

A contract spells out who, what, when, and how much. Pretty simple, except when dealing with multiple vendors and hosting an event for hundreds of guests. Having those details in writing make it easier for both parties to know what is expected, and what you are paying for. The entertainment agreement spells out the details of the act's performance so the act can be at the right place at the right time. Special setup times, additional personnel, music format, special requests, mode of dress, or break times could be specified in the text.

You should ask for a contract, because it is your written documentation that you reserved an Act for a date for a sum of money to play at a certain place during a definite time frame. If the Act doesn't show or doesn't fulfill its obligations, it is in "breach of contract" which carries some pretty stiff legal penalties. In addition, any Act that doesn't live up to its contract and causes problems will soon find itself on the vendors' black lists, ours first. Our contract is a reciprocal agreement-both parties have responsibilities.

One bandleader puts it this way: "We are not interested in gambling on whether your event is going to actually take place. We can't ever go back and regain a lost performance night....we either work or don't work. If contracted, we guarantee that no matter how many offers we have for your date, we will turn them down, because of our written agreement. We are simply asking for you to honor your word that we will get paid." I like that explanation, and here is mine:

Holding an entertainment Act for a date is a reservation. Like one made at a hotel, if you want to guarantee your room reservation, the hotel takes a payment or a charge card in advance. If you don't show, you pay for the room anyway. Booking an entertainment Act is much the same. No buyer wants the Act to accept another job for the night of your big event -and not showing, so the Act becomes obligated via the contract, and must perform. But it is a bi-lateral contract, and buyers have an obligation too.

From the time it is signed by both parties and the retainer is received, the Agency and Act send and post act calendars online and to other agents showing that act is reserved for your date. Everyone will have to decline other events for your date because the Act is on contract with you. If you decide to cancel your event a month before that date, you must pay the Act anyway, since they have been reserved for your date for months, and turning down other offers. Our contract is generous in that it allows if the Agency or Act can find another booking for your date, then you may be released from your financial obligation. Keep in mind, however, that you booked the Act well in advance, and odds are slim that another booking can be secured on short notice.

If your event is going to be outside, be sure to read those stipulations regarding electricity and alternate location. Adverse weather is the #1 problem affecting events. All that planning, lots of time and money invested, and here comes a storm. Most Acts carry \$25,000+ worth of equipment and instruments that could easily be ruined if a tent doesn't have sides to stop the rain. You really don't want to have to buy a band new equipment and instruments because you insisted on the band playing in a storm. We can plan for inclement weather, but sometimes, the situation is more violent than anyone can planned for. Today's digital electronic music gear is very sensitive to inadequate power voltage. If having an event outside, ensure the Act is provided a professionally rigged source of electricity. Our agents will review this with you.

The truth is, everyone wants the same end result, for the event to be fun and all the guests happily entertained. The band really wants to play, because exposure and referrals are their best source of future jobs. It's hard to impress a crowd if weather prevents an act from playing. We've had numerous cases of Buyers wanting the band to continue playing during a thunderstorm or lightning outside or under a tent. It is far more prudent to stop the performance and let Mother Nature take her course, rather than be responsible for a guest or band member being injured by lightning or electrical shock. The act leader/manager will reluctantly "pull the plug" if the situation is bad enough, so make sure to have a sensible alternative plan.

Avoid hassles-work with an experienced agency with a great reputation. Our 35+ years of bookings gives us a unique ability to solve problems before they ever become trouble. We only work with tried and tested acts who have shown us they care about giving our clients the very best service. We'll do all the work so you can relax and enjoy your event.