

BASIC PROTOCOL

Correct Protocol Should Be Observed At All Meetings
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PROTOCOL

The Rules of Diplomatic and State Etiquette and Ceremony.

A cardinal rule of protocol is to observe an order of precedence at Auxiliary functions where officials and/or their representatives are present.

Properly seat officers and guests at banquets and formal functions sponsored by the VFW Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (i.e., at a banquet for an official visit, the Auxiliary should be seated to the speaker's left and the VFW should be seated to the speaker's right. Speaker is facing the audience).

Following is a list of precedence for National, Department, District, and Auxiliary Officers:

NATIONAL OFFICERS: President, Sr. Vice President, Jr. Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Chaplain, Conductress, Guard, Chief-of-Staff, Council of Administration, Past Presidents, etc. Same order to be followed for Department, District and Auxiliary Officers.

REMEMBER PRAY FIRST, THEN PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE GOD BEFORE COUNTRY ALWAYS!

INTRODUCTIONS

It is proper to introduce guests at any time during a luncheon or banquet. The mistress of ceremony should have a complete list of guests. Take the time to go over the list and program with her. To expedite the program, guests not seated at the head table can be introduced during the dinner, before the head table is introduced. Also, to save time, introduce people by groups rather than individually (i.e., committee members, officers, past presidents, etc.)

When you are introducing someone give their title first, and then their name. If you give the name first, the title will be lost in the applause. (If you are asked to sign something, it is just the opposite, give your name first and then your title.) A standard procedure for introducing the head table guests is to start at the extreme left or right end of the head table, introducing each guest then moving to the next guest, etc. until you have introduced all guests to the left (or right) of the podium. NOTE: Skip introducing guests who will be called on to speak or receive awards later in the program. They need not be introduced twice. Simply state: "Since other guests seated at the head table will be speaking later, I will introduce them to you at that time." Or "Our speakers will be introduced when they present their speeches." Save time by asking the audience to withhold applause until all guests have been introduced. Give them proper recognition at that time.

After you have introduced all the guests to your left (or right), move to the opposite end of the head table and introduce each guest by title and name, moving from the furthest guest towards the center of the table. Again, skip introduction of those who will speak or accept an award, later in the program. The membership rises in recognition of the OFFICE when the NATIONAL PRESIDENT or NATIONAL COMMANDER is introduced. If you are introducing a two-tiered table, introduce the guests seated at the lower or secondary head table, before you introduce the guests at the top, or primary, head table.

You are never introducing your guest; you are PRESENTING him or her. When you are speaking to the audience NEVER use the phrase “At this time”. Everyone knows that it is ‘at this time’ they do not need to be reminded.

Plan your introductions in advance. If you are conducting a District meeting and you have many guests attending, you need to write down the names and titles of your guests, so that you have a complete list of your guests compiled for the time when introductions are appropriate. If you are busy getting ready for your meeting or event, delegate the task to one of your Line Officers, or to a Sister that you know will not miss anyone coming through the door. It is acceptable to ask someone, such as a Past District President, to do your introductions for you; however, it is better received, and more professional to do your own introductions.

Be sure you correctly pronounce names, titles and other information about your guests and speakers. There is no excuse for mispronouncing any of these things. If you are unsure on a pronunciation, ask.

PROGRAM

Generally speaking; the principal speaker should be introduced last on the program, serving as the climax and concluding feature. Occasionally, this arrangement should be changed – if several speakers are on the program or numerous awards are to be presented, etc. The Principal speaker should then be introduced at the height of audience attendance and attention.

If the program does not have a principal speaker, then the guests called upon to speak, should be introduced in order of protocol – from the lowest rank to the highest official present. The order of speakers may be varied, to tie into the program – greetings of welcome – presentation of awards, etc.

Plan the order of the program early and discuss it with the people involved. Be flexible to changing the program to meet the needs of those who will participate. The program (if any, besides the National President or National Commander’s message) should be kept short and interesting. The welcome and remarks from Civic Leaders should take a maximum of ten (10) minutes. The National President will need approximately twenty to thirty (20-30) minutes. If these suggestions are followed, you will hold the interest of your members and audience.

