



PROTOCOL GUIDEBOOK FOR DISTRICT 82

For Toastmasters

Disclaimer

This guideline is published to be used as guidance to observe proper decorum in conducting meetings and other Toastmasters events. This shall not be used as a rulebook. Leaders discretion is expected. Information contained herein are obtained from various sources such as Toastmasters International, Wikipedia, etiquette experts and other sources.

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Protocol Handbook for District 82

Introduction

As Toastmasters we get to plan various events. Such events give us the opportunity to provide unparalleled customer service and an unforgettable experience for every guest. It gives us an opportunity to demonstrate excellence, which is one of Toastmasters four core values. However, planning events in the sphere of Toastmasters requires a balance of protocol, tradition, and the occasional costume.

As a District or Club leader, you may have the opportunity to host guests at a banquet, speech contest, or other event. When hosting these types of events, it's important to use proper etiquette as you welcome and introduce guests.

Refer to these resources to ensure you're covering all your bases.

Types of Events:

Following are possible events in Toastmasters world. Each event varies in magnitude depending on the available budget and other constraints. However, if every event follows proper protocol, the event will remain memorable with everyone who attends in them.

- i. Club Events, such as Club Officers Installation Ceremony, Club Speech Contest, Club Meetings, Any other event.*
- ii. Division/Area events, such as Education Sessions, SpeechContests, Any other event.*
- iii. District Events, such as Business Meetings, District Conferences, District Speech Contests, Banquets/ Other events.*

Arrival Protocol

Details to consider:

- Plan ahead for VIP guests and assign a host to each of them.*
- Are your guests arriving from out of town?*
- Are they high level enough to be greeted at the airport or at the hotel before the event? Or should they just find their way to the venue?*
- Do you dedicate a Toastmaster Host to make them feel welcome and informed? The host should be available to greet guests at the door and assist them as needed. If a meal is available at the event, VIP guests and their companions may not have to pay for it. Confirm whether VIP guests will receive complimentary meals before you host an event. Remember, it is your responsibility to ensure that all guests feel welcome and informed.*
- Will you or some other Toastmaster host them at lunch or dinner before the event?*

- *As a host, it's important to pronounce guests' names accurately and include their current titles as you introduce them. If any visiting dignitaries are overlooked during the introductions, acknowledge and introduce them as soon as you note their presence.*

Flag Protocol

- *Prior to the District conference, ensure all country flags are displayed appropriately. The host country's flag is always placed stage right (the section of the stage that is right of center as you face the audience); this is known as the position of honor. Additional flags are placed stage left (the section of the stage that is left of center as you face the audience). All flags must have the same dimensions and be displayed at the same height.*
- *The place of honor is to the audience's left (over the speaker's right shoulder).*
- *The flag of Sri Lanka, as the home country, holds the place of honor, followed by other flags.*
- *The flag of honor, which is the National Flag in most occasions, is flown on the center mast if possible. It is also correct to fly the flag on its own right. To an observer it would be on the far left. If more than three flags are used, the proper position is as far left from the point of view of an observer.*
- *When placed in a semicircle, the position of honor is the center. If a full circle is used outside an entrance to an arena or stadium, the position of honor is directly over the entrance. If used to line the walls of the arena, the flag should be placed directly opposite the entrance.*
- *If hung against a wall, the Lion should be facing the left side of the observer. Such placement should be firmly affixed to the wall not letting the flag drop at any circumstances.*

National Anthem Protocol

- *National Anthem should be sung in full.*
- *If the national anthems of other countries are sung, the host country's National Anthem will be sung last.*
- *The National Anthem should be sung before other traditions like lighting the oil lamp.*
- *The Toastmaster would announce before the commencement of the National Anthem and ask everyone to stand.*
- *If the recorded National Anthem is played, make sure that the correct version is used. Always use the official National Anthem downloaded from Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government website.*
- *Do not show videos with other footage even if it has the National Anthem dubbed. Only visual permitted during the National Anthem is the still image of the National Flag (a slight waving flag image maybe used but not recommended).*
- *When a physical flag is available, everyone should stand facing the flag and sing the National Anthem. The Toastmaster at the lectern also should face the flag.*
- *If a head table is placed, do not display the National Flag behind the head table.*
- *It is courteous to inform everyone to turn towards the National Flag at the position of honor (in case more than one National Flags are in display).*

