



How late is TOO late to book?

There has always been loads of controversy about when is the right time to book your formal, and when to book other aspects of your own personal formal experience. Let's break these into 2 very distinct areas of concern...

1/ The formal itself. This is the actual event and all the aspects of it that everyone will experience together as a group. This includes things like the venue, entertainment, dinner, photography, decorations and so on.

2/ Personal things. These are the parts of the formal experience that each person keeps to themselves, such as clothing, hair, shoes, transport and so on.

The reason it's important to separate these things is that each of these separate categories needs to be decided upon and arranged at different times of the season.

The very first thing should be the formal itself. The venue and date is the most critical thing, followed by the inclusions in your package. This is generally booked and finalised no less than 6-8 months before the proposed date of your formal although booking 12-16 months ahead is also fairly common.

Booking season for venues runs in 2 stages. Stage 1 is from around September to December for the following year, that is to say that securing your venue and date can be done in the final quarter of say 2015 for a formal that's happening in 2016. Stage 2 is from February to April of the year you want the formal.

So it's fair to say that the early bird gets the worm on preferred dates and desired venues. If you haven't secured a premium venue by May, you're pretty well running the risk of missing out altogether, or getting stuck with a budget venue on a date that doesn't really suit you. Lots of people assume that 2 to 3 months notice is fair for booking venues but these are usually the people who end up sitting at home with no formal to attend.

Also be aware that some sneaky venues will take advantage of the desperation of people who left their booking too late and charge either higher than usual prices or secretly share space between your formal and other functions. Our best advice is that if you find yourself in a position of no secure booking and it's any time after May, get professional help or you may get ripped off.

For those of you reading this that have nothing secure yet and are panic-stricken, don't worry too much but call us right away because we have most of the preferred dates at the most desired venues already held and we have plenty of vacancies to book our clients into those spaces until as late as September. Smart agencies tend to secure venue space early in the season and hold it for clientele to buy later.

Once your venue is secure and the formal itself is all booked and taken care of, you can turn your attention to the personal things, which generally become important in around June to August. Book transport first, then move on to clothing and appearance items after that.

The shortest answer to the question of how late is too late to book has to be this... The later you leave it, the harder it's going to be so leaving it late really means you need a professional to help get it right. You don't get a second chance for your formal.

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