



OAK PAPERS

Guide N° 02

An Outdoor Ceremony Checklist

*Twelve small questions to ask before your outdoor ceremony—
most of
which have nothing to do with audio, and all of which affect
it.*

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Oak & Echo

PROFESSIONAL CEREMONY AUDIO · YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

Twelve Questions, Asked Early

Outdoor ceremonies are the reason ceremony audio specialists exist. They are also the reason a general AV team will show up with the wrong equipment. Most of what determines whether your ceremony sounds effortless has nothing to do with microphones at all—it has to do with the site itself.

This guide is built around twelve questions, grouped into four short sections. None of them require any technical knowledge. All of them are worth asking on your very first venue walkthrough, ideally with your planner beside you.

- Walk the exact ceremony footprint, not just the general area—ten feet can change every answer.
- Ask the venue coordinator directly; many of these answers live with them, not with search results.
- Bring this guide with you and use the note lines. A blank space becomes a real question when you're standing there.

A

Site & Light

Where the ceremony sits, and what the sun does to it.

—QUESTIONS 01–03

01 Where does the sun set?

A west-facing aisle at 6 p.m. means squinting officiants, backlit couples, and microphones catching wind off the open field. Rotate the aisle if you can, or plan your ceremony time around the light.

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02 Is the ground level?

Speaker stands and microphone stands are built for flat, firm ground. Grass slopes, garden beds, and loose gravel all change what "level" means—walk the exact footprint, not just the general area.

NOTES.....

03 How close is the reception space?

Sound carries both ways. A cocktail hour setting up too close to the ceremony can bleed into your vows, and a generator running nearby will show up in every recording.

NOTES.....

B

Power & Equipment

What the site provides, and what it doesn't.

—QUESTIONS 04-06

04 Where is the nearest power?

Battery-powered systems are beautiful and necessary in the right locations—but a reliable extension run from a barn, coach house, or outlet is always calmer than hoping a battery lasts through delays.

NOTES.....

05 Livestock, traffic, or a flight path nearby?

A working farm, a nearby road, or a regional airport's approach path all introduce noise on a schedule nobody controls. Ask early—some of it can be timed around, some of it can only be planned for.

NOTES.....

06 When do the sprinklers run?

This is the most common surprise we see. Ask the venue directly, and if the ceremony time is close to a scheduled run, ask them to shift it for your day.

NOTES.....

C

Sound & Acoustics

How the space itself behaves.

—QUESTIONS 07–09

07 What is on the guest side of the aisle?

A tree line reflects sound gently back toward your guests. An open lawn absorbs it entirely and simply needs more coverage per row to reach the same ears.

NOTES.....

08 How many guests, and how many rows deep?

Coverage is about distance, not volume. A back row thirty feet from the aisle needs a fundamentally different plan than one at ten feet—even at the same guest count.

NOTES.....

09 Is the space enclosed, or fully open?

Walls and hedges hold sound in a space. A fully open field lets it drift away in every direction, including the one your guests are sitting in.

NOTES.....

D

Contingency & Coordination

What happens if the plan changes.

—QUESTIONS 10–12

10 What is your rain plan?

Nothing else on this list matters if the audio team doesn't know about it. A rain plan that moves your ceremony indoors is also a new acoustic space—plan for both, not just one.

NOTES.....

11 Has the backup space been walked, too?

The backup space deserves the same attention as the primary one. It's usually an afterthought, and it's usually where the problems happen.

NOTES.....

12 Where will your photographer and videographer stand?

Good equipment placement considers their sightlines from the start, rather than asking them to move around it on the day.

NOTES.....

None of This Is About Equipment.

Every question in this guide could be asked by someone who has never touched a microphone. That's deliberate. The best ceremony audio isn't decided the week of the wedding—it's decided the first time you stand in the space and notice what it does.

We ask couples and planners to walk through these twelve questions early, because the answers change what equipment makes sense, where it goes, and how it's hidden. A plan built around the actual site is always calmer than one built around assumptions.

If you'd like a second set of eyes on your venue—before you've booked anyone for audio—we're glad to talk through it.

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

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