

# 7 Things to Ask Your Wedding Officiant Before Booking

Rev. Steve Durkac

[www.durkac.com](http://www.durkac.com)

**#1 – Are they flexible in their ceremony?** Will they add a Bible verse, a last minute special feature, or allow a family member to have a part in their ceremony? I frequently talk to brides who find out after booking an officiant that they are not flexible or want to add to their fee for extra features like a sand ceremony.

**#2 – Can they speak sufficiently for your ceremony?** Are they clear, can they project voice? Have they had voice training? Are they able to talk loud enough without sounding like they are yelling, especially for a beach wedding where there is always a wind?

**#3 – What training have they received to be a wedding officiant?** Church ministers get this type of practical training in seminary or as an intern to a local church pastor.

**#4 – What makes them legally able to officiate your wedding ceremony?** Ask the name of the organization that has authorized their credentials? Ask how long they have been associated with that organization? Know the difference between an online minister, and a church pastor, and beware of the legal ramifications for using an online ordained minister in your state

**#5 – How many weddings have they actually officiated and where?** Have they actually done an indoor or outdoor ceremony like yours? There has been a rush of photographers and wedding event vendors who have suddenly become online ordained ministers as a way of driving their revenue-generating services, so if you are dealing with a full-service wedding vendor, ask about the specific experiences regarding just their officiating or about the officiant they will provide for you as part of the package deal.

**#6 – Are you dealing with a local resident or an out-state officiant?** There are a few wedding officiant websites who advertise being local to a number of destination beach locations, but are not. I've had one steal my office address for use on a wedding vendor website to appear local for that advertisement, but used his 800 phone number. These brokers will book your wedding, then they turn that service over to an area officiant whom they split your payment with. If you do choose to use their services, get the contact info of the minister who will actually be there to officiate your ceremony and be sure you are comfortable with him/her.

**#7 – Ask if they have ever missed or canceled a booked wedding, and how many times?** I receive 2 or 3 calls a month from brides who call me in a panic, because their previously booked officiant is a no-show or cancels the day before. It doesn't hurt to ask your officiant what their plan is if an emergency arises that prevents them from their booked obligation.