



7 Important Points keep in Mind When Signing a Contract

- ✓ **Pricing.**
A contract spells out the cost of service, and states pricing nuances like discounts. That way, all parties know what to expect not just for this event, but further into the relationship when the same price may be expected, but not offered, again.
- ✓ **Payment schedule.**
A contract will be explicitly clear about how much is to be paid and exactly when. It defines what happens if payment is not received or if the event is cancelled.
- ✓ **Products & services listed.**
A contract should include a detailed list of the entertainment, services and/or rentals ordered and it should include the amount of time you have the entertainers, services, and rentals booked for. Frequently, there is a rider with entertainers contracts regarding food, breaks, and dressing rooms. Be sure to read this carefully.
- ✓ **A Force Majeure clause.**
A force majeure clause is the contract provision that allows a party to suspend or terminate the performance of its obligations when certain circumstances beyond their control arise, making performance inadvisable, commercially impracticable, illegal, or impossible. These might include acts of God, war, riots, fire, flood, hurricane, earthquake, lightning strikes, lockouts, work slowdowns, or acts of state or governmental action prohibiting or preventing parties from executing events. If an event cannot go forward because of a hurricane or a flood or terrorist attack, this ensures that you are released from further financial obligation and in some cases, that your deposit is returned or the event will be rescheduled. Make certain your contract allows for either postponement or cancellation of your event.
- ✓ **Rain or inclement weather contingencies.**
Barring the need to invoke a force majeure clause, even a little rain or wind can significantly affect an event. And a contract should be in place that defines the details of what happens, and who's responsible for what, in such a situation. Does the event get postponed? Does it get canceled? It's important that both parties decide this in advance so they can decide how this could impact the budget.
- ✓ **Boundaries and the scope of services.**
You may think you know what's included in the arrangement, but don't make any assumptions that aren't spelled out in black and white. Contracts are a great way to set boundaries. For example, specify exactly the hours spent, target deadlines, and the final product or outcome. This way you can go back to a document that you both agreed on and signed if ever there is a dispute over expectations.
- ✓ **Expert consultation.**
Unless you're a lawyer, you may not be in the position to write or decipher every line of a contract without help. Seek the advice of legal professionals when possible, and together focus on all the details of the technical speak. Sometimes the placement of a single word in a contract, especially one that carries significant legal implications, can make the difference between paying for damages or not.

