

# PROTOCOL GUIDELINES



NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.  
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## INTRODUCTION

This Protocol information is based on the procedures followed at the NGC, Inc. Conventions and Board of Directors' Meetings. This information may be modified and used as a template.

## PROTOCOL

### What is protocol?

Protocol is being courteous, polite, gracious and hospitable, which is essential in the plans and procedure of any meeting, while honoring our officers and dignitaries. Extending invitations, correct seating of those at the Head Table and introductions are all forms of protocol etiquette. Using guest hospitality along with recognizing that in meetings of organizations, certain Officers have rank. The rank is to be considered in seating and introduction. In most cases, the higher the rank, the easier it will be to observe all the amenities.

**Please** and **thank you** are words we need to utilize always.

## MEETINGS

### National Officer--President

1. One to two years in advance, contact the National President or up-coming President-Elect and extend an invitation to attend your convention. The sitting President should always be given the first consideration in extending an invitation to attend a convention.
2. For the information needed by the NGC President to attend a function, refer to the form **NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC., President Travel Information**, found on the Board Member side of the NGC website ([www.gardenclub.org](http://www.gardenclub.org)). [Click this link](#) to find the PDF fillable travel form.
3. Send the information to the NGC President by attaching the PDF fillable form to an email.
4. National President or dignitary should consult with Convention Chair about hotel accommodations.
5. As the time for departure nears for the Officer, arrangements should be made to ship items to the home at the Officer's request.
6. After speaking at the Convention, a donation to an NGC Project may be presented to the National Officer.
7. At the end of the function, courtesy thank you notes are usually written by the Corresponding Secretary.

**ASSISTANT (PAGE)  
National Officer**

1. A designated assistant should greet the dignitary upon arrival and assist with luggage and hotel check-in. The assistant should also escort the dignitary to registration to make sure the dignitary receives a program and verify the times of the various functions.
2. An assistant should assist the National President or dignitary with seating assignments and any other needs the dignitary may have.

**MEETINGS AND MEALS  
Duties of NGC Protocol Chair**

1. The Protocol Chair receives instructions from the President as to individuals and groups to be given special seating at each meal function: Head Table or Honor Tables and special seating needed during the business meetings.
2. The Protocol Chair keeps in touch with the Convention Chair as to how many seats are needed at the Head Table and how many Honor Tables are to be utilized. They must be aware of the number of seats at Honor Tables.
3. **NGC now requests those seated at the Head or Honor Tables be at their place five minutes before the function begins.**
4. After receiving the information from the President, the Protocol Chair is charged with emailing those members who are to be seated at the Head Table or Honor Tables during the convention. Include in the message to everyone at the Head Table or Honor Tables a reply of "RECEIVED" is sufficient.
5. As the time comes closer to the event, the Protocol Chair must be informed by the President, convention Chair or Registrar if members seated at the Head Table or Honor Tables will not be attending. The one who originally chose those to be seated at special tables will make the replacements. Communication will be sent again, by the Protocol Chair and the lists revised. Please reply ASAP so Protocol knows you understand and have received the message. The word "RECEIVED" is sufficient. Revision may take place up to and including a few minutes before a meal function. Protocol Chair -- **BE PREPARED** for anything to happen.
6. If there is an Assistant Protocol Chair, the above information will be forwarded to that person to step in if necessary.
7. The Protocol Chair will meet with the dining room manager to determine when the room will be available to put the place cards at the Head Table and Honor Tables. Numbers may have to be moved if the hotel has placed these before you arrive. The Protocol Chair requests the dining room floor plan, for each meal, from the Convention Chair.
8. The Protocol Chair provides the place cards. Many of these can be prepared in advance with

only those last-minute changes done at the convention itself. The place cards should be put into separate envelopes clearly labeled as to which day and meal function. Computer-generated place cards are acceptable.

**9. The Protocol Chair determines when the Dining Room doors will be opened.**

**10.** The Protocol Committee or Chair will be seated at an Honor Table and may have to give up their seat for someone who arrives with an unexpected guest. The committee also contacts members selected by the President who can be called upon to fill extra slots.

**11.** The Protocol Committee or Chair will be available to help as needed (buffet lines, loading buses, Headquarters' visit).

**12.** Someone from Protocol presents the Presiding Officer at meals.

**13.** Those seated at the Head and Honor Tables are introduced by the Presiding Officer.

**14.** After introductions, a non-denominational blessing will be given. It is given just prior to a meal. The blessing should be short and simply be a blessing of the food. The blessing will be followed immediately with the serving of the meal--no more introductions or business. An invocation/inspirational message will be given at a business meeting.

