

ALA PROTOCOL - July 13, 2019

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PROTOCOL:

According to the introduction in the Unit President's Handbook, "Protocol is the obligations, etiquette and customs that impact the feelings and attitudes of our members. Protocol sets guidelines, priorities and determines the environment in which meetings will be conducted." It should not be dreaded as an out-of-date form of behavior but used by ALL members to ensure a cohesive and happy unit.

TITLES and PROPER WORDING:

THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY is the name of our Congressionally-chartered organization. We are *not* the "Ladies Auxiliary", the "Women's Auxiliary" or the dreaded "AUX". If you *must* abbreviate, please use "A.L.A.".

In the Unit Handbook, under "Purpose", it reads in part: "The American Legion Auxiliary was formed to aid the American Legion....its programs...and to help the American Legion reach its objectives. Therefore, the American Legion Auxiliary has one great purpose, which we repeat every time we say the Preamble: "To contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of the American Legion." Except for these words, the Preamble of the American Legion Auxiliary is the same as that of the American Legion. Note: There is no "s" on accomplishment.

We are the Department of Florida because there are Departments of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Philippines, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. When we are explaining our mission to "outsiders", it is ok to say State, but it is preferred to use Department (State) of FL.

All Units, Districts and Departments have **Chairmen** of the various programs. This comes from our National Organization based on a decision of the National Association of Parliamentarians. The use of the word Chairman comes from olden days when the presiding officer was the only person offered a chair; everyone else sat on benches. It has nothing to do with ones' gender. If you use the term "Madame Chairman" it still lets us be ladies.

One of the most misused titles is that of Sergeant-at-Arms. If you will remember that people's arms are AT their side, you should be able to remember the proper term.

Some of us tend to get possessive when speaking of the segment with which we are working. Please remember that it is *the* American Legion Auxiliary Unit or District, "Unit" Treasurer, or "District" Secretary, not *MY* Unit, District, etc.

Out of respect for the outgoing President, we do not wear the new President's Pin (Department or National) until after the installation of new National Officers.

INTRODUCTIONS:

We **introduce** someone with whom the body is not familiar, such as a guest speaker. We **present** someone who is known to most of the assembly, or should be!

Introduce elected titles first, followed by appointed titles: Department President, Vice President, Chaplain, Historian, National Executive Committeewoman, National Executive Committeewoman Alternate, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, Sergeant-at-Arms and District Presidents.

Past Department Presidents, Past Department elected Officers and Department Chairmen are next in order.

District Officers and Chairmen are next, followed by Unit Officers and Chairmen.

If guests are *not* speaking at the time they are introduced, start with the highest elected title. No one should speak after the highest-ranking officer except for the presentation of a gift or prayer.

If any of the guests *will* be speaking at the time of introduction, start with the lowest title and end with the highest title.

Use only the highest title. Only introduce once using the current title, even if the guest has a higher past elected title. Past National Presidents and Past Department Presidents should be shown all courtesies and extended honor at all times. This includes rising when they are brought forward (with three raps of the gavel), as we would for Legionnaires, SAL, etc. of the same rank.

Junior members' titles always contain the word "honorary". Introduce a Junior Officer as "Honorary Department Junior President", etc.

UNIT MEETINGS:

The Presiding officer, usually the President, opens the meeting with one rap of the gavel to gain everyone's attention. With three raps, we stand for the Prayer, Pledge, etc.

If the President is absent, then the First Vice President, Second Vice President, etc., preside in that order. If all are absent, the Secretary opens the meeting and calls for a vote for temporary Chairman. If the Secretary is also absent, you probably won't have a quorum, but the members would elect a Secretary pro-tem (for the time) and proceed as outlined above.

The Presiding Officer should call the meeting to order on time. We have found it helpful to have a copy of the Agenda for all present to help them keep track of business and reduce talking.

The Presiding Officer always remains neutral.

