
Section G. Seating Arrangements and Speaking Order

Introduction Whenever guests are specifically invited to attend functions where seating is provided, whether it be a meeting, luncheon, a dinner, or some other sit-down activity, be certain that guests know where they will be seated, and if invited speakers, what order they will speak.

G.1. Head Table If there is a head table for a meal and meal tickets are required, arrangements should be made with the serving personnel so that individuals at the head table are not required to present individual tickets before being served. It is not essential that all invited guests be seated at the head table at a structured function. In some instances, where the number of distinguished guests exceeds the available seating space at the head table, or for various other reasons, only a few of the distinguished guests may be seated at the head table. These should include at least the principal speaker and senior Coast Guard and Auxiliary personnel. Other special guests may be seated at front tables on the main floor of the dining area, or the spouses of the officers at the head table may be seated at special tables in the main dining area. The distinguished guests may be seated at front tables on the main floor of the dining area, and brought up to places at the head table at the start of the program. If this format is followed, the guests should be acknowledged at the beginning of the affair.

G.2. Socializing When invited as guests at a structured function, most people enjoy meeting the other people present, particularly if they are not acquainted with the membership of the local group. Either the host, or someone assisting as a local host for guests at a structured function, have an unwritten obligation to not allow one person to monopolize the time of invited guests in lengthy conversations, especially on subjects that could become embarrassing. In such a situation, it is appropriate to interrupt the discussion in a courteous manner, either by asking the guest if you could have a few words, or simply by taking someone else to the guest for an introduction.

G.3.
Precedence at
the Head Table

Although the Auxiliary does not have formal rank identification, and does not use position titles, except for Commodore, the office held by the individual should be considered. If a national Auxiliary elected or appointed leader is present and the District Commander is not present, the national Auxiliary elected or appointed leader (other than members of the National Staff) should occupy one of the two primary places of honor at the center of the table. If the Chief Director or local Director is present, that officer should also be accorded a place of honor at the head table. The master of ceremonies, or presiding officer for the function, should be at the center of the table. Honors begin at the master of ceremonies' immediate right, then immediate left, then right, then left, etc., in turn until places are assigned for each of the distinguished guests or Auxiliarists who will be seated at the head table. Most frequently, the place of honor, at the presiding officer's immediate right, will be assigned to the principal speaker. The position on the immediate left of the presiding officer would then be filled by the senior officer present from the Coast Guard, or by the Auxiliary leader. Auxiliary leaders at the national level take precedence over district Auxiliary leaders whenever two levels of the organization are represented by elected leaders.

There is nothing mandatory about having all of the Coast Guard officers on one side of the presiding Auxiliary elected or appointed leader and all Auxiliary leaders on the other side. In fact, quite frequently Coast Guard guests already know one another, thus, the best interchange may take place if Coast Guard officers are interposed among Auxiliary leaders. Civilian guests may also be interspersed between Coast Guard officers and Auxiliary leaders at the head table.

When the District Commander or District Chief of Staff are not present at an Auxiliary function, the Director, regardless of rank, shall be recognized and afforded all appropriate protocol as the District Commander would receive as the direct representative of the District Commander unless the District Commander has designated another officer for that purpose at the event. This would call for the Director to be accorded a seating position recognizing that precedence, even though another officer may be present, such as a Sector Commander, cutter CO, or station OIC, who might have a higher rank than the Director.

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G.6.a. Division
Change of Watch
Dinner

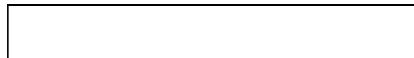
Sample seating arrangements for the head table at a Division Change of Watch Dinner when the persons listed as present, are shown below, both for mix and match seating and for the seating of guests as couples. In the examples, some ladies may be seated next to each other to avoid placing them at the end of the table. Other senior (non-Flag) Coast Guard officers (Sector Commander, cutter CO, station OIC) or Auxiliary leaders (visiting DCO, National Directorate Chief, etc.) may be present and not representing an Auxiliary leader and not part of the program. Such Auxiliarists need not be seated at the head table, but could be seated at an honors table and appropriately recognized.

- (1) Division Commander (presiding leader)
- (2) Division Commander's Spouse
- (3) District Commodore
- (4) Spouse of District Commodore
- (5) Director
- (6) Spouse of Director
- (7) District Chief of Staff
- (8) Spouse of District Chief of Staff
- (9) District Captain
- (10) District Captain Spouse

HEAD TABLE SEATING BY MIX OR MATCH DIAGRAM

*Person Presiding

(7)(6)(2)(3)(1)*(4)(5)(10)(8)(9)



Audience

G.6.b. Flotilla
Change of Watch
Dinner

Seating for a Flotilla Change of Watch would be similar to that shown for Division affairs. A flotilla is more apt to have local officials present. In this circumstance, seating by couples may be more appropriate.

