### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS WEDDINGS - ALLOWAY RECEPTION CENTRE



Surrounded by lakes, forests and abundant natural beauty, FortWhyte Alive's ceremony and reception spaces make exchanging vows extraordinarily special. As a privately operated non-profit organization, hosting your private evening event at FortWhyte Alive not only makes a unique impression but supports environmental education in our community.

Your special event is important to us and the following policies have been put in place to ensure that FortWhyte can accommodate both roles of a popular public facility and a unique, tranquil afterhours rental venue. We know that planning a large event can be stressful – that is why we have prepared these few pages of helpful information. Our years of experience in planning hundreds of special events will hopefully be of benefit to you.



### THE BASICS

## Who do we speak to if we have questions about renting the facilities?

If you are considering renting at FortWhyte, all phone calls and questions should be directed to the Wedding, Event & Venue Supervisor, who can be reached at 204-989-8355, ext. 228 or <u>bookings@fortwhyte.org</u> during regular office hours of 8 am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday. Please allow up to two business days for a response.

## When should I meet with the Wedding, Event & Venue Supervisor?

We suggest a meeting prior to booking the space to go over basic details and have a site visit. Prior to meeting with the Wedding, Event & Venue Supervisor, we ask that you read through this entire package carefully. Please make note of any unanswered questions you may have for your meeting.

We will schedule another meeting before your event at which the Wedding, Event & Venue Supervisor and Catering Manager from Spruce Catering will want to get a feel for the timing and scale of your event, as well as offer helpful suggestions on menu selections. A detailed banquet event order will be forwarded to you outlining the details discussed.

## Does FortWhyte Alive host large parties other than weddings?

Yes, most definitely! Anniversaries, birthdays, retirements, client appreciation events, company dinners and holiday parties have all been hosted at FortWhyte Alive.

#### How many people can this location accommodate?

Our facility can accommodate up to 110 for a seated dinner (plated or buffet) and 140 for a cocktailstyle reception.

## What is the rental fee and what's included in that price?

Our base fee is \$ 2,200 for events occurring in the 2026 calendar year and includes:

- floor plan setup and tear down,
- appropriate dinnerware for the chosen meal,
- bar-ware, tables and chairs and basic white linens,
- use of the projector and screen, and
- podium with a microphone.

#### How many hours does the rental fee include?

The room will be ready to receive guests no earlier than 5:30 pm. Wedding ceremonies can begin no earlier than 6 pm, and the latest guest departure time is 1 am.





### THE BASICS

## How much is the deposit, when is it due, and is it refundable?

A \$500 non-refundable deposit to secure your date is required at the time of booking. Our catering company requires a deposit of \$1,000.

<u>Please refer to catering package for their payment</u> <u>plan (page 23).</u>

#### Can we put a hold on a date?

In order to be fair to all potential guests, we cannot put a hold on a date. Your date is secured once a deposit has been received and the rental contract signed.

#### Do you have an in-house caterer or do I need to provide my own? Even if there is an in-house caterer, do I have the option of using an outside caterer instead?

We are pleased to partner with Spruce Catering for the exclusive food service provider onsite, through the Buffalo Stone Café. Spruce Catering reserves the right to be the sole provider of food and beverages consumed within FortWhyte Alive, with the exception of wedding cakes. All wedding cakes must come from a licensed bakery. Please see their detailed package for all of the food and beverage options.

# What's the payment plan for the entire bill? What forms of payment do you accept?

The remaining FortWhyte fees (ceremony fee, fire pit rentals and remainder of the rental fee) will be invoiced one week prior to the event, and we accept cash, cheque, debit card, American Express, Visa and Mastercard.

<u>Please refer to the catering package (page 23)</u> for the payment schedule required for food and beverage.



## Can I have my ceremony here, too? Is there an additional cost?

We are pleased to host your wedding ceremony at FortWhyte when we are providing the reception services. For couples who want to share this special day in the great outdoors, the Alloway Reception Centre south plaza is a perfect spot with a sunny exposure overlooking Lake Devonian. Because FortWhyte Alive is open to the public until 5 pm daily, we recommend that all ceremonies start no earlier than 6 pm. An additional fee of \$800 will apply to all ceremonies occurring in the 2026 calendar year and includes ceremony chairs, a registry table with linen, a one-hour rehearsal block, and a sound system with a microphone.