- If she wishes to comment on an issue, enter the discussion or needs to relinquish the chair for any reason, the proper terminology is, "The Vice President will assume the Chair", not, "I turn the gavel over to ..."
- If the Presiding Officer does remove herself, she does not assume the chair again until the entire issue is resolved. If a motion is on the floor, she does not resume the Chair until the vote is taken and the outcome is announced.

The Presiding Officer always refers to herself as "The Chair", not "I".

It is always a good idea at the beginning of any program, meeting, etc., to ask for consent to deviate from the agenda or printed program.

MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES:

We cannot conduct business without a quorum present, so your first responsibility is to attend meetings whenever possible. Don't think, "Janie's going and I don't like her, so I won't go." Who knows – Janie might be thinking the same thing about you, and we remember what happened in history when one person didn't vote!

Remember to address all of your comments and questions to the Chair, not to another member. Show the same respect you would wish others to show you. We should be well-mannered and attentive at all times. This includes arriving on time, staying awake and not talking to those around you. If you have an idea to share or a comment to make, jot it down so you don't forget it, then wait to be recognized to do so at an appropriate time.

Always address "Madame President" or "Madame Chairman", even if the Chair is the Vice President. When addressing the Chair, stand, wait to be recognized and identify yourself, especially if a tape recorder is being used.

Members of the American Legion Auxiliary NEVER cadence clap, even if Legionnaires do so. As ladies, we clap or applaud as we would in any other situation.

When we are having a joint function, such as an Installation, the person speaking addresses his/her Sergeant-at-Arms. If it were the Unit President, then she would ask the Unit Sgt.-at-arms to escort the guests.

American Legion Auxiliary members approach the platform/podium from the "Banner" side unless safety dictates otherwise. The escort should offer the Legionnaire or SAL her right arm so s/he can stop and salute the Flag as s/he approaches on the side of the American Flag.

Do not get up, walk around the room or leave the room when someone is speaking.

We should *be as active as we can* considering our health, family responsibilities and work schedules. Volunteer to do something that will utilize your strengths and give you pleasure. A disgruntled member can be very divisive to the unit's health and well-being.

Be LOYAL to our organization. Our minutes, treasurer's reports, etc., are NOT discussed at the bar or anywhere else outside our meeting, nor are the distributed to other "family" members!

Cooperate with the elected officers whether or not they were your personal choice.

Unit Executive Committee meeting minutes are not read. Any recommendations from the Executive Committee are presented at the regular meeting, and action is taken if necessary.

MOTIONS:

When making a motion, remember to say, "I move that we....", not "I make a motion that..." or "I so move". The Presiding Officer asks, "Is there a second?", not "Will someone second that?"

Once the motion has been made and seconded, the Presiding Officer repeats the motion saying, "There is a motion and a second that we.... Is there any discussion?"

Members should speak up when the motion is pending, if only to ask for clarification or express your concern. Do NOT continue to speak about it afterwards, especially if you do not agree with it. Keep the discussion to the subject at hand; address only one subject at a time.

Following any discussion, the Presiding Officer repeats the motion, then calls for the vote by asking, "All those in favor say 'Aye', all those opposed say 'No'". It may also be by a show of hands, roll call or secret ballot for each side. Conclude by stating the outcome – "The motion is carried", or, "The motion is defeated."

The motion should be recorded, as well as the name of the person who made it and the outcome. There is no need to record who seconded it.

OTHER ISSUES:

In Florida, we have a tradition that the space between the flags is considered "Hallowed Ground" out of respect for those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms. We do not pass anything through the flags (from either side of the table) once the meeting has been called to order. Some other Departments don't have this tradition, so don't embarrass someone if you're attending a function elsewhere.

If a corsage is presented to distinguished guests, it can be pinned over the officer's badge. IF a flag pin is also being worn, then the corsage should be pinned on the right shoulder.

When you are speaking, know your place. Do not ramble, talk to hear your own voice, or overextend your welcome.

Please remember that NO ONE is perfect, at least not all of the time! If someone does make a mistake, let it go. Do not stop the meeting, roll your eyes, make tsk-tsk sounds, etc. Take that person aside later to privately and politely tell them about your concern.

