

PROTOCOL



MANUAL

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Webster's dictionary says that protocol is "The Code and Rules of Diplomatic and State Etiquette", that etiquette is "prescribed rules of behavior in society", and Society is "people working together for a common purpose". Thus, we might construe that a definition for our use is "the code and prescribed rules of behavior for people working together for a common purpose".

The subject of protocol covers many things -- some of which are not usually thought of as "Protocol". For example, the wearing of the uniform cap on different occasions; the order of seating at a head table; the order of introducing a variety of people; when and when not to salute; when and when not to uncover; proper display of the flag; the definition of the "Field"; proper conduct during a funeral or memorial service -- the list goes on and on. Let us cover some of the ones usually encountered during post and district activities.

Wearing of the American Legion Cap:

1. The cap should be worn with the post-number forward and the Legion Emblem on the left.
2. There should be no other insignia or decoration on the left side. All pins, office insignia, etc., are to be limited to the right side.
3. Department standing rules, which are published with the constitution and Bylaws, specify when the wearing of other than the blue cap is required and when authorized. As I'm sure you know, the blue and white cap is for District Officers, the white cap for department officers, and the
4. Red cap for National Officers, including the Department National Executive Committeeman and the alternate NECMAN. The blue cap is for all other legionnaires, including past District, Department, and National Officers and Current Post Officers.

Wearing of the American Legion Cap -- During American Legion Meetings:

1. Worn during parading, posting, and retiring of the colors, and the Military hand salute is called for.
2. Worn, without the salute, during recitation of the preamble to the American Legion Constitution.
3. Removed* (male legionnaires only) during prayer and memorial silence.
4. Removed* (male legionnaires only) during recitation of the "Pledge of Allegiance" -- except the cap may be worn and the salute executed provided that the Pledge is not recited.

5. During the playing of The National Anthem, either wear the cap and salute while not singing or remove* the cap and sing.
6. Worn for all other parts of the meeting.

* - When the cap is removed, insert the right hand in the front of the cap with the American Legion Emblem facing out and place right hand and cap over the heart. Female legionnaires remain covered but place the right hand over the heart.

Wearing of the American Legion Cap -- During Meal Functions:

1. Follow the 1, 4, and 5 above.
2. Removed (male legionnaires only) during the eating of the meal.

Wearing of the American Legion Cap -- During Funerals and Graveside Services:

1. At the church or funeral home, the Guard of Honor, Color Guard, and Commander of The Color Guard should wear the cap while in Marching Order or Standing Guard. When returned to the pew and seated, the cap should be removed.
2. All others remove the cap upon entering the church or funeral home and hold the cap per the “*” on page 2 until seated.
3. At the close of the ceremony, the legionnaires stand, put the cap on, and file past the casket. At the casket, pause, give the hand salute, and then file out the door.
4. At the graveside, the cap should be removed and held per “*” on page 2, except for the Guard of Honor, Color Guard, Commander of The Color Guard, Firing squad, bugler, and pall bearers. However, in cold and inclement weather, the cap should be worn, in which case, the hand salute should be executed anytime the Color Guard or Firing Squad is given the command, “Present Arms”, such as during the rendering of “Taps”.

Display of the Colors:

1. Marching:
 - A. One U.S. Flag and one, two, or three others, marching up to four abreast – U.S. Flag to the right of the marchers. **
 - B. One U.S. Flag and massed organizational flags – U.S. Flag center front, with others lined up behind the U.S. Flag. **
 - C. Multiple U.S. Flags and multiple organizational flags – U.S. Flag massed in front, followed by the others. **

** Upon the command "present arms" for the color guard or "eyes right" for other marchers, those carrying organizational flags smartly dip them to approximately 45 degrees, but the U.S. Flag is never dipped.

2. In a post hall, auditorium, etc. -- The U.S. Flag is always to the right of the speaker (audience's left) regardless of whether on a raised stage level or on the same level with the audience.
3. For all the regulations on a U.S. Flag hung flat against a wall, on an outdoor pole, or freely suspended outdoors, please see the current edition of flag etiquette.