### THE BASICS

#### What if it rains?

If there is one thing we would like to be able to control for you it's the weather, however, when planning any outdoor event, you must be prepared for the possibility of rain.

The multipurpose room in the Richardson Interpretive Centre can be an alternative location for a wedding ceremony in the event of rain. It is the responsibility of the renter, however, to make this decision early enough in the day (by 12 pm), to allow us enough time to prepare the room. Seating for 50 can be arranged. Guests will, however, have to walk from the Alloway Reception Centre to the Richardson Interpretive Centre. You may also move your ceremony into the set reception hall and have your guests sit at their tables and enjoy your beautifully decorated reception room. Unfortunately, we do not have time to flip the space from ceremony to reception.



#### Can we have a rehearsal at FortWhyte?

FortWhyte will be pleased to offer you a one-hour rehearsal block the week of your wedding, included with your ceremony fees. This must be booked with the Wedding, Event & Venue Supervisor, as the scheduling will take into consideration other events and programs running at FortWhyte.

# Can we have our wedding photos taken at FortWhyte?

Yes, you are welcome to come on-site on the day of your wedding for photos. FortWhyte Alive offers many wonderful natural areas for your photos. Whether along the lakeshore, on the floating boardwalks or gathered around a timber bench, there is sure to be a setting to suit your needs.

# Are there changing areas for the bride, groom and/or wedding party?

As our buildings are open to the public, we do suggest that you come on-site ready and dressed, there are no dedicated changing areas. If you are arriving for photos prior to the ceremony, we have a space available for you to refresh before you walk down the aisle.

#### Do you have liability insurance?

Yes, but we highly recommend that our couples take out event insurance for their evening. The premises must be left in the same condition as they were at the beginning of the function. The renter is responsible for any and all damage to the facility by their guests or independent contractors working on the renter's behalf. <u>We recommend checking out</u> <u>AON for event insurance.</u>



### **DECOR & RENTALS**

#### Are we allowed to bring in our own decorations?

Yes, please see below for restrictions. All decorating is the responsibility of the renter. FortWhyte and Spruce Catering staff are unable to assist with any personal set-ups of decor. Rental items like table runners must be at FortWhyte prior to 2 pm the day of the function to ensure tables are set in time for your function. We will ensure your tables and chairs are set up per the agreed upon floor plan.

#### May we have a traditional head table at FortWhyte?

A head table for a maximum of 10 people can be set up for your reception. Traditional skirting will need to be brought in at an additional cost. If your wedding party is larger than 10, perhaps consider a sweethearts table for two and then a special table set aside for your attendants.

## When can we get in to decorate the space? When can we drop off decorations?

FortWhyte Alive is open to the public until 5 pm daily. Decorating cannot conflict with public traffic or groups visiting FortWhyte, therefore we ask that set-up for decorations, music, etc. does not take place before 3:30 pm. Drop off of decorations is at the discretion of the Wedding, Event & Venue Supervisor, keeping in mind other events taking place at FortWhyte. If necessary, we may be able to accommodate drop-off the day before the function. A storage fee may apply. FortWhyte will begin setting up tables at 3 pm. Table favours and centrepieces can be placed on the table starting at 3:30 pm.





### **DECOR & RENTALS**

#### Can I hire a company to decorate for me?

Yes! We can even provide you with a list of a few reputable vendors. Please keep in mind when booking a company that they cannot have access to the facility prior to 3:30 pm and that all decorations must be removed by the company following the end of your event at 1 am.

#### Are there any restrictions on how we decorate?

Yes, we ask that you adhere to the following guidelines:

- Decorations cannot be taped, nailed or pinned to any surface other than the raw wood beams/ pillars in the Alloway Reception Centre.
- We do not allow the use of helium balloons as they cannot be retrieved if they float up to the ceiling and pose a danger to our wildlife if they escape outside.
- All candles must be in flame-retardant, untippable candle holders.
- Sparklers are not allowed inside the building as they set off the fire alarm.
- Absolutely no thrown rice or confetti, however, we encourage wild bird seed as a substitute. Our feathered friends will be grateful.

We do not allow Japanese or sky lanterns to be set off on-site, as they pose a fire risk and can be harmful to our wildlife.