**NGC RECEPTIONS**

**1. NGC no longer has receiving lines.**

**2.** Receptions can be informal with the officers and guests circulating and meeting the members.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

**Head Table Seating**

**Conventions**

**1.** Conventions are annual meetings of an organization called for the purpose of transacting certain items of business.

**2.** There can be an opening luncheon or banquet and some of the preliminary introductions, welcomes and response can be made.

**3.** At the business meeting of a convention, the only ones seated on the dais will be the Officers, elected and appointed.

**4.** A center table lectern is preferred for the business meeting. The Presiding Officer will be seated to the immediate right of the lectern. The Parliamentarian is usually seated to the immediate right of the presiding officer. To the right of the Parliamentarian will be the Vice-Presidents in order. To the immediate left of the lectern will be the Recording Secretary followed by the Corresponding Secretary, the Treasurer or these may be reversed followed by

the Assistant Treasurer and other needed Officers. It looks better if the dais is balanced so one of the Officers might be seated on the right beyond the Vice-Presidents.

5. The Protocol Chair is charged with putting the name cards on the dais for business meetings. The same Officers will sit in the same places at each of the business meetings.

6. Others are given special seating at the business meetings. Those members who will be giving the Invocation/Inspirational message, leading the Pledge, giving the Credentials Report, Rules and Program will have special seating. Assistants for the Officers seated at the dais will have special seating as well. The Protocol Chair makes sure those seats are available, assigned and assists those members by either directing them to their seats or placing slips of paper on the backs of the chairs with names.

### INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

1. At the Convention, the installation of Officers may be at a banquet or at a luncheon. Usually, it will be held at a meal function.

2. The composition of the Head Table will be influenced by several things. Honor Tables may be available for this occasion.

3. The President will be closing the meeting with several motions to be adopted. Usually, the Installing Officer will sit to the President's immediate right. It is also usual for the President-Elect to be seated to the immediate left of the lectern. Others to consider being seated at the Head Table at the final meal function would be the Chair of the Convention, Vice-Chair, or Chairs. Since business will be transacted, the Credentials Chair will also be seated at the Honor Table.

4. After the close of the meal in the election year, there may be a reception. It is a good idea to allow those newly installed to leave the room before the closing of the meal to visit the restroom and get some water if needed.

5. The Presiding Officer needs to call for:

- a. The final Credentials Report.
- b. Ask if there is any further business to come before this convention.
- c. Adjourns the convention **Sine Die**.

### INTRODUCTIONS

1. If you are to introduce a speaker or a guest, make sure you have done your homework. You will **introduce someone who is not known to your group** and **present someone who is known**.

2. Make sure you have the correct spelling of the name and **know** how to pronounce it. Find out the person's correct current title.

3. Introductions must be kept short. The general rule is the more important an individual, the

shorter the introduction. If there has been a lengthy biography in an NGC publication or in the Convention Program booklet, do not repeat that information. Try to find some other information or something you have been told from one of the speaker's good friends.

4. The presiding officer will thank the speaker.

5. The Presiding Officer does not turn the meeting over to the Program Chair or to the one who will be introducing the speaker. The Presiding Officer will present the member who will introduce the guest or the speaker. Only those who will be speaking will be given a separate introduction in this form. If workshop presenters are seated at the Honor Table at the meal function closest to the workshop, they would be introduced by name only. They would be introduced at the workshop.

### **SEATING**

Head Table should be an even number of ten or less, if possible.

#### **HEAD TABLE MEAL FUNCTION**

4.3.2.1. Lectern 5.6.7.8.

1. Presiding Officer
2. NGC President
3. Speaker
4. Presenter of Speaker
5. Member giving the Blessing
6. Awards and Special Accomplishments
7. State President
8. Convention Chair

#### **NGC BUSINESS MEETING**

5.4.3.2.1 Lectern 6.7.8.9.10.

1. President (presiding)
2. Parliamentarian
3. First Vice-President
4. Second Vice-President
5. Third Vice-President
6. Recording Secretary
7. Corresponding Secretary
8. Treasurer
9. Historian
10. PH & E

Any other questions contact the Protocol Committee.

### **FLAG ETIQUETTE**

**Refer** to the following website for information about flag etiquette.

<https://www.dar.org/national-society/education/flag-code>

### **DIGITAL ETIQUETTE**

**Refer** to the following websites for information about email and zoom etiquette.

1. Email  
[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/academic\\_writing/email\\_etiquette.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/email_etiquette.html)
2. Zoom. <http://aces.nmsu.edu/4H>