
Section E. Invitations

Introduction	This section describes the proper protocol for handling invitations.
E.1. Types of Invitations	There are several basic forms for invitations. The individual extending the invitation should select the format most suited to the specific function and to the invitee. Formal invitations, either printed or in letter format, should be used for official visitors invited to attend formal dinners, dinner dances, or ceremonial occasions. A less formal invitation may be used for other events such as regular meetings, raft-outs, or rendezvous.
E.2. Information Included	Courtesy to the invitee includes the provision of all information regarding the event for which the invitation is extended. This includes specific information regarding the place, date, time, uniform required, whether or not the invitee is expected to bring a guest, and what part (if any) the invitee is expected to play in the program.
E.3. RSVP	One way to ascertain whether or not the invitee will attend is to request an RSVP. If it is important for planning purposes to determine if guests will be present, indicate RSVP (phone number or address) not later than (date the reply is needed). If an invitation with an RSVP requirement is received, courtesy requires an appropriate response to the person who sent the invitation. Failure to do so may put the potential host in an embarrassing position.
E.4. Expenses	Regardless of the civilian, Auxiliary, or Coast Guard status of the invitee, if an invitation stipulates, "It is our pleasure to extend an invitation to you and Mrs. Doe to attend our Change of Watch Dinner as our guest," Mr. Doe will assume that he will not be expected to pay for dinner tickets for himself and his guest. In order to extend an invitation to an event in which the invitee is expected to pay, state, "It is our pleasure to ask you and Mrs. Doe to join us at our Change of Watch." Then include the cost of the event, and enclose a reservation form in the letter.
E.5. Timeliness	The more senior the guest, the earlier they must establish a schedule. If the invitation is to a senior Coast Guard officer or a National Auxiliary representative of the Auxiliary, it has the best chance of being accepted if it is received at least eight weeks in advance of the event.

E.6. Host

Normally, the Auxiliary leader or Coast Guard leader of the organizational unit sponsoring the function is considered the host for invited guests unless other specific arrangements are made. Hosts have certain responsibilities toward, and for, the guests. In many instances, it may not be possible for the host to personally take care of all of the individual responsibilities. If this is the case, the host may delegate an Auxiliarist to function as an aide for each guest or group of guests, as necessary. The host's responsibility is to arrive at the event before the time guests are expected to arrive to be on hand to greet them. Again, common courtesy is the answer. The following responsibilities of hosts apply:

- a. There should be places for coats and hats.
 - b. Reserved seating should be pointed out as guests arrive.
 - c. For open seating, appropriate seating arrangements should be pointed out to guests.
 - d. Meal tickets should be given to guests as they arrive, if appropriate.
 - e. The program should be explained or distributed.
 - f. The host should ensure that guests are offered drinks.
 - g. If the host is unable to remain with the guests, they should be introduced to an alternate host.
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