#### Can I put up a tent at FortWhyte?

A tent may be erected on the south plaza of the Alloway Reception Centre, however, this activity cannot conflict with public traffic or groups visiting FortWhyte. For this reason, we ask that this work be done outside the daily hours of operation. Only qualified tent installers as selected by FortWhyte Alive may be hired. We will be happy to direct you to our reputable suppliers.

#### Can we hold a dance at FortWhyte?

Many events have held a dance in the Alloway Reception Centre café area. This area has linoleum flooring, adjustable dimmer lighting and a gas fireplace.

#### Can we book a band or DJ?

As the renter, you can book a live band or DJ. All the set-up, take down and technical requirements will be the responsibility of the musicians or company.

ENTANDEM: The Government of Canada mandates that FortWhyte Alive collects a SOCAN fee (Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada) and a Re:Sound fee (this represents the rights of artists and record companies - the people who created the sound recordings) for all function bookings with live or recorded music.

	Without a dance	With a dance
Re:Sound	\$13.30 + GST	\$26.63 + GST
SOCAN	\$31.72 + GST	\$63.49 + GST

#### Do you have any equipment to provide music?

We have a portable sound system that is included as part of your ceremony fee. This system has two speakers, a microphone and a microphone stand that allows for a device to be hooked up to it in order to provide music. The system can be taken down following the ceremony and reset in the Alloway Reception Centre for your reception.



### **DECOR & RENTALS**

#### Are there any noise restrictions?

Out of respect for our neighbours, we ask that if you are playing music outside during the evening that the volume is turned down at 11:30 pm. The party can continue to be loud inside the building.

#### Do I have to provide our own place cards?

If you are selecting more than one entree, a detailed seating chart and place cards must be provided. Place cards are also a great way to notify the serving staff of allergies and dietary concerns.

#### Can we have a bonfire in the evening?

Yes, we are happy to provide portable fire pits for you and your guests to enjoy, provided there is no fire ban at the time. Each fire pit is \$17 and we have up to three available for rent. The fee covers your wood for the evening. We will start the fires for you and leave wood for guests to add as they'd like. The fire pits are not attended by us all evening.

#### How many people can sit at one table?

Our tables are 60-inch rounds and seat eight people. When making your floor plan, please consider high chairs as part of the eight so they are tucked into the table and not in the walkways.

## Are there booster seats or high chairs available for children?

Yes, we have both booster seats and high chairs available for you to use. Please let us know what table they will need to be placed at.

#### How long do we have to clean up/tear down?

We ask that the clean-up is complete by 2 am. Additional charges may apply if it takes longer to complete. If you have a vendor coming in to remove decor, please keep in mind that all decorations must be removed by the company following the end of your event at 1 am.





### LOGISTICS

#### Is there a separate space for cocktail hour?

A lovely spot for your cocktail hour is outside overlooking the lake on the cantilevered deck and stone plaza area. We can serve both drinks and appetizers in this area and allow your guests to enjoy the natural surroundings of FortWhyte.

## Is there parking on-site and, if so, is it complimentary? If not, where will my guests park?

Yes, we have a large complimentary parking lot for your guests, with overflow parking as well.

### Are cabs/ride-shares easily accessible from the venue?

Yes, we are still considered part of the city and so taxis and ride-shares can easily access us.

## If a shuttle service is needed, can you assist with setting it up?

We do not have a shuttle service but can recommend a few companies that would be able to assist you.



#### Is the site and facilities accessible?

Yes, we have reserved parking spaces, a drop-off loop, accessible entrances and exits, accessible washroom facilities and a ramp to the cantilevered deck.

#### What overnight accommodations do you provide?

FortWhyte Alive does not have overnight accommodations, but we are able to offer some suggestions in our immediate vicinity.

## We have guests who smoke. Can they do that on-site?

FortWhyte Alive is a non-smoking facility. Smoking/vaping is not allowed indoors or on any of the nature trails. Smoking and vaping is only allowed in the designated area outside the front doors where there is a smoking box for safe disposal of the cigarettes. Cannabis is prohibited at FortWhyte Alive.

#### Do you have a recycling and composting policy?

Absolutely! As an environmental education centre, taking care of our environment informs all of our choices and actions. We have a robust recycling program and even recycle our wastewater on-site. Working with Compost Winnipeg means that we can compost not just vegetable scraps, but meat, dairy, bread, compostable containers and even the paper towel used in the washrooms.



### HOW CAN I MAKE MY WEDDING MORE SUSTAINABLE?

#### The easiest way to have a more environmentally friendly wedding and reduce your carbon footprint is by choosing a venue that takes sustainability seriously.