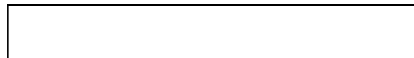
- (1) Division Commander
- (2) Spouse of Division Commander
- (3) Spouse of Local Mayor
- (4) Local Mayor
- (5) Spouse of Flotilla Commander
- (6) Flotilla Commander
- (7) Director of Auxiliary
- (8) Spouse of Director of Auxiliary
- (9) Flotilla Vice Commander
- (10) Flotilla Vice Commander's Spouse
- (11) Past Flotilla Commander's Spouse
- (12) Past Flotilla Commander

An alternative arrangement for a local affair is to have all the guests seated at honors or reserved tables across the front of the room, with a podium and microphone set up from where the presiding officer would introduce the guests and from where the speakers would make their presentation.

HEAD TABLE SEATING BY COUPLES

*Person Presiding

(7)(8)(4)(3)(1)*(2)(5)(6)(10)(9)



Audience

HEAD TABLE SEATING BY COUPLES

*Person Presiding

(12)(11)(10)(9)(8)(7)*(6)(5)(4)(3)(2)(1)



Audience

When local officials or members of other organizations are invited, it is only proper to assign a competent Auxiliarist as an escort to welcome them, introduce them to others present, and be seated at the same table to brief them on the events.

At larger meetings, Area, district, or National priority of seating follows the patterns above. Because of the number of guests and speakers involved, there are alternate plans that may be used. Many available halls are too small for an extensive head table, therefore an alternate would be to have the head table arranged in tiers with a second table set behind and above the first. In this situation, the highest ranking Coast Guard or Auxiliary position attendees would be at the higher table.

Another possibility is to establish a speaker's table, not occupied until the program is about to start. The participants in the program are called from their place at the reserved tables on the floor of the hall to take their place at the speaker's table, and their spouses remain at the reserved table. There are many other formats that Auxiliary leaders may use. The primary requirement is that guests and participating Coast Guard officers and Auxiliary leaders be aware of details of the program, briefed as to their participation, know where their seats are and be introduced in order of precedence. Remember that the spouses of guests have the same precedence as the guest. Additional information may be found in the Auxiliary Division Procedures Guide, COMDTPUB P16791.3 (series).

G.7. Speaking Order for Guests

When a number of distinguished invited guests are seated at the head table or present at honors tables, and the program includes remarks from each distinguished invited guest, the question rises as to the order in which each should speak. A special guest may be invited to address a specific subject and is usually accorded a special place on the program before remarks are made by other guests. If the primary speaker is to be the District Commander, his/her comments fall in this category. Otherwise, the precedence for speaking by distinguished guests at the head table or honors table is usually performed in an ascending order according to Coast Guard rank or Auxiliary office (low to high). Table 12-1 provides a suggested speaking order for invited guests at a function with the following caveats:

- a. For district meetings, the DCO will speak last. This includes speaking after the District Commander or higher ranking Coast Guard Officer. The Director or other senior most Coast Guard District Staff Officer (e.g., the Coast Guard District Chief of Staff (dcs), etc.) will speak in the position normally accorded the District Commander when the District Commander is not present, otherwise as shown in Table 12-1.
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- b. For national meetings, the NACO will speak last. This includes speaking after the Commandant or any other Coast Guard Flag officer. The Chief Director or other senior most Coast Guard Headquarters representative (e.g., the Director of Prevention Policy (CG-54)) will speak in the position normally accorded the Commandant when the Commandant is not present, otherwise as shown in Table 12-1.
 - c. For all other meetings (division, flotilla, etc.), the Director or Chief Director, as appropriate, will normally immediately precede the last speaker who will normally be the DCO. For those ceremonial occasions where it may be desirable for the Director or Chief Director to speak last, the DCO will usually agree to the change in support of the ceremonial event.
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Table 12-1
Suggested Speaking Order for Invited Guests

Speaking Order	Guests
1	Special Guests — Local Mayor, District Commander (when the primary speaker)
2	Immediate Past District Commodore
3	District Captain(s)
4	District Chief of Staff
5	Director or representative*
6	Chief Director or representative**
7	District Commodore — always last at a district meeting
8	National Commodore or representative — always last at a National meeting
9	District Commander or representative (if not the main speaker)
10	The Commandant or his representative
11	The presiding Coast Guard officer or Auxiliary leader closes the meeting.
* Unless representing the District Commander at a district function	
** Unless representing the Commandant	

Situations may arise when other guests are present, but not primary speakers. Introduction of those individuals may follow the order provided in Table 12-2.

Table 12-2
Suggested Introduction Order for Non-Primary Speakers

Introduction Order	Guests
1	Governor of the host State
2	Secretary of Homeland Security
3	Former Governors
4	Senators (by seniority)
5	Governors of other States (precedence is by States entry into the union)
6	Members of Congress or Congressional Representatives (by length of service)
7	Commandant of the Coast Guard
8	Three Star Military
9	National Commodore of the Auxiliary (when serving in office)
10	Two Star Military (Rear Admiral, upper half)
11	Auxiliary National Vice Commodore (currently serving in office)
12	One Star Military (Rear Admiral, lower half and Commodores)
13	Deputy National Commodore (currently serving in office)
14	District Commodore, Assistant National Commodore (currently serving in office)
15	Coast Guard Captains
16	District Chief of Staff, District Captain, Directorate Chief (currently serving)