

Wedding protocols 16th October 2020

Overview:

In preparation for reopening the wider sectors of Saint Lucia's tourism, destination wedding planners will need to apply all related and established protocols to facilitate maximum trading functions without compromise to health and safety, while complementing mandate of State authority.

Most weddings involve the following vendors who would be approved to work on the wedding day

- photographers and videographers
- hairdressers and makeup artists
- florists
- marriage officers, ministers and lawyers
- rental companies
- musicians and DJs
- caterers and restaurants
- taxi drivers
- bakers

Wedding parties can be as simple as two people up to 250 people, but generally speaking the average group size is around 60 people.

Weddings can be held in a variety of places. Below is a list of popular locations but not limited to only these:

- Resort weddings
- Pigeon Island
- Various private villas
- Catamarans and other boats
- Churches
- The Pink Plantation House
- Beaches
- Waterfalls and other tour destinations.

Ceremony venues are hired for privacy, so one would ensure that only invited guests of the bride and groom would be in attendance. Vendors whose services have been contracted by the destination wedding planner would be the only other persons on site.

Most destination weddings are for couples from overseas, therefore the majority of guests will have entered the country and been subject to all flight protocols established by the airlines, and arrival protocols as established by the State.

Wedding couples and their guests are all staying at accommodations that have been vetted and approved for certification by the Department of Health and Wellness and that have all relevant COVID-19 protocols in place. If the wedding couple have invited local guests then the necessary temperature checks will be conducted on arrival to the venue as will all guests be expected to take the required screening on arrival at the venue.

Ceremony and reception venues are either in possession of a valid Public Health License to operate and have submitted to the Department of Health and Wellness for review and appraisal a complete COVID-19 action plan, or are currently working towards that.

A destination wedding planner markets and sells every aspect of the destination and assumes an important role in creating more complex products in the destination offerings, and adds value to the distribution chain, especially in products and services.

COVID-19 Health & Hygiene Plan:

The ongoing pandemic is an immense threat to destination weddings. It is therefore necessary to agree on uniformed practices and protocols to mitigate risk.

Employee Health:

The employees of the destination wedding planning company engage with the guests on the day after they arrive on island. They meet at the couple's accommodation provider to sign legal paperwork with the lawyer and to run through the details of the wedding day.

A rehearsal with the wedding couple and their bridal party a day or two before the wedding usually occurs.

The employees are in attendance for the whole of the wedding day, from guest arrival for the ceremony to departure from the reception. With this in mind, the destination wedding planner will ensure that their employees go through the necessary screening prior to the start of every work day.

Stay At Home Policy:

Employees who do not feel well and may exhibit any related symptoms to that of the Coronavirus are advised to stay home. COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most infected people will develop mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalization.

Most common symptoms: Fever, dry cough and tiredness

Less common symptoms: Aches and pains, sore throat, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, headache, loss of taste or smell, a rash on skin, or discoloration of fingers or toes.

Serious symptoms: Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, loss of speech or movement.

Employees are advised to seek medical attention if they exhibit serious symptoms. Always call before visiting your doctor or health facility.

Temperature Checks & Screening:

Every morning, employees will be temperature screened. This is a mandatory process.

Any employee who has a temperature above 37 °C (99 °F) should remain at home.

Employees may be asked to do a temperature check at the various venues and if so, must adhere to the protocols of the property.

Confidential Information: All temperature readings will be kept in strict confidence and remain on employees file.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): All employees are required to wear their face masks when visiting the hotels and interacting with people.

At Risk Employees:

Consideration must be given to at risk employees in exercising their duties. Employees have an obligation to advise their Manager of any health risks which they are susceptible to. Management will ensure there is a doctor's note on the employee's file. Any employee who may become ill with a respiratory illness must remain at home, and should only return to work, once the doctor has cleared them to do so. In such a case, a doctor's note should also be presented to management and kept on the employee's file.

Travelling Employees:

Employees who travel, whether for business or pleasure, will be quarantined upon returning on island for 14-days as mandated by the Government of Saint Lucia.

Be Open, Be Honest Policy:

The destination wedding planner will encourage employees to be open and honest, should a family member be ill with the COVID-19. This will allow us to work with our local Department of Health and Wellness to address any concerns regarding exposure. Employees who are highly exposed will be required to remain at home for 14 days in quarantine, monitoring their symptoms. Low risk employees should check their temperature prior to their arrival at work to ensure they are well before arriving at the work place. Any information shared by the employee about their families will remain confidential. Additionally, the employee's temperature will be checked upon arrival at the workplace.

Office/Work Station Sanitation:

Whether at home or in an office environment, all areas and all work spaces must be kept clean and hygienic. Public areas will be cleaned regularly throughout the day with disinfectant. All areas to be sanitized throughout the course of the day.

