



## A Modern Guide to Bridal Party Responsibilities

Here's a quick look at the roles and responsibilities today's Bridal Parties and Wedding Attendants; although I've done my best to avoid the stereotypical male/female roles let's face it - if one or both of you are wearing a dress, your 1<sup>st</sup> Attendant (Maid of Honor/Best Man/Woman) should be there to straighten your train or hold your flowers. If you're a man having women stand up for you, those girls may not want to get dressed in the same room with you...or maybe they do!

It also stands to be mentioned that your culture may define these roles differently; this list was comprised from an American/Christian point of view. The point is these are all things that someone should help you with – after all isn't that the point of having attendants? Remember, it's your wedding – you can do it any way you like, this is just a guideline - so, edit away!

Let's start with the easy ones...

Although there are no age limits these roles are traditional withheld for children under 16. Kids 12-18 are often included as Jr. Bridesmaids or Jr. Groomsman or as full fledged attendants.

### **Flower Girl**

- ♥ Attend the rehearsal
- ♥ Wedding attire
- ♥ Arrive at ceremony site at scheduled time

### **Ring Bearer**

- ♥ Attend the rehearsal
- ♥ Wedding attire, including tux/suit, shirt, shoes, etc.
- ♥ Arrive at ceremony site at scheduled time

For very young kids I can not stress enough the importance of rehearsal and having a sense of whimsy! No matter how well rehearsed they are kids can be unpredictable; having a sense of humor about their entrance will make your day even more enjoyable.



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### Ushers

If you have more than 20 guests attending, you need at least one Usher and they are much more important than you think!

**Think of your Ushers as your ceremony hosts.** They will be the first people greeting your guests and will be making that all important 'first impression' for you. Think about it this way – you go into the best restaurant in town and the host is running frantic or worse yet, standing talking to other guests while you are ignored; when they acknowledge you they have no idea where the washroom is, or where you should sit and forget to give you a menu – how do you think the rest of your night is going to go? First impressions are key!

Your ushers are also your mini-security team, if there is a problem during the ceremony; it's your usher who should be attending to the situation; unwanted or uninvited guests, ringing phones, crying kids and drunken relatives all fall under the Usher's job description.

Traditionally Ushers escorted each and every female guest to her seat – ah chivalry! But Ushering takes time so it's important that you do not have your ushers escort all female guests to their seats unless you are having a very small wedding. Your usher should only escort your VIP's and your grandparents to their seats; everyone else should be invited to be seated where ever they wish rather than on "sides", this goal here is to give the audience a balanced look.

However, since couples do tend to have at least few female guests that could really use a strong arm to lean on while walking to their seat, especially outdoors, I always recommend having at least one male usher, if appropriate.

As for attire, if there are men in the wedding wearing matching suits or attire, the male Ushers attire should matching or be similar. Female ushers should wear clothing that is complimentary to the other female attendant's attire.

So here's the breakdown of what your Usher should do besides ~

- ♥ Attend the rehearsal
- ♥ Arrive on wedding day a minimum of 45 minutes prior to the ceremony.

### Prior to the ceremony ...

- ♥ Greet and Welcome all guests
  - Remind guests to turn off cell phones, alarms and pagers
  - Point out ceremony room exits for parents with small children
  - Direct guests to washrooms, guestbook or other participatory activities you've arranged for your guests
- ♥ Distribute your ceremony programs, bubbles/rice/blessing stones.
- ♥ Escort VIP parents and grandparents to their seats.



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(Ushers con't)

### **At the ceremony...**

- ♥ Escort Mothers (or other VIP) to their seat as part of or prior to processional.
- ♥ If the ceremony entrance has doors, the ushers should be in charge of opening and closing them at the appropriate time.
- ♥ Ushers deploy the Aisle runner just before a bride or groom walks down the aisle to accentuate their entrance.

### **After the ceremony...**

- ♥ Ushers assist in dismissing your guests at the end of the ceremony by directing them to your receiving line, transportation or reception, in an orderly fashion.
- ♥ Ushers should escort out anyone the assisted in – if they walked Grandma in, and she's alone, they should walk Grandma out!
- ♥ If couple is doing a traditional exit from building, Ushers gather the guests near the exit and ensure everyone has the proper revelry items (bubbles, rice, etc.)
- ♥ If reception is at a secondary location ushers should have maps available, be able to give directions and point guests to any transportation provided for them.
- ♥ Ushers should gather your aisle runner, unity ceremony items, any leftover programs or maps and load into pre-assigned vehicle.
- ♥ If family photographs are to be taken at the ceremony venue the Ushers should gather the appropriate family members in the designated area.
- ♥ Ushers who are not included in after ceremony photographs should transport any flowers, or other items. that need to be moved to reception.

### **At the reception...**

- ♥ Consider including your Ushers in your reception introductions, hopefully they've been your gracious ceremony hosts all day so give them the props they deserve and let their names be heard too.
- ♥ If your usher will not be announced their roll should be to open & close the doors/curtains/entrance to the reception room/area as each person couple is announced. Once the Newlyweds enter, the entrance is closed and the Ushers job is done!
- ♥ If you are having a head table you can consider including your ushers but it's likely they would rather prefer to take the rest of the night off, be a guest and enjoy dinner with their date. The choice is yours, there are no set rules!



