



Weddings at White Sands



Congratulations! So you've set a date and would like to take your wedding vows surrounded by the shimmering dunes of White Sands National Monument. We know that you've got a lot to plan, so we've made sure that the process for reserving your wedding day is very simple.

How to Apply for a Permit

All wedding requests go through a permitting process and are approved by the superintendent. This process takes about five business days. You can obtain an application on our website at www.nps.gov/whsa.

The application must contain detailed information on your wedding, such as number of guests and if you will have music, flowers, candles, tents, awnings, chairs, etc. Large weddings may be required to provide port-a-potties and trash receptacles for your event. The more information you include on the

initial wedding application, the faster your request will be processed. The permit is valid only for the date of your wedding.

There are three reservation-only areas that may be reserved for your wedding. These include the Group Use Area, West Filming, and Area 19. These locations are off-limits to the public, chained to restrict access. They require an additional reservation charge of \$25 per day and event. You may hold your wedding in other areas within the monument.

Application and Other Fees

A \$25 non-refundable fee is required to review and process your permit which may be paid in cash, cashier's check, travelers check, or money order *only*. Credit cards and personal or business checks are not accepted.

Depending on the amount of impact your wedding may cause, additional fees may be required. These fees may include: cost recovery for resource or vegetation damage, traffic control or parking assistance, dumpsters, trash cans, or port-a-potties. A \$50 per hour

fee is required if your wedding requires the monument to open early or stay open later than normal hours of operation. The option to open early or stay late depends upon the availability of staff.

Wedding guests entering White Sands for the ceremony will not be charged entrance fees. If you choose to have a reception or recreational activities before or after the wedding, your guests will be charged an entrance fee of \$3 per person 16 and older.

Wedding Planning

Signs

You must provide your own signage. See below for more information.

Decorations

You may decorate the area for your wedding. Please see the information below for guidance on decorations that are acceptable and those that are not.

Missile Tests

Missile tests are scheduled anytime from one month to one day in advance and are subject to change, cancellation or extension at any time. We recommend you call us two weeks prior to your wedding, as well as both the day before and the day of your

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Wedding Planning (continued)

wedding to ensure that there are no missile-test closures during your wedding. In case of missile-test interference, you can reschedule your wedding at no extra charge.

Public Facilities

White Sands National Monument does not have any indoor facilities available for public use. There are, however, picnic shelters, grills, and restrooms throughout the dunefield. You may use an RV or other camper as a place for the wedding party to prepare for the ceremony.

Shade

Other than the picnic shelters, there is no shade in the dunefield. You are welcome to set up sun tents and other shelters to provide shade for guests.

Alcohol

Alcohol is not allowed within park boundaries from February 1st through May 31st.

Water

No water is available in the dunefield. If you need to fill up water containers, you can do so at the visitor center. We recommend having on hand at least a gallon of water per person per day.

Park Map and Directions

A copy of the park map is available on our website at www.nps.gov/whsa and may be downloaded and distributed to guests. Directions to the park may be found on our website also.

Wedding Sign Information

- Signs must be placed on a full-size sheet of brightly colored posterboard.
- Lettering must be two-inches thick in black letters.
- Signs must include both the bride's and groom's names over the word "wedding."
- Please do not include directional arrows.
- Signs must be dropped off at the White Sands National Monument entrance station 24 hours before the day of your wedding. The entrance station is located 1/4th of a mile past the visitor center.
- A ranger will collect your signs, attach them to sandwich boards, and place them along the Dunes Drive before your wedding.
- Signs not meeting these standards will not be displayed.

Acceptable Wedding Decorations

- Silk, dried, or fake flower arrangements; garlands; bouquets; etc. are allowed.
- Kites or pinwheels may be used instead of balloons.
- Candles, torches, and candelabra may be used, but you must pick up all wax and dispose of it outside the monument.
- Absolutely no open fires on the sands.
- Bubbles or bells may be used instead of rice.
- Tarps, tents, awnings, canopies, arches, lattice, and columns are allowed as long as they are properly attached to the ground using either ropes or stakes.
- All paper and plastic dishware is allowed.
- Chairs, tables, red carpets, and runners that do not harm vegetation are fine.
- Motor homes and trailers to be used as dressing rooms, equipment, and generators are okay.
- Horses and carriages are okay as long as you follow the monument's rules and regulations regarding the use of these. Horses must be brought in by trailer, and you may get a horse permit at the entrance station. Carriages will only be allowed in designated areas, and they must be brought in by trailer.
- Any other requests not covered here will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Unacceptable Wedding Decorations

- No living plants, live flowers or any plant material allowed in the monument because we cannot risk harming or contaminating our vegetation with non-native species.
- Balloons of any size, shape, or style are not allowed.
- The throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, live flower petals, etc., is prohibited.
- Glass bottles, glassware, wine bottles, beer bottles, etc., are not allowed within park boundaries.