Sources:

- *The American Legion Auxiliary Parliamentary Points Booklet*
- *The American Legion a-b-c's of Parliamentary Procedure Booklet*
- Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised
- "Make the Most of Your Meeting", by Jo Ann Cronin, National News, July-August, 1999

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS – BASIC PROTOCOL

INVITATIONS:

1. Write or call your guest or speaker as soon as you have decided on your program.
 - a. If you call, follow up with a written confirmation.
 - b. Advise all invited guests of their particular function at the meeting.
 - c. Include a brief outline of the tentative program and a data sheet on your organization with its aims and purposes.
 - d. Tell them why the group would appreciate having them as a guest or speaker.
2. Let them know the time allocated for their speech or remarks, the time the meeting will start, and the probable time of adjournment.
3. Find out if your guest would like to be excused early. They may have other commitments and not wish to stay for the business or entertainment part of the meeting.
4. Request confirmation and ask for material that may be used for advance publicity or in introducing them. Ask if they object to being interviewed by the press or being photographed.
5. Tell them whether or not a question-and-answer period is planned following their talk.
6. Give your guest or speaker some idea of what you would like to have them talk about.
7. Let your guest speaker know the type of meeting (dinner, luncheon, etc.) and dress (formal, semi-formal, business casual, etc.).
8. Let them know, in writing, the place of meeting, including the address and directions on how to get there.
9. If the trip necessitates an overnight stay, suggest type of accommodations available and make reservations if they so desire and inform you. Find out if they need transportation.
10. Let your guests know who will escort them and for whom to ask upon arrival. If possible, tell them who will introduce them and send them a copy of your program.
11. A day or two before the meeting, call or write your guests to remind them of the event.
12. If tickets are needed for your guests, see that complimentary ones are provided in advance.

PRELIMINARY PLANNING

1. Check to see that your meeting place is well lighted and ventilated.
2. Check to see that the podium light works, as your guest(s) may wish to use notes.
3. Check to see that sufficient chairs are available, and that there are seats reserved for your guests, both on the platform and in the audience.
4. Check the public address system and be sure it works properly.
5. If your guest has asked for special equipment, such as a projector, screen, blackboard, see that it is set up and in working order.
6. Have water and glasses available.
7. Arrange for distribution of programs in an orderly manner.
8. Be sure the kitchen or refreshment committee is seated near an exit so they may leave at a pre-arranged signal without fuss and confusion.
9. If you have made arrangements for overnight accommodations for your guests, allow them some time to be alone and relax. Be sure to consult them before arranging parties or other activities.
10. If you cannot meet your guest yourself, be sure to appoint someone to escort them to all meetings and to their plane or train when departing.
11. Arrange to have guests met at the door, if possible, by the Distinguished Guest Chairman. If they are to be escorted at the beginning of the meeting, they are to be seated in a group at the rear of the room. See that they are introduced to those seated around them.
12. Instruct your Sergeant-at-Arms to notify the Presiding Officer immediately upon the arrival of a guest. They might wait a few minutes for the signal to escort them up!
13. If a gift or corsage is to be presented, arrange for the bill to be submitted at another meeting – not when the guest is present!
14. If a gift or corsage is to be presented, one person should be designated to present and pin them. Arrange to have this done before the meeting starts and before the guest is presented to the Presiding Officer.

15. The Presiding Officer may accept a corsage, but she does not wear it unless the guest also wears one. (In case of a male guest, he should be pinned with a boutonniere.) White is a safe color for a corsage since it will blend with any color a guest may wear.
16. If a guest brings a companion, be sure they are introduced to the persons seated on either side of them. Ascertain their correct name and if they have a title. Be sure they are introduced to the assembly.
17. If the speaker or guest wishes to leave at the end of their part of the program, thank them on behalf of your group and have the “escort” conduct them to their transportation.
18. If you are giving your speaker a fee, expense money, or a gratuity, present it in an envelope before they leave.
19. Guests should never be expected to participate in drawings or raffles.

