

10 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR VENUE 1) Do you have my chosen date or several dates available that are possibilities for my wedding or event? There's no need to fall in love with a wedding or party venue in your area only to find out halfway through your tour that the date you've got your heart set on is already taken. In fact, the best policy is to start your venue search early, either very soon after you set a date, or, if time permits, before you set a definitive date. If you visit a venue early on in your search and absolutely love it, you may decide that you don't mind working your date around when the venue is available. In terms of priority, a venue should be very close to the top of the list when planning a wedding or event; after all, if you don't have a space for the big day (or evening), how will you be able to decide on all of the other aspects that go along with planning? 2) What are your policies for booking an event and paying for the space? What is your cancellation policy? Venues differ on what amount of a deposit is required to get your event "on the books," so be sure to ask the question early in your discussions—especially if the venue is known to book up fast and you are fairly sure you want to use it. Although you hope to not need the cancellation policy, be sure to find out what it is, just in case. At Hamstead Acres, we require a 50% deposit of your total estimate amount to be paid before we can consider your date booked. The remaining 50% is due exactly two weeks before your event. In the event a cancellation is requested, the request will be reviewed by the management of Hamstead Acres to determine if the reasoning is valid as well as what percentage of the initial deposit should be returned. At a minimum, a cancellation after the deposit is paid will incur a service charge of 10% of the original estimate. 3) Do

you have more than one venue at your location? If so, how many guests can each accommodate and are there certain restrictions on how each can be used? Options are always something you want when you are seeking a wedding venue, ESPECIALLY if you are considering having an outdoor wedding or event. Be sure to check this question off your list during your initial tour; noting the number of guests that each area can safely accommodate. In the wide open spaces at Hamstead Acres, you'll be afforded plenty of room at each of our venues to customize seating, décor and other layout options. 4) Do you have an onsite caterer or can I bring my own? If I bring my own what type of restrictions exist or are there any additional fees? Some of your larger or well established venues have onsite catering that they offer, which can be a wonderful service IF: a) you actually like the food options that they prepare and b) the cost is within your budget. If A and B aren't true, see if you can bring your own caterer and just have them use the preparation facilities on the premises; however, don't be surprised if you can't. There are venues that have an agreement with a single caterer, meaning if you want your event to take place there, the food must come from their contracted caterer. In the event that you can bring in your own caterer, be sure to double check with your venue and make sure they don't tack on any additional fees for using their preparation facilities on the grounds. At Hamstead Acres, we understand that wedding and event planning can be stressful, especially if you are doing it yourself. At any of our venues, feel free to bring in an outside caterer at NO ADDITIONAL COST to you. 5) What is your policy on dancing and alcoholic beverages? Church weddings are truly beautiful, but out of reverence

don't allow for receptions with dancing. When it comes to having alcoholic beverages during a cocktail hour or reception, many venues will either require you to contract with them to purchase the beverages that will be served at your event through them, or they will charge a corkage fee if you bring your own beer, wine or liquor. Be sure to budget additional monies to account for these fees or to carefully gauge how to best provide alcohol to your guests. Depending on your budget, you may elect to have a cash bar, or only provide free alcoholic beverages for the first few hours of your reception, or only provide beer and wine. At Hamstead Acres, we will allow you to bring and serve your own beer and wine without incurring additional fees. You may also bring your own liquor as long as the caterer that you use has his or her own ABC permit to serve.

6) When can I come decorate and setup for my big day? So, you've found the perfect venue and you're ready to sign on the dotted line. Before you do, be sure to inquire about the policies the venue has for decorating before the event. Whether indoors or outdoors, no bride wants to feel the pressure of getting her entire wedding setup on the big day. If possible, spread the pre-event decorating out a couple of days. At Hamstead Acres we include some decorating days and a cleanup day in your rental fee and charge only a nominal fee for additional days needed.

7) I'm thinking about an outdoor wedding and reception. What would I do at your venue in the event of rain? Any outdoor wedding venue worth their salt is going to help you find a solution that works within your plans for the wedding. You might be able to reserve a tent as a backup plan for an outdoor ceremony, or

plan to tentatively reserve any indoor venues that might be available that day in case of rain.&nbsp;

Typically, if bad weather is expected on your big day, you'll be checking the weather seven to ten days in advance and have some wiggle room to make a quick change of plans if need be.&nbsp;

Be sure that you feel confident in your venue being supportive of your requests and needs.&nbsp; At Hamstead Acres, we not only have an indoor wedding venue, but plenty of wide open space to house a tent or multiple tents if needed.&nbsp; In addition, our dedicated planners will be sensitive to your needs and assist in any capacity needed. &nbsp; 8)&nbsp;Is the venue easy to find for out of town guests and is it accommodating? Location can play a much bigger role than you think when selecting a venue, so choose wisely and although it is your big day, consider your guest list as well. You don't want your 96 year-old grandmother having to make a three hour trip to watch you get married if you can help it. Seek a venue that meets your criteria that is a) easy to find, b) has reasonable hotel accommodations within 15 minutes, c) has handicapped accessible facilities and d) has ample parking and space to allow everyone to mingle comfortably. In Eastern North Carolina, where the Hamstead Acres wedding venues are located, the area is more spread out than what you will find in a big city, but still very proximate to . Several small towns and cities like LaGrange, Snow Hill, Goldsboro, Wilson, Kinston, Smithfield and even Greenville dot the landscape.&nbsp;

Hamstead Acres is within 35 minutes of all of the aforementioned locations, and only an hour from many others, making our slice of paradise just a hop, skip and a jump from almost anywhere in Eastern North Carolina.&nbsp; 9)&nbsp;What, if any planning or directing services do you offer in addition to the venue rental? &nbsp; Every venue is different, especially when it comes to the range

of services offered. Often, the services that one venue offers over another can make or break your final decision, so be sure to inquire about what can be done. If you don't have someone to direct your wedding, need some decor inspiration, or need full-scale planning services, your venue may be able to help. At Hamstead Acres, our team is on-hand in any capacity you need, from just helping out on the big day to pre-event decorating, all the way down to detail by detail planning.

10) Do you have a preferred vendors list? If so, do I have to use those companies? Some venues will tout the fact that they have a lengthy preferred vendors list, which is great for you as the bride—until they let you know that you are obligated to use one of their vendors. Be sure to ask if there is a catch and if signing a venue contract almost certainly equates to contracting with any number of other vendors such as a photographer, caterer and the like. At Hamstead Acres, we'll provide you with preferred vendors' information, but the buck stops there. You are not obligated in any way to contract with any that we provide and are free to use any vendor of your choosing. If you have selected us to plan your wedding with you, we'll gladly seek vendors outside our preferred list if you are not satisfied with the selections offered.