

## SEATING PROTOCOL FOR A FUNCTION

If you are asked to assist with the arrangements of the head table for a banquet or luncheon, there is only one accepted procedure for seating arrangements.

Here is an example for such an arrangement:

- ❖ Guests such as ministers, charter members, visiting dignitaries being honored
- ❖ The spouse of a non-Lion VIP
- ❖ Mayor, city councilman, or any non-Lion VIP
- ❖ Spouse of club president
- ❖ Club president
- ❖ Spouse of master of ceremonies
- ❖ Master of ceremonies

Podium:

- ❖ Speaker for the evening
- ❖ Spouse of the speaker
- ❖ District governor
- ❖ Spouse of the district governor
- ❖ Vice district governor
- ❖ Spouse of vice district governor
- ❖ Zone chair
- ❖ Spouse of zone chair

***Official Protocol***

The following is the official protocol policy of the International Association of Lions Clubs. Only the principal speaker is required to acknowledge all dignitaries present. Lions shall be recognized in the following order:

1. International President
2. Immediate Past International President
3. International Vice Presidents (according to rank)
4. International Directors (a) (Board Appointees)
5. Past International Presidents (b)
6. Past International Directors (c)
7. Chairpersons, Council of Governors (a)
8. District Governors (a)
9. Association Executive Administrator
10. Association Secretary
11. Association Treasurer
12. Immediate Past Council Chairman (a)
13. Past Council Chairpersons (c)
14. Immediate Past District Governor (a)
15. Vice District Governors (a)
16. Past District Governors (c)
17. Multiple District Secretaries (volunteer) (a)
18. Multiple District Treasurers (volunteer) (a)
19. District Secretaries (a)
20. District Treasurers (a)
21. Region Chairperson (a)
22. Zone Chairpersons (a)
23. District Chairpersons (a)
24. Club Presidents (a)
25. Immediate Past Club Presidents (a)
26. Club Secretaries (a)
27. Club Treasurers (a)
28. Past Club Presidents (c)
29. Multiple District Secretaries (staff) (a)
30. Multiple District Treasurers (staff) (a)

Note:

- a) recognized alphabetically
- b) recognized in the order they served; most recent first
- c) recognized most recent first; if same year, alphabetic

**Non-Lion Dignitaries**

Non-Lion dignitaries should be given precedence in accordance with local protocol and/or custom, keeping in mind that if the non-Lion is the principal speaker, then he or she should be seated directly to the right of the chairperson (see below).

**Head Table Seating**

The presiding officer or meeting chairperson must always be seated at the most central seat at the table when there is no central podium, shown as seat number one in the following diagram (Figure 1). The principal speaker would occupy seat number two, then other Lions dignitaries in accordance with the general order of precedence. If possible, there should be the same number of seats to the right and left of the chairman or presiding officer (who would normally be the club president, district governor, council chairperson or international president).

(Audience)

Figure 1

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

As shown in figure 2, seating at a head table with a podium is essentially the same, except the meeting chairperson or presiding officer is always seated at the left of the podium (facing the audience) and the principal speaker at the right.

(Audience)

Figure 2

|   |   |   |   |        |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|--------|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 5 | 3 | 1 | Podium | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|--------|---|---|---|---|

When spouses are present, they should be seated to the member’s left when on the left side of the table, on the member’s right when on the right side of the table.

**Master of Ceremonies and Meeting Secretaries**

At some events, the master of ceremonies (emcee) will be someone other than the chairperson or presiding officer. In such cases, the emcee should be seated in accordance with local customs, or at one end of the head table. If, however, the emcee’s place in the general order of precedence dictates a specific seat (e.g., past international president at a district function), then that should rule. On rare occasions, there will be a meeting secretary; again, local customs should rule.

**Multi-Head Tables**

If there is more than one head table, the table at the highest level shall be considered the primary one. Care should be taken not to seat Lions of the same rank at different tables.

**Head Table Introductions**

Introduction of the head table should begin with the meeting chairperson or presiding officer, then continue from the person with the lowest rank on the order of precedence to the person with the highest. When spouses are present at the head table, they should be introduced with the member first (e.g., “Past International Director Jane Doe and her spouse, husband, Joe”).

