

MOST WORSHIPFUL PRINCE HALL GRAND LODGE

FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS
OF ALABAMA
(PRINCE HALL AFFILIATION)

PROCEDURES OF MASONIC PROTOCOL



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MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND MASTER

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PURPOSE

Dr. William O. Jones, Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Jurisdiction of Alabama directed the standardization of Masonic protocol throughout the Jurisdiction of Alabama and in the various Masonic Bodies operating within the Jurisdiction of Alabama. The procedures contained herein were developed to assist the members of the Jurisdiction of Alabama to become more proficient in Masonic protocol. It is hoped that these procedures will be informative and will achieve the overall objective of standardization of protocol throughout the Jurisdiction of Alabama.

Written by: Bro. Donald R. Parks, RW Grand Senior Deacon

Approved by:

Dr. William O. Jones
Most Worshipful Grand Master
Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Alabama

Attest: Dr. Robert D. Nesbitt, Sr., Grand Secretary

REVISED

The Honorable Corey D. Hawkins, Sr., Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Jurisdiction of Alabama reviewed the protocol procedures and appointed a committee to review, revise, and update the original protocol procedures. Procedures and processes were updated, and revised, and new processes and procedures added to further standardize and clarify protocol procedures included in the original version of the document.

Approved by:

Corey D. Hawkins, Sr., Esq.
Most Worshipful Grand Master
Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Alabama

Suggested additions, changes, or deletions should be forwarded to the Right Worshipful Grand Secretary or to the Most Worshipful Grand Master. Suggestions to improve the content of these procedures are solicited and welcomed.

PROTOCOL

Protocol is important for every member of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Alabama. As a member of the Masonic Order you may be called on to establish protocol or arrange seating at a Masonic function; therefore, it is in the best interest of the Fraternity if Masonic protocol is understood by all of its members. There may be occasions when the head of one of the appendant or adoptive bodies may ask for clarification of Masonic protocol or that the protocol practiced by the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Alabama be used at a function. It is important that the protocol practiced within the Jurisdiction be consistent. Since the Masonic family encompasses other appendant or adoptive bodies and these bodies draw their members from Masonry, it is necessary that uniform protocol be adopted and that all members be acquainted with the uniform protocol and diplomacy as they pertain to the relationship Masonry must maintain with these important appendant or adoptive bodies.

Whenever there is a public activity, the presiding officers of the appendant organizations should always be given due respect. Although common sense must be employed, at no time should Masonry be overlooked.

These procedures are not all encompassing; therefore, Brothers are encouraged to use these procedures as a guide when establishing protocol for an affair involving appendant or adoptive bodies. If the appendant or adoptive body has an established protocol it is advisable to follow the protocol of that body. If there is a conflict between the protocol of an appendant or adoptive body and the protocol of the Grand Lodge, then the Protocol of the Grand Lodge shall prevail.

SEATING AT HEAD TABLES

Banquets and other affairs:

1. The first seat(s) on the right of the podium will be occupied by the M.W. Grand Master with his companion.
2. If other Grand Masters are present, they and their companions will be seated next.
3. Elected Grand Lodge Officers and their companions (Highest to Lowest Rank) are seated in the next seats on the right of the podium.
4. The Master or Mistress of Ceremony is seated in the first seat on the left of the podium.
5. The host of the affair and their companion is seated in the first seat(s) of honor on the left of the podium.

6. The elected officers of the body hosting the affair are seated in the next seats

Note: If the body hosting the affair has established protocol then that bodies protocol should be followed. Anytime the Grand Master is present at a banquet and a head table is used the Grand Master will be seated to the immediate right of the podium. Under no circumstances will the Grand Master be moved to another place and someone else placed in the first seat on the right of the podium. If wives or companions are not seated at the head table, reserved seating will be arranged for the wives or companions of those seated at the head table. The reserved seating will be commensurate with the position of those seated at the head table. If the wives or companions are seated at a second and/or lower tier head table then the wife of the Grand Master will be seated in the middle seat and the wives/companions of those seated on the right next to the Grand Master will be seated to the right of the wife of the Grand Master. The wife/companion of the host of the affair will be seated to the immediate left of the Grand Master's wife and the wives/companions of those seated to the left of the host will be seated next to the wife/companion of the host.

