

Protocol and Official Visits

Protocol is, simply put, etiquette. Protocol is all about respect for our dedicated Lions leaders. It is part “compensation” for their Lions work and a way to thank them for their dedication to our organization.

By following protocol, people respect other people – individually and in groups. It is what you say and how you say it. It is the rules for correct behavior. It is part of the culture and tradition of our organization.

Intelligent, well-informed Lions respect and recognize their fellow Lions who have served in a leadership capacity. Respectful Lions, therefore, recognize proper rules of etiquette related to the dignity of official capacity – generally defined as Protocol.

Our clubs, zones, districts, and Lions International have been blessed with outstanding leaders. These leaders devote a major portion of their lives to Lionism in service to other people. They merit the proper respect and recognition for the capacity in which they have distinguished themselves. Protocol, then, is merely a “salute to those whom we have elected” or saying “Thanks – for everything you have done, and are doing in representing us in this movement called Lionism.”

PROTOCOL DEFINED -Webster: “A system of rules that explain the correct conduct and procedures to be followed in formal situations, with deference to rank.”

ETIQUETTE DEFINED -Webster: “The customary code of correct behavior among members of a group.”

Summarized, protocol is the rules for correct behavior in ceremonies, and deference to rank.

In general, Protocol relates to many things:

- Reception and entertainment of Lion dignitaries, especially international officers and past officers.
- Proper respect to and recognition of Lion dignitaries or VIPs (very important people).
- Introduction of dignitaries at meetings and special occasions.
- Visitations of the District Governor.
- Seating arrangements at conventions, charter nights, banquets, and other occasions.
- Other business related to protocol.
- Respect for Speakers.
- Tail Twisting
- Public Relations
- Lions Information
- Proper attitude and behavior, and
- Manners.

THE DISTRICT GOVERNOR’S VISITATIONS

The visit of the District Governor is one of the highlights of the Lions year. Certain rules of protocol apply for the official visit to a club.

Although there are several standards of protocol, most clubs have settled into a protocol that works for them. One time that a standard protocol should be chosen over a local protocol is during visits of dignitary, including the District Governor.

Each District Governor (DG) is responsible for an official visit to your club once during their year in office. The DG will have information about our International organization, our Multiple District, and our District.

The Governor is the only speaker to be scheduled for the meeting. Do not expect the Governor to compete with another speaker or with long, drawn-out business or board meetings. Usually, rules are

suspended and all reports are tabled until the next regular meeting. Have an agenda to work from and start the meeting on time. Make sure all of the details are done in advance, greeters to be present, bell and banner displayed, region or zone chair invited, meal planned, and, if a gift is being presented, make sure it is available at the meeting.

Here are some suggestions for hosting the DG:

CONFIRM the date, time and location of the visit with the DG. Ask if a spouse or VDG will be attending. Be sure to notify the DG of any change of time or place.

NOTIFY each club member and other area Lions of the visit, encouraging them to attend.

SEATING - Be sure to have special seating for the DG and guests.

AWARDS/NEW MEMBER INDUCTIONS - The DG is happy to present awards or install new members. Notify him or her in advance, if possible. Have names, information, and awards ready for presentation.

COST OF MEALS: Clubs may and often do pick up the cost of the meal for the DG and spouse. Some clubs offer to arrange housing or assist with transportation costs.

This is up to the individual club, but is always welcome by the DG. It is proper for such arrangements to be made ahead of time and indicated to the DG in order to avoid any misunderstanding.

EDUCATE THE DG prior to the visit. Provide updated information about ongoing activities. Let the DG know if there is a specific subject you would like addressed during the visit.

EDUCATE THE CLUB members prior to the DG's visit. Each member should welcome the DG and introduce themselves prior to start of meeting. Nametags are a special help to the DG, or any visitor for that matter.

Lions show respect for the office of DG by standing and applauding when the DG is formally introduced at the meeting, until the governor signals them to be seated. Not only is this proper protocol, it is recognition of the office.

As host of the meeting, the Club President will be responsible for welcoming the DG. This should be done with dignity and include information concerning the Governor's home club, business, offices held, Lionistic activities, and family, if appropriate.

Introduction of the Governor should be done only once – when being presented to the meeting for remarks. The Governor sits to the immediate right of the podium with the President to the immediate left. Up to 30 minutes should be allowed for remarks by the Governor.

TREAT YOUR DISTRICT GOVERNOR AS AN HONORED AND SPECIAL FRIEND!

His or her visit is considered an opportunity to share your Club's sincere commitment to Lionism and fellowship. Your official visit will be enjoyable, informational and entertaining.

Just remember to show respect and use good judgment, and the visit will go well.