



THE WEDDING
HANDBOOK

SHANNON HOLLAND

YOUR WEDDING DAY IS ALMOST HERE!

Best. Day. Ever.

I am so excited you are reading this guide!! This handbook is designed for the modern bride as you plan your dream wedding! It is full of information and tips from my perspective as a photographer and recent bride. Let's get you your dream photos and make the most of your perfect day!

SHANNON HOLLAND



BEFORE THE WEDDING

Planning your wedding means SO many things to think about. Don't worry, I am here for you!! Below are some things to think about and plan for before the big day. We are going to dive further into each on one the pages to follow!

- TIMELINE
- TRANSPORTATION
- BRINGING DETAILS
- SHOT LIST



01. TIMELINE

Crucial to a smooth day is a solid outline! This helps everyone know where to be, when to be there, and how long they will be there for. If you have a wedding planner, I will be coordinating with them (and you) to create your timeline for you! If you do not have a planner, you and I will sit down together about 2-3 weeks before wedding day to create your timeline together. In this guide, I've included suggested amounts of time to block off for various parts of your day, as well, to help give you an idea to start with. Having a sufficient amount of time allotted for each part of your day will help ensure you get the photos of your dreams!

02. TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN LOCATIONS

Location is something we delve further into later in this guide, as well, (locations for getting ready, ceremony, reception, hotels, etc.), but before we get there, something to plan for is transportation! How will you get from one location to the next on the big day? How will all of your belongings get there? Will you have a getaway car at the end of the night? Who will be driving it? Make sure whoever is driving is aware of their job so they can adequately prepare.



03. BRINGING DETAILS

There are likely going to be TONS of things for you to bring to your wedding, but something super special to keep in mind is the details! My recommendation is to take a shoebox and place all of the details that you want photographed in it. This keeps everything in one place and on the big day, you can just hand it to me and I will go on my way while you finish getting ready! Some ideas of things to include could be: invitations, earrings, shoes, perfume, garter, veil, rings, heirlooms, vow books, something old/new/borrowed/blue...the possibilities are endless!



04. SHOT LIST

The biggest thing I ask of you is this list! As much as I wish I did, I don't know your family and the dynamics, so a shot list is VITAL to get the family portraits that you will cherish for a lifetime. We will do family, couples, and full wedding party portraits between the ceremony and reception (during cocktail hour), unless we have worked something else out, so a perky pace is crucial. My recommendation when creating your shot list is to start big and send people away to cocktail hour as we go. This helps get the room quieter, keeps your guests happy, and helps us continue to move efficiently. I also recommend sticking to 25 or fewer photos of family so we can stay on track. I have created a sample shot list on the following two pages to get your mind flowing with ideas of different groupings.



SHOT LIST: Page 1

I want to preface this page with a statement acknowledging that I am aware that every family dynamic is very different (which is why your personal list is vital for portraits). This template is just an example to get your mind rolling! Please write names, not titles (i.e. "John", rather than "uncle"). I also want to make note that I will assume you want both, the bride and groom, in each photo, unless otherwise stated on your list.

BRIDE'S MOM'S SIDE

■ GRANDPARENTS, MOM, DAD, AUNTS, UNCLES, COUSINS, SIBLINGS,
NIECES, NEPHEWS

■ GRANDPARENTS

■ MOM, DAD, GRANDPARENTS

■ COUSINS, NIECES, NEPHEWS

**DISMISS THOSE THAT WILL NOT BE IN MORE PHOTOS TO COCKTAIL
HOUR**

BRIDES'S DAD'S SIDE

■ GRANDPARENTS, MOM, DAD, AUNTS, UNCLES, COUSINS, SIBLINGS,
NIECES, NEPHEWS

■ GRANDPARENTS

■ MOM, DAD, GRANDPARENTS

■ COUSINS, NIECES, NEPHEWS

**DISMISS THOSE THAT WILL NOT BE IN MORE PHOTOS TO COCKTAIL
HOUR**

GROOM'S MOM'S SIDE

■ GRANDPARENTS, MOM, DAD, AUNTS, UNCLES, COUSINS, SIBLINGS,
NIECES, NEPHEWS

■ GRANDPARENTS

■ MOM, DAD, GRANDPARENTS

■ COUSINS, NIECES, NEPHEWS

**DISMISS THOSE THAT WILL NOT BE IN MORE PHOTOS TO COCKTAIL
HOUR**

GROOM'S DAD'S SIDE

■ GRANDPARENTS, MOM, DAD, AUNTS, UNCLES, COUSINS, SIBLINGS,
NIECES, NEPHEWS

■ GRANDPARENTS

■ MOM, DAD, GRANDPARENTS

■ COUSINS, NIECES, NEPHEWS

**DISMISS THOSE THAT WILL NOT BE IN MORE PHOTOS TO COCKTAIL
HOUR**

SHOT LIST: Page 2

Please know that I will assume you want both, the bride and groom, in each photo, unless otherwise stated.

