

Guest Speakers

Guest speakers should be given the courtesy of speaking for the allotted time. Often this is twenty minutes then time for questions (five minutes). The guest speaker should be aware of the time and therefore will prepare accordingly. They should be reminded firmly on arrival at the meeting of the overall arrangements including times.

Great care and planning needs to be in place for the use of any audio-visual equipment. Who is responsible for it all working correctly at the time it is needed?

Districts need to have a carefully constructed and fair procedure for payment of meal costs by visiting members of the district team. This information should be clearly shared at the President Elect's Training Seminar and the District Assembly. Any invited or District scheduled guest should always be afforded the courtesy of free admission.

Sergeant-at-Arms

The well ordered conduct of a regular club meeting rests squarely with the Sergeant-at-Arms. The club president, of course, gives the broad guidelines, however the function of the sergeant is to maintain an orderly, dignified and effective meeting. Each meeting should impress current members and all visitors as being professional while offering friendliness.

For instance, it is when inappropriate stories or jokes are told that we let all of Rotary down. In addition when a guest speaker is invited to speak, it is expected that all attending pay due attention.

There are very sound notes handed out at District Assembly time. Frequently the sergeant is a member of the club's board and can, at those meetings, share any specific goals or disquiet about the conduct of meetings. The sergeant of a club is a vital appointment.

Getting Started

Your first responsibility is to learn from the club president and the chairpersons of the Attendance, Fellowship Activities and Program committees what, in general, they will expect from you each week. In coordination with them, you will take charge of the mechanics of club meetings throughout the year. Prior to each club meeting, you should consult with the Program committee chairperson regarding any special equipment such as a podium for a

speaker, a stand for a movie projector, special lighting effects or any other props that may be needed for the program.

You may wish to confer with the chairperson of the Fellowship Activities committee each week for ideas on improving the camaraderie at the meetings. And be sure to speak with the club president prior to each weekly meeting in case there are some specific requirements or suggestions.

Typical Assignments

Here are some other assignments the sergeant-at-arms typically handles:

Be at the door. Stand at the door of the meeting place five minutes before the meeting begins. Welcome visitors if no one has been assigned to do this. See that all members are inside the room by the meeting time.

Name badges. Be sure that all members are wearing their name badges. These are especially helpful to visitors and new members.

Seating. See that members are seated promptly and without confusion; that, if feasible, there are no vacant places between members; that no cliques are sitting together; and that all guests are taken care of properly. (Assume these duties only if they have been assigned to you rather than the Fellowship committee.)

The meal. Make sure that the food is served promptly.

Late arrivals. Please be sensitive to late arrivals. There could be a genuine reason for being late (business or family) and the member might be sensitive to humour. Some members, however are often late and can handle

the heat. A frequent reminder about being on time usually gets the message across and a good sergeant can mostly pick the right occasion for humour or a special fine.

Songbooks. If singing is the custom, be sure that the songbooks or sheets are distributed. If there is no song leader, do what you can do to improve the singing.

Maintain order. In a diplomatic manner, see that the members pay attention to the president's gavel and that no-one annoys the speaker by talking.

Early departures. Keep an eye out for eat-and-run Rotarians and, by calling their attention to the habit in a tactful way, try to discourage the practice, which can be a discourtesy to speakers.

Farewell to guests. When the meeting breaks up, encourage members to speak to the guest, especially those who took part in the meeting and express thanks and pleasure at having them visit the club.

In practice, there will be much more for you to do than just the performance of these routine duties. You will need to feel the pulse of the meetings, to anticipate those things that may be needed. You will not only learn much about the operation of the club, you may find ways to improve it. Most important and satisfying of all, this job will provide you with many real opportunities for friendly service to your club – its members, officers and guests.

Your success as sergeant-at-arms will depend not only upon how well you meet your responsibilities from week

to week throughout the year, but also on how well you plan your work now.

Duty Checklist

1. See that the equipment is OK and put out. Public address system, gong, rostrum, etc. Club charter, the Queen's photo, President's collar.
2. Set clock on time, so that the head table knows the time.
3. See that the members take their seats in ample time allowing for a prompt start.
4. Banners displayed (on a roller rather than on a string).
5. Badge board in order – alphabetical – make up cards, visitors book ruled up with the date and name of guest speaker or program – this is part of history.
6. Cashier list ready and updated with date, name of speaker and maybe roster board displayed.
7. Gong polished, with wooden hammer.
8. The loudspeaker and microphone should be adjusted to correct height, volume and position. Be alert to alter height for the guest speaker or other speakers during the meeting.
9. Seats placed so that the speaker can be seen and heard.
10. See that the guest speaker and chairman of the day has his/her club instruction card to read.
11. As Sergeant-at-Arms, keep an eye on time, control background talking when needed.
12. Be familiar with the dignified procedure for the induction of new members. Check that name badge and Rotary pin are ready. Some clubs have a red or blue cushion on which these are placed beforehand.

13. Sergeant should see that everyone is seated. Sergeant can assist late arrivals and visitors to be seated. In a crowded room this is very important.

14. When meeting is over, see that equipment is put away securely. Some clubs roster club members to assist in setting up and putting away items.

15. When time allows be prepared to conduct a limited fine session.

Fines should never be regarded as a fundraiser. Use the light touch as a humorous diversion.

Keep a roll of those fined. Some members can be upset or embarrassed.

Consider a fine for The Rotary Foundation on one's birthday. (It can be \$5 or \$10 by club arrangement).

16. See that the order is maintained, respect for the chair, control interruptions and any other disturbances that sometimes arise out of good fellowship and humour.

(Some clubs have a card that sets out the suggested duties for the Chairman of the day and another to give to the guest speakers who may know little of Rotary or the history of the Club.

This can be mounted on a large card say A4 and be available at each meeting. It can set out what will be required as guest speaker).

An assistant Sergeant can help greatly in many of the above.

It is probably too much for the Sergeant to farewell members when departing but to farewell visitors on leaving adds to the friendliness of a club. Maybe that could be a past president's job.

Display of the National Flag

At many Rotary functions flags are displayed. A similar flag etiquette applies to all nations and to all flags.

There is a clear protocol to follow and it is well described in articles on the web at: www.australianflag.org.au/protocol.php and flagspot.net/flags/nz.html

I could send either of these by email as a file to anyone who asks. The articles are well illustrated and relevant to New Zealand, Australia and the other countries that form our Rotary district structure.

The following (as an example) is taken from those notes, with acknowledgement:

"The Australian National Flag should be displayed only in a manner befitting the national emblem. It should not be subjected to indignity or displayed in a position inferior to any other flag or ensign. The Flag normally takes precedence over all other national flags when flown in Australia. It should always be flown aloft and free and should not be allowed to fall or lie upon the ground."

Display of the Flag

The National Flag should be displayed as follows:

When the flag is against a surface whether horizontally or vertically the top left quarter should be placed uppermost on the observer's left, as viewed from the front.

Frequently a National flag is displayed along with other National or State flags or the official Rotary flag.

As a general rule, if there is an uneven (odd) number of flags, then the National flag should be placed in the central position.

However, if there is an even number of flags, the National flag should be placed to the left as the observer faces the display.

When flown outside on separate flagpoles, the general rules apply except when a yardarm is used and / or a gaff. There are interesting traditions in these different cases.

Note that the position we call, "half-mast" is when the flag is lowered to just one-third of the mast height from the top!

Please refer to the full articles as there are many variations on flag protocol.