ESCORTING DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

1. The Sergeant-at-Arms or Distinguished Guests Chairman, when escorting, will keep the guest to her right. If she takes hold of the guest’s arm, it will be the left arm.
2. Never walk between the chair and the assembly.
3. The highest ranking group of guests being presented to the Chair is brought up to the **RIGHT OF THE PRESIDING OFFICER**. If space dictates that the lesser-ranking guests must be seated to the left of the Chair, reverse the escort procedure. The guest of honor is always presented to the **RIGHT** of the Presiding Officer. Your distinguished guest always takes precedence over any other dignitary, regardless of title.
4. There are two methods of escorting guests, and both are correct.
 - a. **DOUBLE LINE**.....Sergeant-at-Arms and Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms on the lead....Sergeant-at-Arms on the right and Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms on the left. Distinguished Guests Chairman behind the Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms with the honored guest on her right.
 - b. **SINGLE LINE**...Sergeant-at-Arms leads, Distinguished Guests Chairman second, guest third, and Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms last.

5. If the guests to be presented are members of the American Legion Auxiliary, escort in the following order, the lowest-ranking group first.
 - a. District Chairman
 - b. District Officers (not including District President)
 - c. Past Department Presidents
 - d. Hospital Representatives
 - e. Current Department Chairmen
 - f. District Presidents
 - g. Current Department Officers
 - h. Current National Chairmen
 - i. National Executive Committeewomen
 - j. Department President
 - k. National President

When there are two or more guests in any of the above groups, the Distinguished Guests Chairman escorts the Chairman or Senior member of the group and asks the other members of the group to follow right behind.

6. The distinguished guest (or guest of honor) is always escorted alone.
 - a. The assembly rises in recognition of the officer when the National or Department President is escorted.
 - b. In the Unit, you rise when the District President is escorted.
7. Upon reaching the Presiding Officer's station:
 - a. The Sergeant-at-Arms and Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms step aside and wait while the Distinguished Guests Chairman presents the guests to the Presiding Officer.
 - b. The Guests Chairman presents the guests to the Presiding Officer.
 - c. The Presiding Officer shakes the hand of guests as presented and seats them before the next is presented.
 - d. After the complete group has been presented and seated, the Sergeant-at-Arms and Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms about-face and, followed by the Distinguished Guests Chairman, return to the rear of the room to await the order to present the next group of guests.
 - e. The Presiding Officer does not present any guest to the assembly until all guests have been escorted and seated.
8. When the guest is not a member of the organization, the distinguished guest is escorted **first** and **alone**.
9. Be sure to check Organizational Protocol Rank for Congressional Medal of Honor holders, Gold Star Mothers, etc.

10. The Presiding Officer, Distinguished Guests Chairman, Musician, Sergeant-at-Arms and Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms should work out a system of signals so they know what is expected of them at all times.

BASIC SEATING

1. The Presiding Officer is always at the center of the head table or right off-center, first place.
2. The Distinguished Guest is always on the right of the Presiding Officer and takes precedence over any other dignitary.
3. Other guests may be seated right, left, right, left, etc., of the Presiding Officer according to rank; or all guests of honor may be seated to the right of the Presiding Officer and other dignitaries to her left.
4. If a special chairman is to present a program portion of the meeting, this person is usually seated at the left of the Presiding Officer when there is an honored guest at the Presiding Officer's right.
5. *At a business meeting*, no matter who is thrown out of line, the **Parliamentarian should always be seated to the right of the President**
6. During the business part of the meeting, she may move to a seat provided nearby immediately after the business of the meeting is finished.

CORRECT INTRODUCTIONS OR PRESENTATION

1. **INTRODUCE** one not known to the assembly.
2. **PRESENT** one who is already known to the group.
3. When you introduce or present guests of honor and they are simply to rise and bow, you introduce the **highest** ranking guest first and go down the list. If your guests are each to say a few words of greeting or congratulation, then **start** with the **lowest** rank and go up the list...the last expression comes from the top ranking officer or guest.