BRIDE'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY

- PARENTS
- DAD
- MOM
- MOM, DAD, SIBLINGS
- SIBLINGS

GROOM'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY

- PARENTS
- DAD
- MOM
- MOM, DAD, SIBLINGS
- SIBLINGS

BRIDE + GROOM IMMEDIATE FAMILIES

- BOTH SETS OF GRANDPARENTS, SIBLINGS, PARENTS
- BOTH SETS OF GRANDPARENTS
- BOTH SETS OF PARENTS, SIBLINGS
- BOTH SETS OF PARENTS
- BOTH SETS OF SIBLINGS
- BRIDE'S PARENTS
- GROOM'S PARENTS

****DISMISS THOSE THAT WILL NOT BE IN MORE PHOTOS TO COCKTAIL HOUR****

WEDDING PARTY- CAN LIST ROLES, RATHER THAN NAMES, HERE

- BRIDE, BRIDESMAIDS
- GROOM, GROOMSMEN
- BRIDE, GROOMSMEN
- GROOM, BRIDESMAIDS
- BRIDE, GROOM, BRIDESMAIDS, GROOMSMEN
- BRIDE, GROOM, RING BEARER, FLOWER GIRL
- BRIDE, GROOM, USHERS, GREETERS

GETTING READY

Approximately 1 hour of photo coverage recommended

Relax, have some coffee or a mimosa (or both!), and prepare to take everyone's breath away!! Getting ready for your day is such a fun time and deserves to be documented!

- START TIME
- HAIR & MAKEUP
- GETTING DRESSED
- DETAILS
- GROOMSMEN PHOTOS





01. START TIME

Getting ready for your wedding takes time, especially the larger your group of bridesmaids is. If you're having professional hair and makeup, you will figure out a start time with the hair/makeup professionals based on the number of people they will be making over, and the time we want to start photos. When giving the hair and makeup artists a final count of people, don't forget to include yourself, as well as anyone else that will be included: bridesmaids, moms, grandmas, sisters, etc. For hair and makeup, I recommend the bride is the last person to have theirs done so that it is the freshest for the evening. In addition, I typically come in towards the end of hair/makeup time for about 10 minutes to do getting ready photos, so with the bride going last, I will be able to grab photos of her getting made-up, get some cute pictures of the whole group, then move into detail and groom shots while y'all finish up.

02. HAIR AND MAKEUP

Where will hair and makeup take place? Depending on your venue, you might have access to their bridal suite all day, in which case, location would be taken care of! If that is not an option, don't worry, there are TONS of other great options, such as a hotel room, somebody's home, or even a salon! Wherever you plan to do hair and makeup, try to make sure there is lots of natural light, if possible!

03. GETTING DRESSED

Where will the bride be getting dressed? What about bridesmaids, groomsmen, moms, dads, etc.? Will it be in the same place as hair and makeup, or will you be taking your dresses elsewhere to slip into them? If you are taking everything somewhere else, how will you and all of your stuff get there? Finally, if you are having someone help you get into your dress, make sure they know who they are and when/where they need to be to help you. They should be fully dressed and ready before they zip/button you up. Finally, don't forget any tools you may need to help you get into your dress, such as a crochet hook for buttons or fashion tape to hold everything in place (I recommend Topstick: Men's Grooming Tape-- sounds crazy but it STICKS!)





04. DETAILS

After snapping pictures of you and your girls getting ready, I will move into the detail shots (that shoebox of goodies we talked about earlier)! Don't forget to include *both* of your wedding rings, and a nice hanger for your dress (tip: if you don't have one/don't want to buy one, you could also call your venue ahead of time and check to see if they have one you can borrow)!



05. GROOMSMEN PHOTOS

While the groom and his groomsmen don't have quite the getting-ready process that the bridesmaids do, they still have to button up their suits and tie their ties, and my second shooter or I will be sure to capture those little moments!



FIRST LOOK?

What is a first look?

This is a private moment where the groom sees his bride for the first time, before the ceremony. For a first look, it will just be the two of you and your professional third wheel (that's me!)

Should I do a first look?

This is ultimately a decision that you and your groom should make together. Some people like to do one for the private, intimate moment it provides, while others prefer to wait for the big reveal in the ceremony! Either decision is absolutely perfect.

What difference will it make to the timeline?

If you choose to do a first look, we will allot 20-30 minutes before the ceremony for it. This time allows your groom to see you, you guys to soak in the moment, and then we will spend a few minutes doing more formal portraits of the two of you together. Doing a first look can also save us time later by allowing us to do family and/or full wedding party portraits before the ceremony, rather than during cocktail hour.

What are my other options?