Introducing the Grand Master at Social Affairs, Balls or Galas

The Grand Master will be introduced just prior to introducing the Host of the affair or the one in whose honor the affair is being given. The Grand Master will be escorted by his cabinet, if he desires. When escorted by his cabinet the Master or Mistress of Ceremonies will be instructed to call the name and office of the Grand Lodge Officers present prior to introducing the Grand Master.

If the Grand Worthy Matron and Grand Worthy Patron are present the Grand Worthy Patron will be introduced just prior to the Grand Worthy Matron. No one will be introduced between the Grand Worthy Patron and the Grand Worthy Matron. The Grand Worthy Patron and Grand Worthy Matron will be introduced prior to introducing the Grand Master and his cabinet.

The individual in whose honor the affair is being given will be introduced last. No one will be introduced between the Grand Master and the host/honoree of the affair.

No one will be introduced after the host/honoree is introduced.

ESTABLISHING PROTOCOL

Establishing Masonic protocol as a speaker is a most challenging task. There is considerable confusion concerning what is correct and what is incorrect. The confusion exists mainly because there are no set rules for establishing protocol. Each speaker makes his own rules or does the best he or she can. The following procedures will establish guidelines for establishing protocol at Masonic functions in the jurisdiction of Alabama. These guidelines will be followed by ALL Prince Hall Affiliated and appendant Masonic organizations in the jurisdiction of Alabama.

Protocol will always be established when the Grand Master or his representative is present at a Masonic affair. The Master or Mistress of ceremonies normally establishes protocol; however, any member of the hosting organization may be designated to establish protocol for the program. After protocol has been established other speakers should not attempt to repeat the protocol but will acknowledge the Master and/or Mistress of ceremonies, the head of the sponsoring organization, and the Grand Master or his designated representative. If the affair is being sponsored by the Order of the Eastern Star, then the Grand Worthy Patron and Grand Worthy Matron will also be acknowledged. The following protocol will be used;

1. Acknowledge the head of the sponsoring organization
2. Acknowledge the officers of the sponsoring organization
3. Acknowledge the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Jurisdiction of Alabama
4. Acknowledge visiting Grand Masters and their delegations
5. Acknowledge other Grand Lodge officers present
6. Acknowledge the head of any appendant organizations present
7. Acknowledge the Grand Worthy Patron if present (See note 1)
8. Acknowledge the Grand Worthy Matron (See note 1)
9. Acknowledge other Grand Chapter officers present
10. Acknowledge representatives of State government, if present
11. Acknowledge representatives of County government, if present
12. Acknowledge representatives of City government, if present (See note 2)
13. Acknowledge the members of the sponsoring organization
14. Acknowledge visiting guests of the sponsoring organization
15. Acknowledge the audience

The following is presented as an example of the above protocol procedures using a Lodge sponsored affair;

1. To Brother _____, Worshipful Master of _____ Lodge No. ____
2. To the Officers of _____ Lodge No. ____

3. To the Honorable _____, Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the Jurisdiction of Alabama
4. To MW _____ Grand Master of the Jurisdiction of _____ and MW _____ Grand Master of the Jurisdiction of _____
5. To the Officers of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the Jurisdiction of Alabama
6. To SGIG _____, Deputy for the Orient of Alabama and Noble _____, Imperial Potentate of the Shrine
7. To Brother _____, Grand Worthy Patron of the Mizpah Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star
8. To Sister _____, Grand Worthy Matron of the Mizpah Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star
9. To the Officers of the Mizpah Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star
10. To the Honorable _____, Governor of the State of Alabama
11. To Mr. _____, Chairman of the Montgomery County Commission
12. To Ms. _____, President of the Montgomery City Council
13. To the members of _____ Lodge No. _____
14. To visiting Brothers of _____ Lodge No. 26, Jurisdiction of _____
15. To the Brothers and Sisters, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good evening.

