



OAK PAPERS

Field Notes N° 03

Planning for Wind

*The invisible variable at every outdoor wedding—and one of
the
easiest to plan around when it is treated as a design
constraint.*

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Oak & Echo

PROFESSIONAL CEREMONY AUDIO · YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

A Design Constraint, Not a Malfunction.

Wind is not a problem you solve on the day. It is a variable you design around weeks in advance. Every other part of ceremony planning treats weather as something to react to—a tent for rain, a fan for heat. Audio doesn't work that way.

By the time wind is blowing across a lapel microphone during the vows, the moment causing the problem has already passed. There is no gain knob fast enough to save a gust that lasted four seconds and swallowed "I do."

This is why we ask about forecasted wind during the planning call, not the week of the wedding. A ceremony at three in the afternoon in an open field behaves completely differently than the same ceremony an hour later, once the day's thermals settle.

The gust that ruins a recording lasts four seconds. The planning that prevents it starts months earlier.

How Wind Actually Breaks Audio.

Wind doesn't sound like wind on a recording. It sounds like a fist against a drum, a low rumble that swallows every consonant, or a hiss that rides underneath the officiant's voice for the entire ceremony.

Moving air striking a microphone's diaphragm directly creates a kind of handling noise the capsule can't distinguish from the voice it's meant to capture. A foam windscreen works by turning that direct strike into a gentler, distributed pressure change the capsule can filter out. A furry "dead cat" cover adds a second layer of protection for genuinely gusty days.

Distance matters just as much as wind speed. The further a microphone sits from the speaker's mouth, the more wind noise competes with an already-quieter signal—which is why placement often matters more than the equipment itself.

A Practical Threshold.

We don't need a weather station to make good decisions—just a general sense of the forecast, and three tiers of response.

Calm to Light Air

0–6 MPH

Any well-placed lavalier performs normally. A standard foam windscreen is sufficient for every microphone on the ceremony.

Light to Moderate Breeze

7–14 MPH

Foam-and-fur windscreens are recommended, and lavalier placement becomes important—inside a jacket consistently outperforms an exposed lapel.

Fresh Breeze and Above

15 MPH +

We shift readers and officiants to a handheld microphone with an internal windscreen. It looks deliberate in photos, and it eliminates the largest source of outdoor audio failure.

None of this is dramatic. It is the boring, patient side of the work—decided in a planning call, not improvised at the altar.

Placement, Not Just Equipment.

The same microphone, moved six inches, behaves like a different piece of equipment entirely. A lavalier clipped to the lapel sits directly in the wind's path down the body. The same lavalier placed just inside the jacket, beneath the tie knot or lapel fold, is shielded by the fabric itself—the wind has to work around a physical barrier before it ever reaches the capsule. For officiants who prefer not to wear a body-worn microphone at all, a well-positioned area microphone paired with tighter proximity often outperforms a poorly placed lavalier, particularly in gusty conditions. We test every placement before guests arrive—not after. It's a five-minute walk of the aisle with a monitor headset on, listening for exactly what a back-row guest will hear.

FIELD NOTE

A lav on the lapel is exposed. A lav inside the jacket, under the tie knot, is protected. The difference sounds obvious once you've heard both recordings side by side—which is exactly why we check on-site, every time, rather than assuming yesterday's placement will work today.

The Patient Side of the Work.

None of what's in this field note is dramatic. There's no clever trick, no single piece of gear that solves wind on its own. It's a windscreen chosen correctly, a lavalier placed six inches differently, a forecast checked weeks before anyone needed to think about it.

That patience is the actual job. Guests will never know a wind threshold was ever discussed—they'll simply hear the ceremony clearly, exactly as it happened, regardless of what the afternoon breeze was doing.

If you're planning an outdoor ceremony and want a second opinion on wind exposure before you commit to a site, we're glad to talk it through.

About Oak & Echo

Oak & Echo exists for one purpose: to make sure every guest hears every promise. We specialize exclusively in professional wedding ceremony audio, partnering with couples, planners, officiants, photographers, and videographers to create ceremonies that feel effortless, natural, and uninterrupted.

Oak & Echo · Professional Ceremony Audio

Youngstown, Ohio · Serving Northeast Ohio & Western Pennsylvania
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