It is YOUR day, so the possibilities are endless! If you choose not to do a first look with your groom, maybe you want to do one with your dad or bridesmaids! Maybe you don't want to do any first looks, but would rather do something like a blind prayer with your groom, or a gift or card exchange where you don't see each other. It is up to you how your day looks!

WEDDING PARTY PORTRAITS

Approximately 45 minutes of photo coverage recommended

Time to photograph you with your people!! For wedding party portraits, we will do some with the bride and her bridesmaids, some with the groom and his groomsmen, and then some of the whole group together. Each set will take about 10-15 minutes.

A big determining factor of when wedding party portraits are taken is dependent on if you and your groom are doing a first look or not. As mentioned on the previous page, if you are doing a first look, we can get the whole wedding party together after the first look to do portraits before the ceremony.

If you are NOT doing a first look, we will wait to get the whole wedding party together until cocktail hour. If time allows, ideally, we will do bride + bridesmaids photos and groom + groomsmen photos before the ceremony, then whole group during cocktail hour.



FAMILY PORTRAITS

Approximately 30 minutes of photo coverage recommended

Photos to cherish forever! Traditionally, family portraits will take place during cocktail hour; family will stay behind after the ceremony for portraits, while the remainder of your guests go enjoy appetizers, lawn games, drinks, time to mingle, etc.

This is the time that I will pull out that handy shot list that we talked about earlier and will call out names of those who are listed to be photographed.





THE CEREMONY

Approximately 30-45 minutes of photo coverage is typical

- UNPLUGGED
- OUTDOOR CEREMONIES
- INDOOR CEREMONIES
- PROCESSIONAL
- FIRST KISS
- RECESSIONAL

01. UNPLUGGED

What does "unplugged" mean?

An unplugged ceremony is something I HIGHLY recommend to all couples. An unplugged ceremony is when the couple asks guests to refrain from cell phone usage during the ceremony.

Why should my ceremony be unplugged?

Hi, my name is Shannon, welcome to my soapbox. There are many reasons to have your ceremony be unplugged. Cell phones are distracting, may go off during the ceremony, and possibly the biggest reason, they can get in the way of your photos. Guests are SO excited for you and want to capture moments of your ceremony, too, but you are paying for a professional to do that, and if guests are sticking their phone in the aisle to try to get pictures for their own personal use, they will get in the way of your professional photos, and there is only so much that photoshop can fix. It is not fair to you, as the couple, to have cell phones in the middle of your beautiful photos on the biggest day of your life. Okay, stepping off the soapbox, now!

How do I make my ceremony unplugged?

Many couples choose to display a cute sign announcing that their ceremony is unplugged. While this is a great option, in addition, I highly recommend having your officiant make an announcement before the ceremony for anyone who may have missed the sign.





02. OUTDOOR CEREMONIES

If you have chosen an outdoor venue/location for your ceremony, here are some things to consider: Where will the sun be at the time of my ceremony? Will it cause harsh shadows? Will the ceremony be shaded by a tree, covered by a tent, open-air, etc.? What will you do in the event of inclement weather? How will you keep guests at a comfortable temperature? (handheld/personal fans, heat lamps, etc.)

03. INDOOR CEREMONIES

If you have chosen an indoor ceremony location, some things to consider are: How much natural light is available in the room? Will it still be light outside, allowing natural light in, or will it be dark? If there is not enough light in the room, flash may need to be used. Finally, if you have big windows, check with your venue to see if the sun blares in at certain times of the day, which could interfere with photos and visibility.



04. PROCESSIONAL

During the processional, I will be at the front of the aisle, photographing everyone's faces as they come down the aisle. My second shooter will also be at the front of the aisle with me, so one of us can get shots of the bride coming down the aisle, while the other gets the groom's reaction.

Bridesmaid photo tip: "stems to stomach." This just means that as bridesmaids walk down the aisle holding their bouquets, it is best that they put the very bottom of the stems against their body, so that the whole bouquet can be seen in photos, rather than part of the bouquet and a bunch of stems.

05. FIRST KISS

WOOHOO! You are now pronounced husband and wife!!!
Make this kiss COUNT! It is such a beautiful moment!!

06. RECESSIONAL

Congratulations!!!! You are now Mr. and Mrs.!!! When you walk down the aisle, I will be at the back of the aisle, capturing your faces as you come my way. Want another awesome photo? Pause at the end of the aisle and kiss again, while the whole crowd is turned around looking at you guys!



COUPLES PORTRAITS

Portraits of the two of you together are such a special part of your day. If you did a first look, we will have already taken some time to do couples portraits, but, of course, you can't get enough photos together on your wedding day!

Ideally, we will take about 15+ minutes at the end of cocktail hour to do some couples portraits. This is such a special time to do photos of the two of you as you are now husband and wife!!!

