



FAQ's When Hiring A Band

It's a lot of work planning a private event, and if you're like most people, you probably don't have a lot of experience hiring a band. We've been honored to perform at hundreds of weddings, corporate events, fundraisers and private parties over the years, and we've compiled this list to help you book your ideal band like a pro!

SHOULD I HIRE A BAND WITHOUT SEEING THEM LIVE?

You can, but we don't recommend it. Personnel configurations in a band can change, so a band you saw a few years ago might sound entirely different these days. If a band you're considering performs at public clubs around town, reach out to let them know you're coming to a show. Not only should they add you to the door list so you don't get charged a cover fee, but they should make the effort to meet you between sets.

DO I NEED A CONTRACT?

It's always a good idea (even if your best friend runs the band). Like any other vendor, there needs to be a clear understanding of the entertainment they'll be providing, when and where they'll provide it and what they'll be paid for it.

WHAT SHOULD BE IN A BAND CONTRACT?

The date, location, start time and length of the band's performance, the deposit amount (usually 25% - 33%), when and how the balance will be paid, what happens if there's a postponement or cancellation, who's in charge of providing meals, water, insurance, PA amplification, and a stage, and any other terms about the band's performance.

IF MY EVENT IS CANCELLED OR POSTPONED, WILL I LOSE MY DEPOSIT?

Most contracts state that the deposit is forfeited if the event is cancelled. However, if your event is just postponed (like so many weddings booked during the pandemic), the deposit should simply be applied to the new event date.

WHAT ABOUT LIABILITY INSURANCE?

Most bands don't carry a general liability insurance policy since they're rarely needed and consequently an unnecessary expense. However, some venues (usually hotels) require all vendors including bands to provide insurance coverage for the event. You'll definitely want to ask any venues you're considering if they require individual insurance coverage from every vendor. If insurance is required, there are 24 hour policies available for purchase in the \$100-\$200 range. If this is required for the band, be prepared to cover that extra expense.



CAN I REQUEST A CERTAIN TYPE OF DRESS/LOOK/COLOR SCHEME FROM THE BAND?

Most bands that play a lot of private events have a few different “standard” looks that may include casual, flashy and formal. They will probably work with you within reason to achieve a particular look, but if hitting that look involves purchasing new clothes, you’ll likely be expected to cover the cost.

WHAT IF I WANT BACKGROUND MUSIC FOR MY COCKTAIL HOUR IN ONE LOCATION AND DANCE MUSIC FOR THE RECEPTION IN ANOTHER LOCATION?

The band should make every effort to accommodate you, but understand that sound-checking and moving equipment is a bit of an undertaking. Music without vocals (like a jazz combo) is probably easier to transport, and you can always ask if the band has the equipment for two set-ups (a second drum kit, amplifiers, etc. so the musicians can be set up in both locations at the same time).

HOW MUCH ROOM DOES A BAND NEED?

The typical band will need at least 10 feet of depth, and a minimum 12 feet of width for a small 3 - 4 piece group. For each additional group member, a good rule of thumb is to add 2 feet to the width of the band footprint.

DO I HAVE TO PROVIDE A STAGE?

Having a stage to elevate the band isn’t a necessity but it will add to your guests’ experience and always looks great. Most bands don’t own stages so this would likely be something you would rent for them.

HOW MANY BREAKS DO BANDS TAKE AND HOW LONG DO THEY LAST?

It is customary for the band to take a 15 minute break once an hour, but you should expect the band to be flexible on the length of the performance based on the timing of your event.

CAN THE BAND PROVIDE RECORDED MUSIC IN BETWEEN SETS?

Yes, they should not only play recorded music between sets if you want it, but that’s also an ideal time for you to request a playlist of music you want to hear that the band can’t play live

HOW MUCH POWER DOES A BAND NEED?

Band equipment, lighting, PA’s etc use a lot of power. If your event is taking place at a commonly used event venue, then they more than likely have an adequate power supply. If not, finding out



how much power is available and asking the band to estimate their needs is critical. And if you're hosting your event somewhere that requires power from generators, be prepared from some band pushback; almost every working musician has a horror story about their equipment getting fried unexpectedly by a generator.

CAN WE PICK FROM THE BAND'S SONG LIST?

A band should be able to provide their complete playlist for you to choose some "must play" songs or even some "not on your life" songs you don't want to hear. But don't get too carried away assembling entire sets; the band has the experience building their set lists based on crowd reaction, the pacing of the set and lots of other considerations.

CAN I EXPECT THE BAND TO MC MY EVENT?

Most bands that play a lot of private events will be prepared to offer MC services as an included service or sometimes with an added fee. MC services typically include introducing special guests, making general announcements, managing the mic during toasts, etc. If this is something you want, 1) add it to the contract and 2) find out if the band has a wireless microphone for the toasts. Lots of folks aren't comfortable speaking in public, and a wireless mic lets them stand where they are to give a speech/toast rather than coming onstage.

IS THERE MORE TO A PERFORMANCE THAN JUST PLAYING MUSIC?

A good band does more than just play music - they engage an audience in a way that's fun, exciting and memorable. Our band for instance uses choreography, audience participation, unique song arrangements and specialty items like synced LED wristbands that we pass out to the crowd to make them part of the performance.

DO I NEED TO PROVIDE FOOD AND BEVERAGES FOR THE BAND?

Making sure the band has plenty of bottled water throughout the event is expected. Whether you'll need to provide a meal really depends on when and how long you want the band to play. Most caterers feed their own staff on-site and can often be contracted to make more for other vendors like band members. Even ordering a couple of pizzas is usually fine.