

Wedding planning: Whom should you tip?

Most of the vendors who provide services for your wedding will give you a flat rate or let you know what percentage of the final bill is expected for the gratuity. Be sure to ask up front about expected tips. Here are some general guidelines on who to tip and how much to tip.

Apparel & Beauty Vendors

- **Seamstress** – You are not expected to tip for alterations to your dress. This service provider gives you a price based on the amount of time and supplies needed to alter or make your dress.
- **Beauty Professionals** – This is a professional who expects a tip. Fifteen to 20 percent of your total bill is expected for a hair stylist, makeup artist; nail technician or other beauty professional.

Officiate

- Ministers or priests do not usually charge for their services. However, it is expected that you make a gift to their church or other house of worship.
- Most clergy or ministers will give you a typical honorarium amount.
- The range is about \$50 to \$500.
- You are expected to pay travel expenses for a minister or other officiate traveling more than within their local area.
- JP's usually charge a flat rate. A tip is a nice gesture, but not expected.

Transportation Attendants

- Tips are usually included in the rental fee for limousines and other travel providers. Make sure you get this in writing before your wedding.
- Valets should be tipped \$1-\$2 per vehicle.

Various Attendants

Coat and restroom attendants should be tipped \$1-\$2 per guest.



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Food/Catering Staff

- **Waitstaff** – The catering bill usually includes a gratuity of 15 to 20 percent of the final bill for wait staff tips. Be sure to clarify this with your catering manager before the wedding.
- **Bartenders** – Bartenders should be paid in the same manner as waiters and waitresses. Their tip should be a percentage of the beverage bill as agreed upon with your catering vendor.
- **Catering Manager** – Most caterers include a charge of 15 to 20 percent of the bill for their services. Make sure this is in your agreement.

Entertainment Professionals

- **Church Musicians** - An organist or other church musician's fee is usually included in the rental fee. Be sure this is the case before the wedding. A tip of \$25-40 per musician is adequate for exceptional performances.
- **Live Musicians** (Reception Entertainment) – You are paying a flat fee for the band's time. Unless you want to tip above the fee for a stellar performance, a tip is not expected. \$25 per band member is a customary tip in this case.
- **DJ** – Again, you are paying a flat rate for a DJ's services. Tipping is not necessary. If the DJ did an outstanding job, a tip of \$50-\$75 is adequate.

Audiovisual Professionals

- **Photographers** – This is another case of fee-for-service payment. Show your photographer your appreciation by purchasing more prints after the wedding.
- **Videographers** – As a fee-for-service professional, you are not expected to tip.



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Wedding Planner/Coordinator

Your wedding planner or coordinator is another fee-for-service professional. He or she will either charge you a flat fee or hourly rate for their services. Do not worry about a tipping your wedding planner.

Other Wedding Professionals

- **Florist** – You are paying a flat rate for their services. No tip is expected. Be sure to ask about any delivery or set up fees.
- **Rental Staff** – You are not expected to tip staff dropping off tables, chairs, linens or other reception supplies. This is covered in the rental fees.

Who Handles Tip Distribution?

- The best man is usually responsible for making sure gratuities are paid to the vendors. If your best man does not want or cannot take on this task, you should find a trusted individual to do this duty.
- Make this job easy by providing labeled, sealed envelopes with the correct tip amounts before the wedding. Then all your best man will have to do is distribute the envelopes. Don't forget to give him some extra cash just in case there is something that comes up.
- The tip should be presented to whoever is "head" of the service. For example, the catering manager is the contact for the food and bar services.
- Don't forget about providing a meal for your service providers. The photographer and entertainers should have some sort of food and beverage arrangement prepared. It's a good idea to discuss this with your caterer as part of planning your reception. Also, be sure to let the service providers know the arrangement beforehand.