Best Practices of Lighting the Oil Lamp

The oil Lamp has played a significant social, cultural and religious role in the lives of Sri Lankans. In every important function, ceremony or festival across religion and culture, lighting the oil lamp is one of the most important events. The oil lamp is intricately linked into a person's life; from their birth, to their marriage, known as the second birth of a person and death. The flame of the lamp stays lit unflinching through all these times weaved into the rhythm of people's lives.

- *Honoring traditions is highly encouraged in Toastmasters. Respect is one of our core values. As mentioned above, the traditions should come after honors. If a silence of honor is observed, it should be done before the lighting of the oil lamp and after the National Anthem.*
- *Although the tradition is lighting a brass or clay lamp, there is no written protocol how it should be done. Therefore, in order to bring uniformity, these best practices may be followed.*
- *Plan well in advance how many wicks would be available on the lamp. Keep the dignitaries informed that they would be called for lighting the oil lamp. Arrange ushers to escort them to the lamp.*
- *Oil lamps come in different shapes and sizes. It is better to use only the top deck for this purpose to avoid guests bending down to light the wick. It might inconvenience guests with loose garments, loose hair etc.*
- *Observe safety. As naked flames are involved take every precaution to avoid accidents. Avoid using camphor tablets as they cause larger flames and smoke. If used, make sure they do not accidentally fall off and cause damage to bystanders, carpets etc.*
- *If floral strings are used to decorate the oil lamp, ensure that they do not catch fire when a wick is lit.*
- *Make arrangements to extinguish flames and move the oil lamp out-of-sight after the ritual is complete and guests have settled.*
- *In modern days wax candles are used in place of oil lamps. Please ensure not to refer to such candles as "oil lamp".*
- *Note that it is NOT "Lighting of the TRADITIONAL oil lamp" but "Traditional lighting of the oil lamp". Avoid mispronouncing "lighting" as "Lightening".*

Seating Protocol

The Head Table

At District events, typically, there is one head table with dignitaries and their guests. In most instances, the District Director, Program Quality Director, Club Growth Director, the Immediate Past District Director, and any International Officer, International Director, or Region Advisor are seated at the head table.

At the District conference, it may be appropriate to seat the incoming District Director, Program Quality Director, and Club Growth Director at the head table as well.

Lectern - Podium dilemma.

A Podium is a small platform on which a person may stand to be seen by an audience, as when making a speech or conducting an orchestra.

A Lectern is a tall stand with a sloping top to hold a book or notes, from which someone, typically a preacher or lecturer, can read while standing up.

In a Business meeting if a Head Table is placed, it is preferred to have the lectern placed at the center. The host (presiding officer) sits to the right of the lectern (to the left viewed from audience). If

there is no lectern and the number of guests is even, the presiding officer sits to the right of the center (left of the center viewed from the audience).

If there is a Toastmaster for the event (in addition to or in place of a presiding officer), the Toastmaster is seated to the left of the lectern (unless rank demands that the person be seated to the right of the presiding officer).

Head Table guests are seated in order of rank alternately.

The guest with highest rank is seated to the right of the presiding officer, the next highest rank to the left, with the rest alternating right and left. Those who have no rank but are seated at the head table, sit in the end.

If spouses are seated at the head table, they should sit next to their spouses.

If a Chief Guest or a Guest of Honor is seated at the head table, they should sit to the right of the Presiding Officer.

At club meetings, a head table can be used while decorum is observed.

