

Phase III Wedding FAQs

How many guests can I have at my wedding?

Indoors – 10 for a non-catered event; 25 for a catered event with a licensed caterer

Outdoors – 10 for a non-catered event; 75 for a catered event with a licensed caterer

I am not hiring a caterer, but the venue where I am having the wedding is providing the food. Does this count as licensed catering?

Yes, if the professional venue (e.g. a restaurant) is providing the food, it counts as licensed catering. In all instances, the caterer or professional venue must be licensed to prepare and serve food to the public.

The venue has large doors and windows that can be opened during the event. Does this qualify as an outdoor event?

No. Opening doors and windows does not qualify as an outdoor event, although outside air circulation is encouraged. A tent with **open sides**, however, would qualify as outdoor.

The guidelines say I can have up to 25 people indoors, but my venue is telling me that I need to have fewer than that. Why?

25 is the maximum number allowed for an indoor social gathering, but the venue must still follow restaurant emergency regulations which requires at least 8 feet of space from table edge to table edge for social distancing purposes. The size of your venue may not allow for this distancing with 25 people in the room.

Are the staff included in the count of the number of people in attendance?

Staff (e.g. event planners and servers) are excluded from the event size limits.

Can an exception to the maximum capacity limits be made?

Exceptions can be requested only for pre-booked weddings taking place in November. If you wish to request an exception for wedding that had already been booked for for November, the event venue or caterer can submit an event specific COVID-19 Control Plan to DBR through the link on the www.dbr.ri.gov homepage for submitting event plans. The Event template can be downloaded from reopeningri.com. Remember - smaller events are safer events.

Do masks need to be worn?

Events should be planned (1) to prevent mingling and congregating, (2) to facilitate 6-foot physical distancing between individuals, and (3) to require mask wearing at all times except when dining, to the greatest extent possible.

Is dancing allowed?

Dancing is not permitted. The only exception is if the wedding couple want to have a 1st dance, or a mother/son, father/daughter “performance.” In these cases, ONLY the couple dancing is permitted on the dance floor. Guests and the wedding party must remain in their seats.

We are planning a stand-up cocktail hour/walk up open bar. That is allowed, right?

No. Venues must adhere to restaurant emergency regulations, which prohibit mingling and congregating, standing consumption of food and beverages, and bar service to standing customers. **There is no walk-up bar service allowed under any circumstances.** All drinks must be delivered by waitstaff to guests seated at their assigned tables. As alternatives to standing bar service, establishments may wish to consider providing beverage service (1) through servers to seated guests at tables or (2) through the placement of beverages at seated tables for consumption by guests seated at their tables (e.g. buckets of canned/bottled soda or beer; bottles or carafes of wine; enclosed pitchers of batch cocktails), provided that these beverages are not exposed (i.e. beverages should be in a can, bottle, or enclosed pitcher).

Can I have a buffet style dinner if the event staff serve the food from the buffet?

While buffets and salad bars with exposed food are prohibited under the restaurants guidance, food stations can be used in accordance with the [Phase III restaurants guidance](#). However, food stations are not recommended. If food stations are used, event planners should follow the following standards:

- Guests may not serve themselves unless the food is prepackaged, wrapped, or otherwise protected. **Self-service salad bars, buffets, and other food stations where food is exposed are prohibited.**
- Establishments should install sneeze guards or other barriers to separate servers from guests.
- Plates, utensils, and other dinnerware cannot be exposed at food stations. Establishments can address this (1) by staffing food stations and keeping dinnerware separate (e.g. behind a sneeze guard or other barrier) or (2) leaving dinnerware for each guest at their seated tables.
- Guests must be spaced six-feet apart in line, and lines must be spaced at least six-feet away from other guests' tables. Establishments are strongly encouraged to demarcate six-foot spacing in lines and otherwise facilitate physical distancing among guests in lines.
- To reduce congestion around food stations and otherwise minimize congregating and mingling, establishments should request that guests remain seated until their table is called and return to their seats immediately after collecting their food.
- Establishments and event planners/hosts should note that the state's standards for face coverings especially applies to guests when away from their tables to get food from food stations.

Are passed hors d'oeuvres or hors d'oeuvres or dessert tables permitted?

Passed hors d'oeuvres are not allowed, and event planners should note that mingling, congregating, and standing consumption of food and beverages at events are prohibited. Self-serve appetizer/dessert tables with exposed food are also prohibited; however, event planners can use food stations, provided that they follow the food station standards included in the [Phase III restaurants guidance](#) (additional details also available above).

Will the Social Gathering sizes change?

These requirements pertain to events happening in Phase III. If your wedding date is beyond the expiration of the current Executive Order, it is not known whether the group size will change. We recommend planning for a smaller event and making sure it follows the current group size. Smaller events are safer events.

Will dancing and cocktail hours/walk-up bar be allowed in the coming months?

Although it is not possible to predict what the future will bring, it is not likely that these restrictions will be lifted. Evidence shows that these activities are transmission hot spots and are likely to continue to be discouraged.