

# Questions to Ask the Musicians or Deejay



- 1. When and where can we see you perform live?**  
The band or deejay should invite you to a club date or schedule a mini performance of three to four songs for a small audience.
- 2. Can you supply us with a videotape or audiotape? Is it recorded live or produced? Is the sound technically enhanced?**  
A seasoned band should be able to provide both an audio CD and a live DVD. While the sound may be somewhat electronically enhanced, it generally doesn't cross the line into misrepresenting the band's sound. Ask the band if it has a site on [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com), where you can hear it live.
- 3. Can you play any song we want, regardless of your style?**  
Presumably, you've chosen a deejay or a band that stylistically suits your musical taste. It should be able to provide you with a set list of up to 100 songs for review. You can request songs off the playlist as most bands are willing to learn up to five new tunes for the occasion.
- 4. How many musicians are in the band? Is there a vocalist? Is this negotiable?**  
A typical wedding band has a core group of five members—drums, bass, guitar, keyboards, and vocals. Depending on your needs and expectations, the band can expand by adding more vocalists and, in some cases, a horn section. Keep in mind that the more players you hire, the more expensive the band will be.
- 5. Do we need to rent any instruments? Amplifiers? Supply chairs or music stands? Are these costs included in your quoted fee?**  
These costs are typically absorbed by the band and should be included in the quoted fee.
- 6. Does the band use recorded music? (Recorded material is sometimes mixed with live music to achieve a “bigger band” sound.)**  
Combining taped and live sound saves money and is not uncommon. For you, this is a matter of preference and budget.
- 7. How large a room does your sound system accommodate?**  
A standard band generally has a sound system that can fill a room the size of a large banquet hall.
- 8. Can the bandleader or deejay act as master of ceremonies?**  
If the bandleader isn't charismatic, he or she may hire an emcee for this role and include it as an overall expense that can be negotiated before signing the contract.
- 9. Who will set up and at what time?**  
Bands and deejays generally set up their equipment 1½ to 2 hours ahead of time.
- 10. Will you agree to a dress code?**  
If you insist that the band or the deejay follows a dress code, deal with this during the initial meeting. If they balk, don't hire them.
- 11. How many breaks do you require?**  
A typical arrangement consists of three 45-minute sets with 15-minute breaks between sets.
- 12. Are you insured?**  
If yes, ask that the musicians show you a certificate of liability insurance.

## Questions to Ask the Musicians or Deejay (continued)



**13. Will you play overtime? What is the fee?**

Most bands and deejays will agree to play overtime for a fee, which should be outlined in the contract. This fee varies from region to region but could be as high as \$100 per band member per hour.

**14. Do you personally check out the electronics and the acoustics at the venue?**

A good band or deejay will scout the space before the reception to make sure all the proper equipment for achieving good sound is in place.

**15. What size are the speakers and can they be camouflaged?**

Most musicians bristle at covering up fairly large speakers (about the size of a watermelon) because it interferes with the sound. But they may agree to drape thin fabric over them. If you are

concerned about the size of the speakers and their placement, ask to see them, then work with the musicians to come up with a solution that suits you both.

**16. Are you equipped to play CDs guests bring along?**

Most deejays are equipped to play guests' recordings. If this is important to you, find out from the deejay right away. A band, on the other hand, is generally not set up to play CDs, but some bring an MP3 player loaded with music to play during breaks.

**17. What is your cancellation policy?**

This will vary from band to band and deejay to deejay, but generally one month is the least amount of notification to which they will agree. The terms of cancellation and a payment schedule should be spelled out in the contract. Most require a nonrefundable deposit plus up to half the total fee.