4. Introduction or presentation of honored guests should be gracious, but short. The higher the Officer, the shorter the introduction.
5. When introducing or presenting a speaker:
 - a. Be sure you have the name and title correct.
 - b. Identify the speaker.
 - c. Give qualification through a brief history or biography.
 - d. Announce the subject.
 - e. Last of all, give the speaker's complete name while still facing the audience then turn to the person being introduced and repeat the name only.
6. The President always introduces or presents the National, Department or District Officers and Chairmen when they are visiting a meeting.
7. The members always rise in recognition of the National, Department or District President is introduced.
8. When Department Officers or Chairmen are present at their own Unit or District Meetings they should be escorted:
 - a. At the first meeting after election or appointment
 - b. At official visits of other Department Officers or Chairmen
 - c. Special meetings ... Installations
 - d. When they are distinguished outside guests

At all other times they take their place in the audience as a member. They should, however, be introduced from their place in the audience. When visiting other than their own Unit or District, they should be escorted.
9. Remember that an error in protocol is not a major crime. If you are the Officer or Chairman offended, be gracious.
10. When the speaker concludes, you rise and thank them. If a gift is to be presented, do it at this time.
11. If newspaper or newsletter publicity appears following your guest's appearance, or if photographs or informal pictures are taken during the meeting, it is a nice gesture to send a copy to your guest.

12. A letter of appreciation from you is a must; and an informal note from the President or Chairman is a nice gesture. Remember, the Organization is indebted to any guest speaker or entertainer who has taken time, trouble and expense to attend your meeting.
13. When there are distinguished guests present, Officers and Chairman making reports address the CHAIR ONLY ... Madam President. The only exception given by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised is that the speaker may address the CHAIR ,,, Madam President Ladies and Gentlemen.

INSPIRATIONS ... INVOCATIONS ... CLOSING THOUGHTS ... GRACE

All should be short and should be generalized. Poems are acceptable if well-chosen and well delivered.

INVOCATION...The assembly rises at the direction of the Chair, who waits for complete silence before stating the name of the person who will give the invocation. An invocation is an earnest entreaty or prayer calling for assistance and guidance. It is given at the beginning of the meeting, concluding with **AMEN**.

GRACE...The assembly remains seated. Grace is a blessing asked or thanks offered before a meal, and technically becomes a benediction if offered after a meal. If ***blessing*** is used rather than ***grace***, it must conform to religious precedent. Conclude with **AMEN**.

INSPIRATION...The assembly may remain seated or be requested to stand if offered at the beginning of the meeting, but should remain seated if used at the close. An inspiration is an expression along spiritual or ethical lines...**AMEN...is not used at the conclusion.**

THIS IS BASIC PROTOCOL...You may add to it, and most Units, Districts and Departments have traditions and customs that make these basic rules more personal. The main thing to remember is to use common sense, courtesy and above all...never embarrass anyone.

The first law of procedure is courtesy to everyone. It is nothing but kindness, politeness and civility. To protect the public image of the American Legion Auxiliary, courtesy should always be promoted.

RECEIVING LINE...RECEPTIONS

A reception line should consist of those selected for the occasion.

Family

Government Officials

Organization Group Officials

1. Member states name to the **RECEPTION CHAIRMAN** who is at the head of the line.
2. Reception Chairman states member's name to **DISTINGUISHED GUEST CHAIRMAN**.
3. Distinguished Guest Chairman present member to **PRESIDENT**.
4. President introduces member to **HONORED GUEST**.
5. Member continues down the line shaking hands with each member of the line.

NEW MEMBERS...MEETINGS...COURTESY

New members are just as valuable as current members. Without new members the Unit will soon wither and die. It takes many hours or sometimes months to persuade someone to join the Auxiliary. With a bit of indifference, a discourteous word or bickering between members, the new member can be driven away-never to return. Longstanding members do not care to attend meetings where discourtesy is permitted.

No one is perfect and should you, an officer or a chairman make an error, the world will not end. Apologize if necessary for your error. Do not continue to do things in a wrong manner lest it become a habit, and after a time everyone accepts the wrong way as the right way.

Never speak a sharp word...courtesy is a mark of breeding for women and creates a positive image of our Organization.