

# The Ultimate Event Checklist

Your first event is an incredible opportunity to learn, get creative, and sharpen your organizational skills. But without proper planning, it can also be a logistical headache.

We asked the experts at our partner hotels for advice, and have put together this checklist to help make sure your event goes smoothly.

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## 3 Months Before Your Event

Three months sounds like a long time, but for big groups remember that things book up quickly. Here's what you need to do three months prior to your event, especially if your guests are coming from out of town.

- Discuss the reservation procedures with your hotel, including block release dates.
- Review your hotel's credit policy and billing options.
- Inform your hotel and/or venue of any special guest needs or accessibility issues.
- Plan your activities! Don't leave outings, like dinners or evening activities, to chance. Make reservations and buy tickets.

## 1 Month Before Your Event

This is when you get down to the nitty-gritty. In this phase you'll calculate a lot of the supplies that are essential to event success. One tip: always order a bit more than you think you need; it's awful getting caught short the day-of. And put your name on everything! You'll need it again and it's easy for small stuff to get misplaced.

- Review menus and your group's food and beverage requirements and finalize with your partners.
  - Review your hotel's check-in/check-out procedures.
  - Review and finalize your meeting requirements - how should the venue be set up?
  - Finalize any materials you're handing out to attendees.
  - Plan and communicate your A/V requirements. If you're using a projector, don't forget about any cables or connectors you may need.
  - Submit your rooming list to the hotel, and remember to note any VIPs.
  - Review and finalize any signage requirements.
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## 2 Weeks Before Your Event

Now might be your last chance to make changes to things like hotel bookings, so make sure do a final review.

- Review your rooming list and notify the hotel of any changes, cancellations or revisions.
- If you're sending any materials – handouts, signage, etc. – ship it now.
- Submit all of your deposits, if required.

## 5 - 10 Days Before Your Event

It's down to the wire now. Make sure all of your ducks are in a row.

- Confirm – then reconfirm – your final food and beverage needs and if required provide your minimum guarantee of attendees.
- Reconfirm the schedules of any staff or volunteers you plan to have on-site.
- Review your final rooming list.
- Reconfirm your venue set-up, just in case.
- Make sure your venue received any materials you've shipped and confirm their location.

## Day of Event

If you're coming from out of town, this may be the first time you're seeing your venue in-person. Arrive as early as possible and spend some time getting to know your space. It's a good idea to print out your venue contracts in advance and bring them with you.

- Pack some personal supplies like Sharpies, tape, scissors, safety pins and an extension cord, just in case.
- Brief all staff – the venues', and your own, and let them know who the VIPs are.
- Find the venues' temperature controls, and make sure they're set to something comfortable.
- Wrap tablecloths around your garbage cans so they aren't an eyesore.
- Find the lighting controls.
- Make sure the room is set up correctly – are there the right number of chairs?
- Locate all emergency exits and make sure they're not blocked.
- Will guests have what they need? Water, pads, pencils? Handouts?
- Locate all elevators and stairways.
- Check the lectern microphone and light.
- Ask your venue where you'll need to dispose of trash.
- Test and re-test all of your A/V equipment.
- Make sure beverages are on-ice three hours out.
- Make sure your signage is in place.
- Make sure there are snacks and water for your staff and volunteers.

## Final Day of Event

Make sure to end everything on the proper note. A bit of planning here will make sure guests leave as happy as they arrived.

- Extend check-out times for your VIPs.
- Identify where your attendees can store their luggage.
- Confirm any coaches or cabs required for airport transfers.
- Distribute and collect event evaluations.
- Review your charges and billing info.
- Let the venue and/or hotel know how they did.

## Post-Event

Hurray - you did it! Now that your incredible event has wrapped, there are just a few things left to do.

- Make sure you've cleared all of your stuff out of the venue.
- Package up and ship anything you need to keep for next time.
- Receive and review any invoices.
- Had a good experience? Tip! Gratuities are always appreciated.
- Schedule a post-mortem meeting to review what went well and what could be improved.
- Start planning for next year!

**That's it! You're done. Print this checklist and make it your event bible - and if you have any questions along the way, remember to contact your Meet Calgary hotel partner for more tips and tricks.**

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