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### **Guest Book Attendant**

Most couples choose to capture a signature, sentiment or photograph of everyone in attendance so you'll need some reliable guest book attendants; preferably a trusted individual with a friendly, welcoming demeanor.

### **They will be part of that first impression your ushers make**

- ♥ Dressed in Appropriate Wedding attire
- ♥ Arrive at ceremony site at scheduled time

### **Prior to the ceremony ...**

- ♥ Greet guests at entrance to ceremony
  - Ask guests to sign the Guest Book
  - Accept and securely store any gifts brought to ceremony site.

### **At the reception...**

- ♥ Greet guests at reception site entrance,
  - Ask if they have already signed the Guest Book.
  - Accept and securely store any gifts brought to the reception.
- ♥ Assist guests with finding their place cards.
- ♥ Make sure the parents of the Couple & the Wedding Party sign the Guest Book

### **After the reception...**

- ♥ Assist Maid/Matron/Man of Honor with collecting mementos/keepsakes at the reception (programs, menu cards, favors, Guest Book and Pen, Cake Top Ornament, Top tier of wedding cake, toasting glasses, Garter, Bouquet, Cake Knife and Server, etc.)



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**Attendants** – also known as Bridal Party, Bridesmaids and Groomsmen; boys or girls these are the people that will be standing with you during the ceremony...

- ♥ Attend the rehearsal.
- ♥ Wear the appropriate Wedding attire you've chosen.
- ♥ Assist with hosting the Bridal or Couples Shower and Bachelor or Bachelorette Party.
- ♥ Arrive at ceremony site at scheduled time.

**1<sup>st</sup> Attendants – also known as Best Man/Woman or Matron/Maid/Man of Honor**  
Regardless of their gender, or yours, or the title you give them, you'll have one person standing right next to you at the ceremony; this is your 1<sup>st</sup>, in addition to the duties above...

### 1st Attendants...

- ♥ Assist you with getting ready for the wedding
- ♥ **Host** the Bridal or Couples Shower and Bachelor or Bachelorette Party

### At the ceremony...

- ♥ Escort each other in and out of the ceremony
- ♥ Hold a ring during the ceremony
- ♥ Stand in the receiving line (if scheduled)
- ♥ Sign the marriage license as witness, if applicable

### At the reception...

- ♥ Escort each other into the reception during introductions
- ♥ Dance with each other at least once
- ♥ Make the first two toasts before dinner

### After the reception...

- ♥ Make sure car is ready to leave reception, or assist with "fake" exit.
- ♥ Assist with transporting gifts from reception to your/parent's home after reception.
- ♥ Gather mementos of wedding for Couple's keepsakes at end of reception (program, favors, toasting glasses, cake-top, top tier of cake, guest book and pen, garter and bouquet, cake knife and server, etc.)

### Other duties can include...

- ♥ Attending dress/suit fittings
- ♥ Assist you with taking get-away car to reception location or hotel
- ♥ Escorting or driving you to the ceremony



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### **Wearing a Dress?**

If one or both of you are wearing a dress your 1st Attendants have a few additional duties, obviously these may vary if your 1<sup>st</sup> is the opposite sex...

- ♥ Carry the train of the your veil and gown as you walk to the ceremony area/room
- ♥ Straighten the your veil and train before you walk down the aisle
- ♥ Hold the your bouquet during ceremony, and return it to you after the "kiss"
- ♥ Straighten your train and veil before you begin the processional
- ♥ Assist you with bustling the train of your dress
- ♥ Accompany you to restroom during reception
- ♥ Help the you change from your gown to going-away outfit

### **Odds & Ends...**

There are a few more "things" that have to be done by the end of the ceremony or the reception, who you assign these too is up to you, just make sure you address these thing ahead of time so everyone know exactly what's expected of them.

**Officiant** ~ If applicable, your Officiant will need your Marriage License as soon as the Ceremony concludes, assign someone to hold this during the ceremony, point this person out to the Officiant prior to the ceremony; final payments can be delivered with License.

**Paychecks & Tips** ~ Most vendors will have a balance due the day of services, this includes your Officiant! Assign one person to deliver tips and payments to all your vendors. I recommend using cash for tips and preparing individual envelopes the night prior, this way tips can be adjusted as needed, in accordance with service delivered.

**Gifts & the Card Box** ~ although it's listed under the 1<sup>st</sup> Attendants responsibilities above please makes sure the people handling your Gifts are communicating so that nothing gets misplaced and you know who is going to have and be responsible for them throughout the night.

**Décor** ~ Cake & Display Stands, Centerpieces, Backdrops, Candelabras; anything you rent or bring in must be collected and removed. Don't assume you can leave your flowers or centerpieces behind, make sure you are clear with your vendors and venues on what can be left behind, what they are picking up and what has to be returned by you and when.