

No Laughing at Weddings, Russian Region Says

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One's wedding day is widely considered to be one of the happiest days of one's life.

Not in the Rostov region of southern Russia, where authorities have [banned](#) laughter at civil marriage ceremonies.

The new decree, which took effect on Monday, also forbids drinking alcohol and rearranging furniture at marriage registry offices.

It stipulates that civil marriage ceremonies should be held in a ceremonial hall at a prearranged time and date — not exceeding 40 minutes — with the Russian flag and coat of arms present.

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Loud conversations and exclamations are explicitly prohibited in addition to laughter, as is the wearing of dirty shoes and outerwear or carrying large bags and backpacks.

“Yes, marriage is a joyful occasion, but you shouldn’t get carried away. It is permissible to smile, but there is nothing funny in the ceremony — this is a solemn, tender occasion,” Olga Isaenko, who heads the Rostov region’s registry office, [told](#) the Komsomolskaya Pravda tabloid, noting that such restrictions have always existed informally.

Eating, drinking alcohol, smoking, walking around the marriage hall and moving pieces of furniture and floral arrangements round out the region’s list of now-outlawed marital procedures.

Photography, videography and musical accompaniment are still allowed, however.

Isaenko said that there are no formal punishments in place for violating the decree, but that extreme cases such as disrupting a ceremony while intoxicated can result in prosecution.

The regional decree isn’t the first attempt to stifle laughter in Russia. In 2019, authorities in the North Caucasus republic of Ingushetia attempted to crack down on loud laughter with a PSA [campaign](#) in 2019.

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