**National Anthems**

When official representatives of the International Board of Directors (whether or not currently serving on the board) from another country are present at an event where national anthems are normally played, they should be extended the privilege of having their anthem played before the anthem of the local country.

## GUIDELINES FOR ATTIRE

Explanation of suggested attire:

|                                    | <b>LADIES</b>                                                                                          | <b>GENTLEMEN</b>                                                                   |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>FORMAL</b>                      | Long or short cocktail dress                                                                           | Black or white dinner jacket                                                       |
| <b>INFORMAL</b>                    | Dress, suit or separates that you might wear to church, the theater, nice restaurant.                  | Business suit                                                                      |
| <b>CASUAL</b>                      | Pants, skirt, or dress that you might wear shopping or touring. Shorts and jeans are not usually worn. | Pants and sport or polo shirt; sweater or sport coat optional. Ties not necessary. |
| <b>MULTIPLE OR COUNCIL UNIFORM</b> | As detailed by your multiple or council                                                                |                                                                                    |

## HOSTING INTERNATIONAL GUESTS

Each district meeting basic criteria is entitled to a visitation by one international officer or director as a keynote speaker. The date of the district convention must be determined before a visitor can be assigned. An international board member (past or present) may assist you and the district governor in arranging for the visit of an international officer or director. Many multiple districts have assigned the task of assisting the district governors in arranging for a keynote speaker. If such an assignment has been made in your multiple you should seek the assistance of that individual.

You and your spouse are the hosts at the district function. You are assisted by the chair people of the event, as well as by other individuals who may be involved. There are many people involved in making the weekend a success. Remember to acknowledge those who contribute to the success of your function.

As hosts of the function one of the main responsibilities of the district governor and spouse will be to occasionally host the international guest. There are some general guidelines that may help both you and your guests have an enjoyable weekend: **Plan ahead. Anticipate. Communicate.** The district governor should invite the international family of your multiple district and the other Lions leaders to participate in the entertaining of and socializing with the international guests.

Remember that your guests come into your district as Lions. They are everyday people. Treat them as you would treat a guest in your own home. They are there to enjoy the fellowship of Lionism. Be yourself so that they may be themselves. Most importantly, **have fun!**

*1. BEFORE THE VISITOR ARRIVES*

- Communicate with International Headquarters: The district governor will be asked to complete a form which gives the details of the anticipated event. The district governor should be as detailed as possible in completing the form and should include the latest possible arrival time and date, the earliest possible departure time/date, distance from airport, appropriate dress, etc. Biographical information regarding the international guest and spouse will be provided to the district governor and is also available on the Lions Clubs International website: [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org)
  
- Communicate with the international guest and spouse: The district governor should communicate directly with the guest prior to the visit. This should be done at least four weeks before the district function. **You** should write a brief note to the spouse of the guest to introduce yourself and to orient your guest with the upcoming events. Be sure to include:
  - ⇒ A basic itinerary for the events
  - ⇒ Description of the weather anticipated
  - ⇒ Recommendations of proper attire for the different functions. Be as clear as possible as to the formality of each event. If formal, indicate whether jackets will be white or black for males and whether long or short dress for females.
  - ⇒ If expected, an invitation to the spouse to speak at any time during the function.

## 2. THE DAY OF THE VISIT

Obtain the room key in advance to be presented to the guests on the trip from the airport. The district governor and spouse typically will be the ones greeting the guests at the airport at the time of arrival. Sometimes an entire group of Lions and spouses will be there. **The district governor should be in uniform with the badge being worn on the right side.** If you cannot meet your guests at the gate at the airport, determine in advance where they can be met. After greeting them, help them with any luggage or items they may be carrying. If you have met them at the gate, go to the baggage claim area and assist them in collecting their luggage. Do not let them carry their own luggage. You should then proceed to the vehicle waiting area or parking lot. While one vehicle may be sufficient for your guest and luggage, it is always prudent to have an extra one in the event of excess luggage.