TIPS

- Use name cards at the head table (Template is available for download)
- Let head table guests know in writing where and when to assemble for the march-in
- Provide guests with a seating diagram that describes how to get to their seat during the march-in
- Situate conference volunteers to help headtable guests
- Review the pronunciation of names before the march-in. If you are unsure how to pronounce a name, ask the guest.
- Announce each guest, giving his or her name last (for example, "From Central City: District Director Brenda Yung and her husband, Dillard")

Order of Precedence:

RANK

1. National/ Government officials
2. State or province officials
3. City or local officials
4. Prominent citizens
5. Toastmasters Officers (International President, International President Elect, First Vice President, Second Vice President)
6. Toastmasters Directors (Regional Directors Regions 1-14)
7. Region Advisors
8. Past Toastmasters Officers (refer 5 above)
9. Past Toastmasters Directors (refer 6 above)
10. District Leaders
11. Immediate Past District Director
12. Past District Directors
13. Division Leaders (in alphabetical order, Home director taking precedence)
14. Area Leaders
15. Club Officers

Order of introduction of Head Table

1. *Other guests, such as the conference chair and their guests*
2. *Incoming Club Growth Director and Program Quality Director and guests*
3. *Immediate Past District Director and guest*
4. *Club Growth Director and guest*
5. *Program Quality Director and guest*
6. *District Director and guest*
7. *Guest of honor (International Officer, International Director, or Region Advisor) and guest*

After the head table march-in or introduction, (and prior to serving the meal), the District Director introduces special guests seated in the audience. Introduce those of highest rank first.

1. *Local Dignitaries (government officials, media, etc.)*
2. *Toastmasters officers (who currently serve on the Board of Directors and attend the conference in an unofficial capacity)*
3. *International Directors (who currently serve on the Board of Directors and attend the conference in an unofficial capacity)*
4. *Region Advisor*
5. *Past International Presidents and Past International Directors*
6. *Past Region Advisors*
7. *Past District Directors*
8. *Current District leaders*

Introducing Speakers

Make your introductions brief and appropriate. An introduction must be between 30 seconds up to 2.5 Minutes. Ensure that you gather current and accurate information about the speaker and the topic. Stress those aspects of the speaker's background and qualifications that will establish credibility for the audience on this topic.

Avoid biographical recitation. Ask the speaker for an introduction. If the speaker sends you their biographical information instead, you should prepare an introduction beforehand. Prepare the introduction and run it through the speaker if possible. Avoid comments on their habits or personality that can embarrass the speaker and the audience.

Follow these steps in preparing an introduction.

- i. *Give opening remarks that grab the audience's attention, make them aware of the significance of the speaker and set the mood for the speech.*
- ii. *Ensure your introduction answers four questions;*
 - a. *Why this subject?*
 - b. *Why this speaker?*
 - c. *Why this audience?*
 - d. *Why this time?*
- iii. *Present the speaker, welcome the speaker and pronounce his/her title and name correctly.*
- iv. *Lead the applause and continue until the speaker arrives at the lectern. Greet the speaker with a warm smile and a firm handshake (be aware that some cultures avoid shaking hands and some nervous speakers will not look at your face). Return to your seat.*

- v. *Following the last words of the speaker and when signaled by the speaker, return to the lectern greet the speaker (if they are still at the lectern) with a warm smile and a handshake and gesture to their seat.*
- vi. *Express your appreciation to the speaker for the contribution to the program. Keep your remarks brief, personal and pertinent to the significance of the speaker's topic. If a recognition item (a token of appreciation) is given, give it at this time unless other arrangements are made.*

Club Officer Installation Ceremony

After new officers are elected, the outgoing club president arranges an installation ceremony. The entire ceremony takes about 12 to 15 minutes and is done toward the end of the meeting. Installations can be conducted during a regular club meeting or during a special event.

If the officer installation is conducted as a special event, please observe following protocol.