Employee Training:

All employees will be trained, and constantly be reminded about general hygiene and safety regarding COVID-19 and other communicable diseases in the work place. This will be done through general meetings, memos, and educational posters in key areas. All employees will be trained in the following areas:

- Limiting Exposure
- Communication with Management
- Employee regulatory rights and responsibilities
- Impact on Work Environment

The staff of the destination wedding planning company is required to attend any training facilitated by the Department of Health and Wellness or any Government affiliated entity such as National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO).

Wedding guests and employees responsibility:

All employees will:

- In conjunction with the wedding couple, advise potential vulnerable persons against travelling to Saint Lucia and attending the wedding, for example the elderly, those with underlying medical conditions (e.g. heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, liver disease)
- Not allow anyone displaying COVID-19 symptoms on the day to attend the wedding ceremony or reception
- Protect against the spread of COVID-19 on a wedding day by:
 - Avoiding all handshakes; a no-contact Namaste greeting will suffice
 - Washing hands properly and regularly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
 - Wearing a face mask
 - Temperature checks for all attendees
 - Sanitizing all guests hands on arrival at the venue using an alcohol-based sanitizing spray
 - Covering mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing and/or sneezing
 - Putting used tissues into a bin and washing hands or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer afterwards
 - Not touching eyes, nose or mouth if hands are not clean
 - Ensuring guests either wear a face mask at the venue and maintain physical distancing protocols at all times.

Record keeping:

For the purposes of contact tracing, the destination wedding planner will keep an accurate record of all attendees at the wedding which will include:

- Full name and address – both while on island and their home addresses
- An effective means of communicating with each attendee (for example, an active phone number or email address)
- The time at which the person arrived and left the event
- These records will be held for at least two months and will only be shared with our local Department of Health and Wellness, Saint Lucia Fire Service and Respiratory Centers located in Gros Islet, La Clery, Dennery and Vieux Fort as required.

Venues:

The wedding ceremony and reception venues that are used will all hold valid Government certification as it pertains to COVID-19 protocols and instructions. Most of them already have it in place or are working towards obtaining it.

Only venues that can support physical distancing will be used.

Venues used will allow for appropriate hand washing facilities, and keep communal areas such as bathrooms or high-touch surfaces clean.

Wedding vendors:

All wedding vendors will adhere to all relevant personal protocols on the wedding day:

- Temperature Check: Prior to entering the office or the ceremony/reception venue, vendors' temperatures will be checked. If a vendor exhibits a high temperature above 37 °C (99 °F) they will not be allowed to enter the offices or to attend the wedding venue.

- Vendors will be scheduled for set up or delivery in an effort to limit the number of people in any venue at any one time.
- Vendors will ensure they follow the general personal hygiene guidance about washing hands and carry hand sanitizer and use it regularly.
- Vendors will minimise interactions with wedding planners and other vendors.
- Vendors will be required to wear face mask.
- Vendors will maintain at least 6' separation from each other

Vendors will have participated in the relevant COVID-19 training as mandated by the State and will have obtained their certification to allow them to operate, this is particularly relevant to beauty service providers.

Transportation:

All taxi drivers used to pick up guests from their resort to convey them to the ceremony and/or reception venue and back to the resort after the wedding will have attended the relevant training and will be certified as per State regulations. They will follow these basic guidelines:

- Drivers to use hand sanitizer and offer to passengers on entering the vehicle
- Drivers will always wear a mask
- Drivers will keep a supply of tissues and encourage passengers to use them as needed
- To practice physical distancing passengers must sit in the rear passenger seats only
- In taxi buses, the maximum number of passengers will be limited to the number of passenger seats allowed as per current Government COVID-19 guidelines
- In the bridal car, the maximum number of passengers will be limited to the number of passenger seats in the back of the vehicle (in most cars there are typically 3 rear passenger seats)
- There are no cash transactions as transport is pre-paid by the wedding couple/planner
- After every journey or when visibly dirty, drivers will wipe all surfaces that a passenger may have touched with alcohol based sanitizing wipes or disinfectant. This includes: inside/outside door handles, seats and seat belts/buckles.

Wedding ceremony/venue:

Everyone arriving and departing the venue will have their hands sanitized by an employee using a disinfectant spray and will have their temperature checked. If a guest exhibits a high temperature above 37 °C (99 °F) they will not be allowed to enter the ceremony venue.

At every wedding ceremony venue there will be appropriate hand washing facilities, boxes of tissues and lined containers to dispose of used tissue.

Any regularly touched surfaces, such as tables, chairs and restroom surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected prior to guest arrival and regularly and frequently cleaned and disinfected during the wedding.

Hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant will be readily available at each wedding ceremony site.

Readily visible signage will be placed to remind everyone of best hygiene practices at doors, sinks, tables, and any food/bar areas.

The Marriage Officer will be placed appropriately so that physical distancing protocols are adhered to and for larger groups he/she will use a microphone.

Provision will be given to the layout of the ceremony venue to allow for increased spacing between seats for guests and standing space for the couple and wedding party during the ceremony to ensure adherence to physical distancing protocols.

PA facilities will be required to provide at least two microphones and carefully sanitized after each use.