Definition of the "Field":

In an American Legion meeting, the area between the U.S. Flag and the Organizational Flag is designated as the "Field" and dedicated in memory of those who lost their lives on the Field of Battle. Protocol dictates that the "Field" not be broken -- that is, that no one walk or reach across the "Field".

Approaching the Podium:

Approach to the left of the U.S. Flag, stop, salute, and then proceed to the Podium. Leaving the podium should be done around the organizational flag and when just clear of that flag, turn toward the U.S. Flag, salute, and then continue to the proper place in the audience.

Entering or Leaving the Meeting Hall:

Once the meeting has been called to order, the U.S. Flag should be saluted each time one leaves or enters the meeting hall.

Seating:

1. At a meal or an opening ceremony at which others will be bringing greetings, the Presiding Officer (Commander) is usually seated to the right of the podium, with the highest ranking dignitary seated in the next right position (facing the audience), continuing by descending rank to the right until half of the dignitaries are seated, and then start at the left of the podium and continuing left in descending rank. In the case of an opening which is not a meal, the dignitaries may be seated in chairs arranged behind the podium and the tables at which the officers of the organization are seated.

2. At a Meeting :

- A. The Post Officers should be seated at tables lined up with the podium, with the Commander to the right of the podium and the Chaplain to the Commander's right and with the Adjutant to the left of the podium and the Finance Officer to the left of the Adjutant. A Judge Advocate, if there is one, should be seated between the Commander and the Chaplain. The 1st or Senior Vice Commander's Station is to the right of the podium and half way back through the audience; the 2nd or Junior Vice Commander's Station is directly opposite the SR. Vice Commander's Station, as they are from the podium, leaving a square open area. The audience is to be arranged behind the Vice Commander's and JR. Vice Commander's Station. The Sergeant at Arms Station should be at the rear of the hall, near the door.
- B. At a District Meeting, the Commander should be seated to the right of the podium and the Chaplain next right, with the Adjutant to the left of the podium and the Vice Commander next left.
- C. When higher ranking officers are present for the meeting (that is, District Officers at a Post Meeting or Department Officers at a Post or District Meeting), whether or not they are to all be seated at the head table or on stage behind the podium is determined by the type of meeting and their purpose in attending.
 - (a) For a District Officer's visitation at a Post Meeting, it is necessary to introduce those officers shortly after the opening ceremonies, but they need not be seated near the podium. Under "Good of The Legion", they should each be invited to speak and escorted to the podium, one at a time, starting with the lowest ranking officer and ending with the District Commander.
 - (b) At an Initiation or Installation ceremony, at the appropriate time in the agenda, the District Commander should be escorted to the podium (assuming that the District Commander will be the Initiating or Installing Officer).
 - (c) At a District Meeting, shortly after the Roll Call of District Officers, introductions should proceed in the following order:
 - (i) Past District Commanders
 - (ii) Past National Executive Committeemen
 - (iii) Past Department Commanders
 - (iv) Past National Vice Commanders
 - (v) Past National Commanders

- (vi) Current appointed Department Officers in The Order of Assistant Adjutant, Judge Advocate, Finance Officer, Adjutant, and Service Officer.
 - (vii) Current elected Department Officers in The Order of Sergeant at Arms, Historian, Chaplain, Vice Commanders (in area order), Alternate National Executive Committeeman, National Executive Committeeman, Executive Committeeman, and Commander.
- (d) At a District Fall or Spring Conference, follow (3) above, except that the Department Adjutant, Service Officer, National Executive Committeeman, Vice Commander for that District's area, and Commander should be escorted by the District Sergeant at Arms (one at a time) to the podium area, with seats behind the District Officers. After the District business is completed, including District Officer's and Committee Chairmen's and Posts reports, as well as unfinished and new business, The Department Officers seated in the podium should be invited to the podium to speak in the order noted above. If there are Department Officer Candidates present to campaign, the District Commander should have a list and call on them, after all the above, in the same order as in 2.C.(3).g above.

