

Table 1: Guideline Checklist of Items for Hiring a Disc Jockey Service Promoting Professionalism

Item	Professionalism
Binding Contract	<p>A professional organization will provide a typed binding contract that has with all of the stipulations clearly spelled out.</p> <p>If any service offers a verbal agreement or something written by hand on a piece of paper, it is recommended to avoid signing with that company.</p>
Proper Attire	<p>A professional organization will send out disc jockeys that are dressed accordingly. If the event is formal, your disc jockey for the event should come wearing an outfit similar to your guests. For the male performer, a tie and sport jacket is always a nice added touch, but not a necessity, and for the female, a skirt and blouse provides an extra touch of class.</p>
Professional Disc Jockey Equipment	<p>Sound clarity is an important aspect that should never be overlooked. Do some research on the internet and ensure that the service you book with uses equipment with names that you are familiar with and we recommend that you view the equipment that the service uses. Banged up speakers with the corners broken off or ones that are full of dust and cobwebs are signs of neglect and a warning for potential equipment failure.</p>
Back-up Equipment	<p>When booking a disc jockey service, ask if backup equipment is available. Even with newer brand name equipment, unforeseen electrical problems can arise at any given time. Moreover, many services are now using computers to play the music and an additional laptop and harddrive is an absolute necessity.</p>
Music Playlists	<p>Any professional disc jockey service will provide a general playlist for the client to select a good variety of songs for the event. It is important for any professional service to start function knowing the genre of music that will satisfy the musical tastes of not only the clients themselves, but also the guests attending.</p>
Wedding Forms	<p>With any wedding, a number of forms that need to be filled out and a professional service will provide them. They include a general information form listing the formal wedding songs and any special needs, a song request form, and in some cases, a wedding party introduction schedule.</p>
Equipment Set - Up	<p>In order to be ready to begin according to the contract's start time, all professional disc jockey services will have their equipment set up and verified operational at least 30 minutes before the guests arrive. Any service that says that they will arrive at 5:00pm to begin their set up with the doors opening to the hall at 5:30pm would be deemed unprofessional. In addition, all visible wires should be neatly taped down and speakers positioned in a manner to ensure the safety of anyone attending the function.</p>
Event Pricing	<p>In order to provide a high level of professionalism, a disc jockey service needs to charge a price to keep up with equipment maintenance and upgrades, music library updates, proper training, insurance and licenses. As a general guideline, fees for 4 hours of wedding service in the Niagara Region should be at least \$450.00 and \$600.00 for 7-hour packages before taxes. Discounts near the \$100.00 mark may be applied during the non-peak season periods of January through April and early November. Pricing for stag & does and corporate events may be a bit lower depending on the time of year and whether the function is during the week or on the weekend. If you do receive quotes well below these established guidelines, be aware that the quality of service may be jeopardized.</p>

	Deposit	<p>A professional disc jockey service will always ask for a deposit to secure a specific date. Deposits will vary in size depending on the cost of the event, but should never exceed 50% of the total cost. If any service asks for the full amount up front, a warning signal should go off. NEVER BOOK WITH A DISC JOCKEY SERVICE THAT ASKS FOR FULL PAYMENT UP FRONT. If they happen to go out of business or leave town while waiting for your event to materialize, the court proceeding can be very tedious and nerve-wracking and the chances of fund retrieval are not favourable.</p>
	Business Referrals and Negative Reports	<p>Any professional disc jockey service will offer testimonials from previous clients and reputable referrals from establishments that are frequently played at. Take the time to review the testimonials, which in most cases, are posted on their website. In addition, ask for a letter of recommendation or the contact information of a banquet manager that can verify the company's professional status. Most importantly, check out sites like the Better Business Bureau or the Wedding Wire to see if the service that you might be hiring has previously provided clients with substandard performances.</p>
	Liability Insurance	<p>All professional disc jockey services now provide liability insurance as one of their featured attributes. Clients should ask the service being hired to provide proof of insurance. This will ensure that coverage for all guests is available for any injuries directly caused by the company providing the entertainment. Moreover, many reputable venues are now requiring mandatory liability insurance for any type of service performing onsite.</p>
	AVLA Licensing (Audio Video Licensing Agency)	<p>Most people are not even aware that any music been provided to the public by disc jockey companies in order to gain income, requires that the music being used in most cases, to be licensed. The only exemption from the licensing practice is if the service only uses store bought CD's and does not duplicate them to produce multiple libraries. The AVLA has now produced a manual that is going to be distributed to halls in the future, educating them on the many illegal practices being incorporated by disc jockey companies regarding copyright infringement. For example, with the introduction of the MP3 format, a large number of services are obtaining all of their music via the internet. Not only is this a criminal offence, it has threatened the livelihood of many companies spending thousands of dollars to abide by the law. Although policing by the AVLA to prosecute services breaking the law is not common, it may be become more frequent in the near future. Ensure that the disc jockey service being hired provides proof of a valid AVLA license or a monthly CD subscription, which already comes fully licensed.</p>
	Business Registration	<p>Any professional disc jockey company that is serious about their service will be registered with the provincial government. Ask the service that you are interested in booking with for proof of registration. In addition, if HST is being charged and a HST number is not visible on the contract, ask for proof that the company is registered and obligated to charge the additional 13% tax; you may be paying the extra money to a company not entitled to collect it.</p>

	Website	Most professional disc jockey services now provide a website to offer valuable information such as testimonials, pricing and services available. Moreover, many now have an online quote system making it simple to receive a hardcopy quote to reference when comparing prices. It is not imperative to have a website to show professionalism, but it does show the client that the company is becoming more innovative and moving forward with modern technology.
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