Golden hour is another amazing time to take stunning portraits of you guys. I HIGHLY recommend working in golden hour photos into your timeline. The lighting is amazing and it will definitely get you some amazing portraits! Depending on the time of the year and the time of the ceremony, this may mean sneaking away from your reception for 10-15 minutes, but I promise it'll be worth it! If you choose to add golden hour portraits into your timeline, I am happy to work with you to determine exactly what time that will be.



RECEPTION

THE RECEPTION

Approximately 2-3 hours of photo coverage recommended

- DINNER
- LIGHTING





01. DINNER

During dinner, my second shooter and I will sneak away to eat at the same time as the guests. Most of the time, we eat in the bridal suite, unless the venue has another designated spot for vendors. It is recommended that we are served before the rest of the guests so that we can eat quickly and get back to shooting without missing any key moments! Some venues prepare vendor plates for the vendors in advance, while other times, we will need to go through the line. Check with your venue/caterer to see what their procedure is for vendor meals, and if those meals should be included in the headcount or if they are complimentary.

02. LIGHTING

During the reception, I will use ambient light for as long as possible. Once the lights go down and the room is dark, I will use various flashes, depending on the room. Please check with your DJ about lasers. as they have been known to permanently damage camera sensors, which will not only cause problems for me and my gear, but also for you and your photos!

BONUS THOUGHTS

Here are some extra questions to consider when making plans for your day

- How are you displaying things at the wedding? Will you need to bring easels or are they provided by the venue? What size easels do you need? What are you putting on the easels (canvases, signs, etc.)?
- Do you have candles? Who is responsible for lighting them, or switching them on, if they're LED?
- Do you need to provide your own utensils for cake cutting and toasts? Cake stands, forks, plates, cutting/serving utensils, champagne flutes?
- Who provides and sets up table settings? Do you need to rent them from an outside company? Linens, centerpieces, place settings, etc.?
- What happens to your dress and your hubby's suit after the wedding? Are you exiting, going straight to a different location than everyone else, and leaving for your honeymoon the next morning? If so, I suggest changing from your wedding attire into a different outfit for your exit and leaving your dress/suit with someone you trust. Doing so will allow you to go on your honeymoon without having to take your wedding attire with you!



SAMPLE TIMELINE I

We have talked so much about different allotments of time for various parts of your day, so I want to make sense of it all here. Note: this is a very basic outline of a timeline; yours will include many more details, such as when parents should be dressed, boutonniere pinning, etc.

2:00- Photographer starts bride's getting ready + detail photos

2:45- Groom + groomsmen getting ready photos

3:00- Bride gets dressed

3:10- First look + couples portraits

3:40- Wedding party portraits- full party, bride + bridesmaids, groom + groomsmen

4:30- Wedding party tucked away as guests begin to arrive

5:00- Ceremony

5:45- Cocktail hour: family portraits for 30-45 minutes, couples portraits for 15-30 minutes

6:45- Wedding party is introduced into the reception

6:45-8:30- First dances, dinner, toasts, cake cutting, open dancing

8:30- Sneak away for golden hour photos

8:40- Back to reception for dancing, garter and bouquet tosses, and private last dance

9:50- Exit

SAMPLE TIMELINE 2

We have talked so much about different allotments of time for various parts of your day, so I want to make sense of it all here. Note: this is a very basic outline of a timeline; yours will include many more details, such as when parents should be dressed, boutonniere pinning, etc.

2:00- Photographer starts bride's getting ready + detail photos

2:45- Groom + groomsmen getting ready photos

3:00- Bride gets dressed

3:10- Groom + Groomsmen photos

3:30- Bride + Bridesmaid photos

3:50- Any kind of gift exchanges/card exchanges, blind prayer, first look with dad, etc.

4:30- Wedding party tucked away as guests begin to arrive

5:00- Ceremony

5:45- Cocktail hour: family portraits for 30 minutes, wedding party pictures for 10 minutes, couples portraits for 20 minutes

6:45- Wedding party is introduced into the reception

6:45-8:30- First dances, dinner, toasts, cake cutting, open dancing

8:30- Sneak away for golden hour photos

8:40- Back to reception for dancing, garter and bouquet tosses, and private last dance

9:50- Exit

AFTER THE WEDDING

After your big day, I will get busy editing! My goal is to have sneak peaks to you within 24-48 hours of your wedding, and all images back to you within 6-8 weeks. Sneak peaks will be in lower resolution than the final product, so don't try to put those on a canvas until you get the finished product!

The day after your wedding, you will receive an email from me with your print release, then once your photos are complete, you will receive another email from me containing the link to your online wedding gallery!! Woohoo!!!!

Please let me know if you have any questions throughout your planning process. I am MORE than happy to help, and I can't wait to celebrate you!

Shannon Holland

