, planned group photos, and any hard bar or transportation cutoff.
9:45 PM 10:00 PM	Last call and transportation reminder FIXED	Bar / MC / transportation	Reception room	State the final bar time and departure options without changing contracted service times.
10:00 PM 10:05 PM	Last song FIXED	DJ / band	Dance floor	Confirm the couple and photo team are present and the exit route is ready.
10:05 PM 10:15 PM	Send-off FIXED	Planner / transportation	Venue exit	Stage guests safely, protect the accessible route, and confirm the couple's vehicle.
10:15 PM 11:15 PM	Strike and final venue sweep FIXED	Venue / planner / vendors	Entire venue	Account for rentals, gifts, cards, personal items, waste, keys, and approved pickup plans.

No-first-look variation

Keep the 4 PM ceremony fixed and move the combined portraits into cocktail hour. Confirm the portrait priorities with the photographer and family wrangler before the wedding; do not assume every group will fit.

Time	Activity	Owner	Location	Execution note
3:20 PM	Couple remains separate; solo portraits wrap	Photographer / attendants	Getting-ready areas	Protect separate travel and holding routes.
3:30 PM	Guest seating opens	Ushers / venue	Ceremony space	Keep both partners out of guest view.
4:00 PM	Ceremony	Officiant / ceremony lead	Ceremony space	Fixed anchor.
4:35 PM	Immediate family portraits	Photographer / family wrangler	Portrait location	Stage named groups before the recessional ends.
4:55 PM	Wedding party portraits	Photographer / wedding party lead	Portrait location	Use the priority combinations first.
5:15 PM	Couple portraits	Photographer	Portrait location	Hold a private drink and a 5:35 PM hard wrap.
5:30 PM	Guests begin seating for reception	Coordinator / ushers	Reception room	The couple can join at 5:40 PM after a five-minute reset.
5:40 PM	Grand entrance	DJ / MC	Reception room	Keep dinner fire tied to the actual entrance cue.

Before you share it	On the wedding day	If the schedule slips
Replace sample contacts and locations. Confirm every vendor's arrival, setup, service, departure, and best day-of contact. Name one person who may approve timeline changes.	Keep one approved version. Use role-specific views or copies so each person sees the cues they own. Keep a printed or offline copy available.	Protect fixed anchors. Use planned buffers first, then compressible blocks, then cuttable items. SmartRipple suggestions in EventSync remain advisory; an authorized human approves every change.

Make the sample yours: geteventsync.app/free/timeline-builder

Decision log / day-of notes

Time	Change or request	Approved by	People notified