RECEPTION LINE

The reception line is headed by the President or Chairman, usually preceded by one hostess to announce each person. The Guest of Honor is next to the President with other guests following in rank. A reception line should never be too long and should be situated away from the door, in order for people to enter or leave the room. Each person in line repeats to the person at the right the name of the person just greeted. If this is not done, then those going down the reception line give their name to those in line.

INVITATIONS

Sometimes you may wish to send out invitations for your District's Official Visit, a banquet you may be planning, for your homecoming, an anniversary for your District or Auxiliary, etc. Please remember to include the Department Officers in your guest list. If this is a function with the Comrades, include their Department Officers. Include in your invitation, what the occasion is, where it will be held, the date and time of the event, the cost of the event and whether advance payment is expected (don't forget to include an address and contact person to mail the money to) and be sure to include the mode of dress. You may want to include an R.S.V.P. phone number so you will know how many are planning to attend. If you receive an invitation and it requests an R.S.V.P., have the courtesy to reply in a timely manner.

SPECIAL INVITATIONS AND OTHER HELPFUL POINTERS IN PLANNING A PROGRAM

Advise all invited guests of the basic objective of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary, as well as the guest(s') particular function at this event. Give all guests a tentative outline of the program, time they are to be on the program, approximate size of audience, their particular interests, how much time is allotted for guests to speak and mode of dress. Written invitations are best and should include the date, time and exact location of where the meeting will be held. If the invitation is made by telephone, be certain to confirm by letter, and obtain acceptance by letter. In your follow-up letter, enclose complimentary tickets or, by prearranged plan, have an Auxiliary member be personally responsible for guest tickets. A standard rule is to always pay for the dinner or luncheon of anyone who is asked to do something for your organization, or to whom you issue special invitations. Arrange to meet your guests. If you made motel/hotel reservations for them, be certain to follow their instructions as to type of accommodations they require.

CORRECT ESCORT OF GUESTS AT A DISTRICT MEETING

Generally speaking, these are guests of the District Commander. The Auxiliary Conductress will escort the District Commander. His guest of honor will be next in line (usually the Department Commander), who will walk with the next guest in line. The Comrades will then walk two by two, arranging themselves according to rank. The Assistant Conductress should be the last in line with one of the Comrades. Should there be an odd number of guests the single person will walk by himself, immediately in front of the Assistant Conductress and her guest. A Page may be conveniently stationed near the guard's door to escort the one person. The escort is always done two by two.

The Conductress is in charge and should not permit the VFW guests to interfere with the escort.

CHART FOR SEATING AT THE HEAD TABLE

Below, you will find a “Suggested Head Table Seating” for the Official Visit of the Department Commander and Department President. In many areas there is not room to place the Chaplains and their spouses at the head table. In that case, they should be seated in close proximity so that they are immediately available when called upon. Other Department Officers should be seated at a Special Honor Table. Be sure to place name cards at the head table and for any seated guests at a reserved table. Have a hostess present to inform guests where they are to be seated. Anytime circumstances dictate, the number seated at the head table can be adjusted. We never want more people at the head table than we have in the audience.

OFFICIAL VISIT SUGGESTED OFFICIAL VISIT HEAD TABLE SEATING CHART

A U D I E N C E	X	Spouse of the VFW Chaplain
	X	VFW Chaplain
	X	Spouse of Civic Leader (if none, spouse of Post Commander)
	X	Civic Leader (If none, Post Commander)
	X	Spouse of Department Commander
	X	Department Commander
	X	Spouse of District Commander
	X	District Commander
	X	Spouse of Master of Ceremonies
	X	VFW Master of Ceremonies
		PODIUM
	X	Auxiliary Mistress of Ceremonies
	X	Spouse of Mistress of Ceremonies
	X	District President
	X	Spouse of District President
	X	Department President
	X	Spouse of Department President
	X	Civic Leader (if none, Auxiliary President)
	X	Spouse of Civic Leader (if none, spouse of Auxiliary President)
	X	Auxiliary Chaplain
	X	Spouse of Auxiliary Chaplain