FortWhyte Alive's award-winning Alloway Reception Centre features geothermal heating and cooling, sustainable and recycled building materials, onsite wastewater management, and electric vehicle charging stations. All of the lighting in the building is retrofitted with LED energy-efficient bulbs.

Your rental and ceremony fees directly support FortWhyte's diverse environmental education programs.

The Lakeside Plaza is a perfect location for an outdoor ceremony. Holding both your ceremony and reception in the same place is a great way to reduce carbon emissions for you and your guests.

The Buffalo Stone Café is experienced in banquet catering and our creative menus incorporate local Manitoba-produced foods. Our chefs endeavour to source local vendors for the freshest ingredients and products with the lowest number of food miles.

Our facilities are cleaned and sanitized using environmentally responsible products by a local vendor, and all soaps and restroom products are environmentally friendly.

To capture some unique wedding photos, guests may use our four-seater electric golf cart prior to the ceremony (based on availability, Wedding, Event & Venue Supervisor to confirm).

#### More Sustainable Event Suggestions

Consider your invitations. There are a wide variety of recycled and tree-free paper options for your invitations. Seed paper invitations are not only beautiful but grow wildflowers or herbs when planted in soil.

- Ask your stationer if they can print your invite using soy-based inks, which put less pollution into the waterways.
- Eliminate paper completely and go digital. Use a wedding website and email to manage your guest list, track RSVPs, and post information such as directions, maps, menus and other pertinent details.

Encourage guests to arrive in style in a small bus, by carpooling, or renting an electric wedding vehicle and charging it at one of our stations during your reception.

Select guest mementos or wedding favours that continue to give, such as:

- A sampler jar of FortWhyte Farms honey.
- A Manitoba white spruce seedling.
- A family day pass to FortWhyte Alive.
- Make a charitable donation to FortWhyte Alive in lieu of gifts.
- Purchase speaker or attendant gifts through FortWhyte Alive! May we suggest a FortWhyte membership, Nature Shop gift certificate, or unique, handcrafted items from the Nature Shop? All proceeds from these sales support FortWhyte's mission of providing environmental education to our community.
- Our Wedding, Event & Venue Supervisor will be pleased to discuss these options at the time of your booking. Call 204-989-8355, ext. 228 or email <u>bookings@fortwhyte.org</u>.



### HOW CAN I MAKE MY WEDDING MORE SUSTAINABLE?

Select a florist that uses locally grown flowers.

- When designing your arrangements, pick flowers that are in season at the time of your event. It's easier on the environment and your budget.
- For centrepieces, consider potted blooms or plants that can be replanted instead of cut flowers, or create an intriguing arrangement with candles and other natural items.
- Make your place cards or centrepieces work as wedding favours. Little potted flowers or succulents with place card picks are a great way to make something special do double duty.
- Think about donating your flowers to nearby hospitals or nursing homes after the wedding. You can also ask if your florist offers a recycling service. It's a simple way to make your wedding more eco-friendly – plus you'll brighten someone else's day.

Consider the type of candles you use for the evening. A soy-based or beeswax-based candle is non-toxic, does not produce soot and is better for the environment. Bonus: there are lots of local makers you can support. Create an eco-friendly registry. Our Nature Shop has plenty of sustainable gift options, or consider a charity registry instead.

Don't litter with your exit toss. It may seem like a small thing, but throwing rice or bits of paper around the property impacts our environment. As an alternative, go with a plant-based option. Lavender, fresh herbs, bird seed or a mix of micro flowers are all great biodegradable choices. Make them available in craft paper bags that can be recycled or in a large vessel where guests can grab a handful.

Reuse, recycle or donate your decor.

- Consider using items you already own, rent from a vendor, or scour flea markets and thrift stores for forgotten treasures and give them a second life as wedding decor.
- Think about selecting pieces you'd like to use in your home afterwards. If something isn't a good fit, you can drop it off at a local thrift store or sell it to another soon-to-wed couple using a local buy-and-sell platform.

### SAVE YOUR DATE

We look forward to discussing how FortWhyte and Spruce Catering can be a part of your special day. For more information and to look at available dates, please contact our Wedding, Event & Venue Supervisor at 204-989-8355, ext. 228 or <u>bookings@fortwhyte.org</u>.