



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

CONFERENCE & VISITORS COUNCIL
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10 Frequently Asked Questions & Answers to Help You Plan Your Santa Cruz County Wedding

- 1. How do I obtain a marriage license?**

The [Santa Cruz County Clerk](#) office can provide information and requirements for Santa Cruz County marriage licenses. Give them a call at **831.454.2060**.
- 2. Can I hold my wedding ceremony right on the beach?**

Beach and beach overlook locations lend a beautiful backdrop to your ceremony. Reservations and permits are usually required for wedding ceremonies consisting of more than 20 people and long-term advance planning is advised. Our beaches fall under the auspices of California State Parks, Santa Cruz County Parks, or the City of Santa Cruz Parks & Recreation. See our comprehensive lists of local [parks](#) and [beaches](#) and select the park or beach of your choice. Within the location listing, you will find a link to the governing agency's website and the phone number.
- 3. Can I have my reception or a large party on the beach?**

Permits are required for any beach event at which chairs, tables, a stage, or sound systems are present. Reservation and permit information can be found by contacting the agency which manages the beach you are interested in. Please see question #2.
- 4. What about hosting a beach party and bonfire at night?**

Fire rings are available or individual bonfires are permitted at the following State Beaches: Seabright, Twin Lakes, New Brighton, Sunset, and Manresa. Rio del Mar Beach allows fires as well. In all cases, fires must be extinguished by 10 pm. Visit www.thatsmypark.org for details or call **831.335.3455**.
- 5. May I serve alcohol or champagne on the beach?**

For the safety of all beachgoers – and to protect the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary – glass and alcohol are not allowed on any Santa Cruz County beaches.
- 6. Can I have my wedding among the redwoods?**

The same three park agencies, listed in question #2, offer numerous sites within the redwoods. The same reservation and planning restrictions apply.

7. What is the best time of year to hold a wedding in Santa Cruz County?

Santa Cruz weather is considered mild, with summer temperatures in the mid-70s and winter temperatures in the mid-50s. The sun shines 300 days a year and the humidity is low for a coastal city. Most rainfall occurs between November and April. However we experience beautiful weather during these months as well. We have occasional fog due to changing Pacific currents. Take a look at our historical almanac for [monthly temperature averages](#).

8. Do I need a wedding planner?

A wedding planner is not required, but can help you make the most of your big day, particularly when planning a destination or large event. Many [wedding venue hotels and resorts](#) will have a coordinator for the day of and leading up to your wedding. When considering hiring a planner, some questions you may want to ask yourself are: Am I planning from out of town? Is my venue a public park or beach? Do I have more than 40 guests? Will I need to coordinate transportation between venues? Do I have many ideas for my wedding and am finding it hard to keep track? Answering “yes” to many of these questions may indicate a wedding planner is right for you. Wedding coordinators can also recommend ways to make your wedding more cost effective and sustainable!

9. Where can my guests stay?

Santa Cruz County offers a variety of hotels and resorts for all kinds of budgets. For any wedding, but particularly those during the summer season, it is recommended to hold a block of rooms in advance to ensure your guests have ease of finding accommodations. Our website offers a variety of lodging properties from beachside to mountain settings; take a look at our [lodging listings here](#)! Also, consider the off-season (September through May) for better availability and rooming specials for groups!

10. What if my questions aren't answered here?

We have a variety of resources to help you on our website. You can [request a wedding packet](#) containing our 70-page, full-color Official Santa Cruz County Traveler's Guide, a list of wedding venues and services, and brochures for each. There is no charge for the Wedding Packet, and we encourage you to stop by the office and pick up your packet today! We are located at 303 Water Street, Suite 100 in Santa Cruz. For other questions, email our Sales & Marketing Manager krupp@santacruz.org.