If the guests are driving, make plans to meet them in the lobby to assist them with their luggage, present them with their room key and escort them to their room.

Do offer lunch or dinner to guests who have traveled a long distance since they may have not had a meal on the airline. Sometimes, only a beverage is necessary.

Provide the guests with your room number and the numbers of others who will be involved so that they may contact you or others if necessary.



### 3. HOTEL

Communicate with the hotel before the arrival of your guests to be sure the room is acceptable. Check the room yourself. Arrange to check-in for your guests to save time when you and the guests arrive at the hotel.

Ask the hotel to have an iron and ironing board in the room for your visitors.

Provide a small hospitality basket filled with snacks and/or fruit depending on the preferences of the visitors. Include beverage of choice such as water, tea or soft drinks.

Fresh flowers would provide a cheerful welcome, but they need not be expensive. Do not spend a lot of money – keep it simple.

Leave a program with the itinerary of the events for the visit. Write a personal note of welcome including your room number and place it to the side of the flowers or snack basket.

#### 4. COURTESIES

Always escort or arrange an escort for your guests to and from all events. Do not allow them to find their own way.

Always keep your guests abreast of the schedule. Tell them what time you will pick them up.

Remember to reserve seats for the visitors at all functions so that the guests are not seated in the back of the room. It is customary when traveling by bus to and from the function sites to reserve the first two rows for guests.

Allow your guests to be served first at meals. If you have a head table, the head table should always be first in line.

Guests do not pay for meals while attending the conference. Their expenses are typically paid for by the host district or multiple district. Do save receipts – so the district governor can submit them for reimbursement.

A thoughtful suggestion is to arrange for someone to take pictures during the visit to be sent to the guests after they return home.

#### 5. TIME

Upon arrival, allow your guests time to get settled in their hotel room before they attend the first activity.

Allow your guests time to relax each day. If your guest is to speak, he/she probably could use the time to prepare notes and thoughts prior to the keynote address. Once the event starts, never leave your guests unattended

## 6. GIFTS

It is customary for the district to present the visitor with a small gift. There may be a tradition in your district as to what that gift should be, or you may choose something different. Many choose a gift representative of the area, while some may choose to make a donation to LCIF in the name of the guest. Here are a few guidelines regarding your gift:

- ⇒ Check with International Headquarters for the preferences cited by the visitor.
- ⇒ The gift should not be extravagant. It is a token of appreciation.
- ⇒ If engraved, place the engraving on the **back** of the gift.
- ⇒ When choosing a gift, ask yourself, “Would I like to display this in my home?” If you would not, then chances are neither will your visitor.
- ⇒ Be selective; be practical.
- ⇒ Ensure that a wrapped gift is easy to open in front of an audience. In some cultures, gift bags allow the guest(s) to neatly open the gift.
- ⇒ If the gift is too large for your guest to carry, arrange to have it mailed.
- ⇒ Provide the guests with an opportunity to thank the district for the gift.

## 7. DEPARTURES

Offer to confirm the departure flight with the airline before it is time for your guests to leave.

See that the guests have had a meal of some sort before they leave.

Escort the guests to the airport at least two hours in advance of the departure (check with local airport). Allow plenty of time to drive to the airport.

Offer to stay with them until their departure, but respect their wishes if they prefer to wait unescorted. Offer them a phone number to call in case they encounter travel difficulties, such as a cancelled flight.

Shortly after the visit, write a note to your guests, thanking them for attending the convention and enclose any pictures taken during their visit.

### Visitor Checklist

- Have you sent your guest full information about the meeting and your district?
- Do you have flight number and arrival time, and proper arrangements for meeting your guests and transporting them to the hotel? Do not overcrowd the vehicle - four people, including your guest, should be the limit.
- Have you checked them into their room and fully inspected it?
- Have you assigned a host and hostess to accompany them throughout the meeting, if you cannot do so?
- Does their schedule allow sufficient free time?
- Are plans for departure made?
- Have you sent a “thank you” note or letter after they depart?
- Have you given your guests a contact number/cell phone number to call in case of problems? Do you have their cell phone number??