- i. The choice of the Installing Officer at the club officer installation ceremony lies with the club. Area Director, Division Director any other District officer, club mentor or any senior Toastmaster of the club's choice can be the installation officer.*
- ii. The club officer installation script could be found in the Club Leadership Handbook, Item 1310 downloadable from Toastmasters website.*
- iii. The ceremonial installation should be brief and succinct. Do not use elaborative narrations that consume time.*
- iv. Offering Club Officer's pin should be done by the installing officer. However, in corporate clubs, if senior corporate leaders are present, they may be invited to do the honors. It is also the common practice that the available highest-ranking District officer is also invited to perform this honorable task.*
- v. At a club Charter Ceremony, the Charter Certificate should be read out by the Toastmaster officer of the highest rank present. Such officer will read the certificate and hand it over to the Charter President of the Club.*
- vi. In subsequent Club officer Installation Ceremonies, the Charter Certificate should be displayed. It is not necessary to hand it over to the incoming president since the custody of the charter certificate is already transferred to the incoming club secretary.*
- vii. The order of precedence to be followed is as follows.*
 - a. District Director*
 - b. Program Quality Director*
 - c. Club Growth Director*
 - d. Administration Manager*
 - e. Finance Manager*
 - f. Public Relations Manager*
 - g. Division Director*
 - h. Area Director*
 - i. If any other Toastmaster Officer who are senior in rank are available, they take precedence.*

The Gavel

The gavel is used as a symbol of power and authority given to a Toastmaster by members. It should be used only by the meeting chairperson to commence the meeting and conclude the meeting.

At Toastmasters International Business Meetings, the International President uses it to call the meeting to order. Similarly, at District Business Meetings the District Director uses it and at Club Meetings the Club President uses it to call a meeting to order and at adjournment.

Apart from being used at business meetings, the gavel is used to symbolize the power and authority at officer installations.

At Club meetings, the gavel should not be passed to others as Elected president is the only custodian of the power and authority bestowed upon them.

At Installation Ceremonies, the installing officer shall not request the power and authority passed to them. The installation officer has to simply follow the script given in the Club Leadership Manual.

Once the presiding officer has commenced the meeting, the gavel will remain placed on its stand or otherwise on a table or the lectern until the business meeting is concluded.

Hosting a visiting Toastmaster.

The visiting officer shall not make a surprise visit, unless warranted by the status-quo. Visits should be officially planned.

Special courtesy should be extended to International or District Officials visiting your club.

Once such official visit is informed a Toastmaster should be assigned to host the visiting Toastmaster. The host Toastmaster functions as the liaison between the club and the visitor.

Its best practice to announce the visit on social media and within the community. The host will help the club prepare an agenda and arrange a speaking slot to the visiting Toastmaster.

Its recommended that the visiting officer conducts an educational session.

The host should provide a proper introduction of the visiting officer at the beginning of the meeting (unless the president or any other officer of the club does it)

The host should make sure to arrive at the meeting location (if not travelling together) before the guest arrives and be prepared to receive the guest and introduce to other Toastmasters present before the meeting commences.

During the meeting its better if all toastmasters include the guest in their salutations.

Hosting a dignitary.

When you are assigned as a host for a dignitary, you are acting as an ambassador of Toastmasters International and our country. Your conduct is critical to the impression made about the organization and the country and perhaps your profession.

Always observe proper protocol, time, and let the dignitary have their personal space. Do not ask too personal questions, favors etc.

When you are serving as Sergeant-at-arms.

As sergeant-at-arms you are responsible for making everyone feel welcome to the specific Toastmaster function. You set the tone for the event. Be in position at least 10 minutes before the start time.

Two minutes prior to the commencement, issue a warning through the audio system, asking the audience to take their seats. If necessary, give a one-minute warning too. If the audience is still talking and walking around, then give the greeting (Good Morning/Good Afternoon/Good Evening) and pause until the audience quiets.

Introduce yourself, then invite the presiding officer to preside the occasion. Do it in style.

Gifts (if given),

- *Remember to include tokens for speakers, as well as higher-level gifts for your principals/guests.*
- *Think about what fits the theme of the event, the tastes and interests of the principals, and the institution or location; it's ideal to have a gift reflect the spirit or values of the institution, or a cause that's important to the host.*
- *Local artists and local food products are always appropriate gift items to consider.*
- *Don't forget that presentation is as important as the gift.*
- *Have a plan for gifts to unexpected guests*

Communication

- *Brief your principals on cultural norms (e.g. the custom of exchanging business cards in Japan, the appropriate use of jokes, criticisms etc.)*
- *Use conversations about the venue and food as discussion stimulators.*

Above all else, communication is key to creating a positive experience for your guests, audience, and your volunteers.