Wedding reception/venue:

At every wedding reception venue organized by the destination wedding planner, provision will be given to the layout of the reception venue to allow for increased spacing between seats for guests during dinner.

Everyone arriving and departing the venue will have their hands sanitized by an employee using a disinfectant spray and will have their temperature checked. If a guest exhibits a high temperature above 37 °C (99 °F) they will not be allowed to enter the reception venue.

PA facilities will be required to provide at least two microphones and carefully sanitized after each use.

Use of hand sanitizers at the table should be encouraged and reception venue employees will encourage guests to practice physical distancing.

Employees, vendors and attendees will maintain a 6ft separation from other individuals, including while waiting to be seated at the reception, while waiting at the bar or food service, in bathrooms and anywhere on the property.

Bathrooms will be regularly and frequently cleaned and disinfected and cleanings will be documented as required and bathroom occupancy will be limited in order to comply with stated social distancing measures.

Hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant will be made readily available to employees and customers as availability allows.

Handling a Sick Guest:

In the event a guest becoming ill at a wedding ceremony or reception, the wedding planner will follow the protocol as outlined below or as is mandated by State protocols:

When a guest shows signs of being unwell, the following questions should be posed to the guest:

- Are you feeling unwell? If the answer is yes, proceed to ask them the nature of the illness.

Following their response, the following questions should be asked:

- Do you have a cold?
- Do you know what kind of cold?
- Do you have a fever?
- How long have you been feeling unwell?

- Where did you travel from?
- Have you been in contact with someone who had a confirmed case of COVID-19?
- On which airline did you travel?
- What is your resort/who is your Tour Operator/DMC Representative?

Guests' response should immediately be reported to the management of the resort or villa they are staying at. The relevant hotel/villa management and DMC representative will collaborate on making the final decision as to whether or not the Ministry of Health and Wellness should be contacted.

Based on the decision, and should quarantine be warranted, the guest MUST be advised that due to the Protocol in place by the Local Health Authorities, due to the COVID-19 virus any suspicious cold symptoms must be reported to them. Also, anyone showing such symptoms MUST immediately be returned to their accommodations and remain in their room until seen by someone from the Local Health Authorities and approval is given to leave the room. Apologize for any inconvenience that this might cause and ensure the guest that arrangements will be made to ensure that the necessary steps will be taken to assist in making their stay a comfortable one.

Quarantine & Isolation Procedure:

If there is a suspected case of the Coronavirus, the following is the protocol as recommended by the Department of Health and Wellness:

- 1) All guests or team members who are visibly showing or are reporting flu like symptoms / respiratory illnesses (suspected case) should be reported to the manager, immediately.
- 2) In the case of a guest, the individual should be quarantined in their room. The hotel is required to contact the Chief Medical Officer at the Department of Health and Wellness who will organize and determine what steps to take next. The hotel is also required to contact the Destination Management Company. The Ministry of Health and Wellness will take full responsibility for the patient to organize transfer and care to the designated quarantine facility.
- 3) In the case of an employee, the individual will be quarantined in a room designated for this purpose and should allow for easy access. The manager will be required to contact the Chief Medical Officer at the Ministry of Health and Wellness who will organize and determine what steps to take next. The Ministry of Health and Wellness will take full responsibility for the patient to organize transfer and care to the designated quarantine facility.
- 4) If a doctor is called to the ceremony or reception venue or the workplace, the doctor will be required to wear protective uniform and should be the only contact person with the guest or team member until the medical team from the Ministry of Health and Wellness arrive.

The destination wedding planning company will call any one of the following numbers and alert the St. Lucia Hospitality and Tourism Authority (SLHTA) via WhatsApp or call the CEO at Tel 721-4444 to give an update on the guest's situation.

Contact Details:

Organizational Contact Details

Company	Contact Numbers
Department of Health & Wellness	(758) 468-5300 (758) 452-2859
Owen King EU Hospital	(758) 727-4068
Respiratory Clinic—Gros-Islet Poly Clinic	(758) 518-4127
Respiratory Clinic—Vieux Fort	(758) 518-5881
Respiratory Clinic—Dennery	(758) 518-5695
Respiratory Clinic—Soufriere	(758) 518-1905
Respiratory Clinic—La Clery	(758) 723-0712
Respiratory Clinic—Victoria Hospital	(758) 518-4101
Saint Lucia Fire Service	(758) 451-7667
Saint Lucia Hospitality & Tourism Association (SLHTA)	(758) 453-1811

Staff/Officials Contact Details

Name & Position	Company	Contact Numbers	E-mail Addresses
Dr. Sharon Belmar-George Chief Medical Officer	Department of Health & Wellness	(758) 468-5309 (758) 285-1260	sharon.belmar@govt.lc
Joseph Joseph Chief Fire Officer	Saint Lucia Fire Service	(758) 451-7667 (758) 725-7339	samjo10@hotmail.com
Noorani Azeez Chief Executive Officer	Saint Lucia Hospitality & Tourism Association	(758) 453-1811 (758) 721-4444	slhtaexec@gmail.com