A Guide for the Mistress and Master of Ceremonies and the House Party

Quick answer
The mistress and master of ceremonies (MCs) are the voice of the wedding reception. They welcome guests, make announcements, introduce the wedding party, cue toasts and dances, and keep the evening on schedule. The house party are the hosts and helpers who greet guests, manage the guest book and gift table, guide seating, and handle setup and teardown. Together they let the couple and their families relax and enjoy the day.

Who Is Who: MCs and the House Party

Many couples choose two MCs, often a mistress and master of ceremonies who share the microphone, so one can handle announcements while the other checks in with the DJ, caterer or planner. MCs are usually confident speakers who know the couple well, and the role can also go to a professional DJ or emcee.

The house party is a small team of trusted friends or relatives who aren't in the wedding party. They are the couple's hosts on the ground. Common house party roles include:

- **Guest book attendant:** invites guests to sign and keeps pens handy.
- **Gift and card table attendants:** receive gifts, keep cards secure and move everything to a designated car at the end of the night.
- **Seating hosts or ushers:** help guests find their tables and assist elderly guests.
- **Floaters:** refill supplies, run errands and handle small emergencies.
- **Teardown crew:** pack décor, rentals and personal items at the end of the night.

▶ Need a pro to MC the night?
Browse DJs and emcees in West Michigan: https://westmiweddingplanner.com/browse/1/14
Or in Metro Detroit: https://easternmiweddingplanner.com/browse/1/14

Duties by Phase: Rehearsal Dinner to Send-Off

Phase 1: Rehearsal Dinner

- **MCs:** Attend the rehearsal, walk through the ceremony and reception flow, and get the final timeline, name pronunciations and list of toast-givers.
- **MCs:** Meet the DJ, venue coordinator and planner to agree on cues and who signals whom.
- **MCs:** Optionally host the rehearsal dinner itself by welcoming guests and introducing family speakers.

- **House party:** Get your assignments in writing, including who holds the card box, who has the car keys for gifts, and where supplies are stored.
- **Everyone:** Swap phone numbers and set up a group text for the wedding day.

Phase 2: Wedding Morning

- **House party:** Arrive at the agreed time to help set up the guest book, gift table, place cards, favors and signs.
- **House party:** Confirm the card box is secure and someone is assigned to it at all times.
- **MCs:** Review the script, print a copy of the run of show and check in with the planner or DJ.
- **Everyone:** Keep an emergency kit handy with safety pins, tape, scissors, stain remover, pens, tissues and a phone charger.

Phase 3: Ceremony

- **House party:** Greet guests, hand out programs and point the way to seating, restrooms and the guest book.
- **House party:** Help seat late arrivals quietly at an appropriate moment.
- **MCs:** If asked, give a brief welcome before the processional with reminders such as an unplugged ceremony or where to go afterward.
- **MCs:** Note any timing changes and pass them to the DJ and caterer.

Phase 4: Cocktail Hour

- **MCs:** Announce where cocktail hour is and when guests should move to the reception room.
- **MCs:** Confirm the grand-entrance lineup and pronunciations with the wedding party.
- **House party:** Staff the guest book and gift table, move ceremony items such as programs and signs to the reception, and help guests find seating cards.
- **House party:** Watch for guests who need assistance, such as elderly relatives, guests with mobility needs or families with small children.

Phase 5: Reception

- **MCs:** Open the reception with a warm welcome and housekeeping notes such as dinner order, the bar and the hashtag.
- **MCs:** Introduce the wedding party and the couple, then cue the first dance, blessing or grace, dinner, toasts, parent dances, cake cutting and open dancing.
- **MCs:** Keep toasts on time by letting speakers know their order and gently guiding the program.
- **MCs:** Make sure vendors know when breaks and key moments happen.
- **House party:** Keep the gift table tidy and secure, refill supplies, help the caterer direct tables to the buffet if needed, and handle small problems so the couple doesn't have to.