Protocol during Meeting Business:

1. In preparation, the Commander should have prepared an agenda, including listing all known unfinished and new business items. Also, the Commander should have contacted each of the Officers and Committee Chairman to find out whether or not each has something to report and then calling only on those who will be making a report.
2. The primary thing to remember is to show courtesy for each speaker – and to speak one at a time – Parliamentary Procedure dictates that a certain formality be followed in order to expedite the business and to protect the rights of both the majority and the minority on each question – does that remind you or our “Preamble” ???
3. There are eight steps to be followed for every motion:
 - A. Rise and address the Commander (Mr. Commander, or Madame Commander, as applicable, or Comrade Commander) to obtain the floor.
 - B. The Commander recognizes you and assigns the floor to you – and that just means that you have permission to speak.
 - C. State your motion – not the reasons for the action you want taken – by saying “I move that...” or “I move to...”.
 - D. Someone has to second the motion – the seconder does not have to agree with action, but may second it just to get it on the floor for discussion and vote.

- E. The Commander then states the motion and notes that it has been moved and seconded, and then adds “are you ready for the question?” That just means that if you want to debate (or discuss) this motion before the vote is taken, now is the time to rise and get recognized. Note that the Maker of the Motion has the right to be the first speaker.
 - F. When debate or discussion is over, the Presiding Officer again asks “are you ready for the question?” – Do Not Answer—If no one wants to get the floor, just be quiet, and the chair will state “The question is on the Adoption of the Motion.... (repeating the motion in its entirety)...”.
 - G. Those in favor say “Aye” (or Yes), pausing for response. Those opposed, say “No”, pausing for response.
 - H. The Commander then announces the results of the vote:
 - (a) The Ayes have it, the motion is adopted, and... (stating the effect of the vote),
 - OR
 - (b) The No’s have it, and the motion is not adopted.
4. There are several important points regarding the processing of motions:
- A. When you make a motion, make it simple and straight to the point of the action you want the group to take – do not ramble and include all the reasons why everyone should agree with you.
 - B. When the Commander states your motion, Pay Attention – the motion as stated by the Chair is the Official Motion. If it is not stated correctly, rise immediately, stating the Chair’s Title and state “that motion should be...”, stating it as you did originally and listening again when the Chair repeats it.
 - C. The maker of the Motion has the right to speak first during the discussion, but must rise to claim that right.
 - D. If the discussion drags on and on with the same reasons being just repeated, the Chair should state “If there are no new item to be presented, we will proceed to vote.”

- E. Do not sit in the audience and shout “question” – that is not a motion. If the discussion has dragged on and the Chair shows no sign of closing it as above, the appropriate motion is “I move the previous question”, which requires a second, is not debatable, and requires a 2/3 approval vote. The Chair will state “The previous question has been moved and seconded. Those in favor of closing debate will stand”...taking a count. Then, “be seated. Those opposed will stand”...Taking a count. If the Ayes are at least two times the number of no’s, then “the motion is adopted and we will proceed to vote on the question which is...(repeating the motion)”.
- F. Regarding Amendments – A Main Motion, which is what we’ve been dealing with, may be amended by:
 - (a) Striking specific words.
 - (b) Inserting words in a specific place.
 - (c) Striking and inserting different words.
 - (d) Presenting a substitute motion which is on the same subject, is not on the opposite side, but is a different wording from the main motion.
- G. If there is an Amendment of the floor, then discussion must be limited to that amendment, not on the main motion.
- H. If there is an Amendment on the floor, it may be amended by striking specific words, inserting words in a specific place, or by striking and inserting different words – But only in the words in the amendment, not in the main motion.
- I. If there is an Amendment to the main motion and an amendment to the amendment both on the floor – that’s all – no more amendments until at least one of them has been processed.
- J. Voting is done on the amendment to the amendment first, then on the amendment to the main motion, and last on the main motion. In each latter two, if the amendment to it has been adopted, then that amendment must be incorporated into the stating of the question prior to the vote.