Phase 6: Send-Off and Teardown

- **MCs:** Announce the last dance and send-off, line guests up and hand out sparklers or bubbles if the venue allows them.
- **MCs:** Thank guests on behalf of the couple and families.

- **House party:** Move gifts and cards to the designated vehicle, pack décor and personal items, and return rentals as directed.
- **House party:** Do a final walk-through for lost items and follow the venue's cleanup rules.

Sample Run of Show

Every wedding is different. Adapt this sample to your venue, caterer and DJ timeline.

Time	Moment	Who leads
3:00 PM	House party arrives; guest book, gift table and signs set up	House party
4:00 PM	Guests arrive and are greeted and seated	House party / ushers
4:30 PM	Ceremony	Officiant; MCs give the welcome if asked
5:00 PM	Cocktail hour	MCs announce; house party moves items
6:00 PM	Guests seated; grand entrance	MCs + DJ
6:15 PM	Welcome, blessing and dinner service	MCs, caterer
7:15 PM	Toasts	MCs introduce each speaker
7:40 PM	First dance and parent dances	MCs + DJ
8:00 PM	Cake cutting; dancing opens	MCs
10:45 PM	Last dance and send-off	MCs; house party hands out send-off items
11:00 PM	Teardown and gift transport	House party

Script Tips for MCs

- **Write it, then trim it:** Keep each announcement under a minute and let the couple shine.
- **Practice names out loud:** Confirm pronunciations at the rehearsal and write them phonetically in your script.
- **Use a two-voice rhythm:** Alternate lines between the mistress and master of ceremonies so announcements feel lively.
- **Keep humor kind:** Inside jokes and roasts can fall flat, so aim for warm and inclusive.
- **Stay sober and on cue:** You are the timekeeper, so check the run of show before every transition.
- **Have a sample opener ready:** "Good evening, everyone! On behalf of [Couple] and their families, welcome. We're your MCs tonight, and we're so glad you're here."

▶ Plan every moment in one place
Use the free wedding Planner: https://westmiweddingplanner.com/planner · https://easternmiweddingplanner.com/planner

MC and House Party Duty Checklist

☐ Final timeline and run of show printed (MCs, DJ, planner)

☐ Name pronunciations and entrance lineup confirmed

☐ Toast order and speakers notified

☐ Vendor contact list shared with the group text

☐ Guest book, pens and card box set up and staffed

☐ Gift table attendant and gift vehicle assigned

☐ Seating chart and place cards displayed

☐ Emergency kit packed

☐ Send-off items ready and allowed by the venue

☐ Teardown, rental return and lost-and-found plan agreed

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What does a mistress or master of ceremonies do at a wedding?

They host the reception. They welcome guests, make announcements, introduce the wedding party, cue toasts, dances and cake cutting, and keep the evening on schedule with the DJ and caterer.

Q: What is a house party in a wedding?

The house party is a group of friends or relatives, outside the wedding party, who help host the day by greeting guests and managing the guest book, gift table, seating, supplies and teardown.

Q: Should we have one MC or two?

Either works. Two MCs, often a mistress and master of ceremonies, can share the microphone and the behind-the-scenes coordination, which makes the night run more smoothly.

Q: Can our DJ be the MC?

Yes. Many professional DJs also emcee. Confirm it when you book and share your run of show and pronunciations ahead of time.

Q: When should the MCs and house party get involved?

Ideally at the rehearsal and rehearsal dinner, where they learn the timeline, cues and assignments, and then through the end of the reception, including send-off and teardown.

Q: How do we thank our MCs and house party?

Acknowledge them during the reception, give a small thank-you gift and send a handwritten note after the wedding.

Ready to Plan?

▶ Find your MC, DJ and every other vendor
West Michigan: https://westmiweddingplanner.com · East Michigan: https://easternmiweddingplanner.com

Appendix B: Notes

This guide gives general etiquette and planning guidance. It contains no statistics. Directory links were checked on Nov 2, 2026.