NOTE 1: If the affair is being sponsored by the Order of Eastern Star then the Grand Worthy Patron and Grand Worthy Matron would be acknowledged immediately after acknowledging the Grand Master.

NOTE 2: If representatives of the state, county, or city government are bringing remarks on behalf of the Governor or the Mayor then the individual present will be acknowledged by name with the distinction of "representing the Honorable _____, Governor of _____ or Mayor" as the case may be. If other state, county or city representatives are present as invited guests they will also be acknowledged.

The above protocol and the accompanying example are not all-inclusive and do not attempt to cover all of the possible situations that can exist. Rather the list of protocol and the example are to be used as a guide for establishing protocol by acknowledging those persons that should be addressed. If a situation exists that is not covered by these procedures, then the head of the sponsoring organization should provide guidance or instructions on protocol.

When the affair is sponsored by an appendant Masonic organization and that organization has an established protocol then that organizations protocol will be used; however, if the protocol does not acknowledge the Most Worshipful Grand Master the protocol will be amended to include acknowledgement of the Most Worshipful Grand Master. Conflicts between the protocol of appendant organizations and the protocol of the Jurisdiction of Alabama will be referred to the head of the appendant organization and the Right Worshipful Grand Secretary of the Jurisdiction of Alabama for resolution. It is the responsibility of the host organization to ensure speakers or guests who are not members of the Masonic organization are provided proper guidance on protocol. An individual from the host organization will ensure the none member understands the proper use of the title of those to be acknowledged. This responsibility should not be taken lightly and should be provided in written form to avoid confusion, misunderstanding and embarrassment.

The best and simplest rule to follow in Masonic protocol is to use common sense and remember that if it is a Masonic affair Masonry will be acknowledged first and the Grand Master or his representative must be afforded proper respect.

ESCORTING LADIES

When escorting Ladies at a Masonic function the lady will always be on the males left.

ORDER OF PROCESSION FOR CEREMONIES

When the Lodge forms a procession for Religious or Memorial services or other functions, the following order of procession will be used:

1. Tyler, with drawn sword
2. Stewards, with Rods crossed
3. Master Masons (In twos)
4. Treasurer and Secretary
5. Senior and Junior Wardens
6. Past Masters
7. Holy Bible, Square and Compass, supported by the oldest unofficial member of the lodge, or chaplain.
8. Worshipful Master, Escorted by the Senior Deacon on the right and Junior Deacon on the left with crossed rods

The Marshal will lead the procession.

When the Grand Lodge forms a procession the Order of procession will be;

1. Grand Tyler, with drawn sword
2. Grand Stewards, with Rods crossed
3. Master Masons (In twos)
4. Grand Architect, with Square, Level, and Plumb

5. Grand Treasurer and Grand Secretary
6. Junior Grand Warden (bearing silver vessel of oil, when used and Senior Grand Warden (bearing silver vessel of wine, when used)
7. Grand Chaplain
8. Past Master, with Holy Bible Square and Compasses
9. Past Grand Officers (in inverse order of their official rank)
10. Deputy Grand Master (bearing golden vessel of corn, when used)
11. Master of the oldest Lodge, with Book of Constitution
12. Grand Master escorted by the Grand Senior Deacon on the right and the Grand Junior Deacon on the left, with Rods crossed

*Whenever the Grand or Deputy Grand Master is present, the Book of Constitution must be borne in the procession immediately before him. This must never be done without the presence in the procession of one or both of these officers.

When the procession faces inward the Deacons and Stewards cross their rods and the brethren then pass under them. In returning all processions observe the same order as in going. The rear is always the post of honor.

SEATING IN CHURCHES

Prior arrangements should be made with the Pastor or a representative of the Church to insure adequate space will be made available for the Brothers and Sisters.

Lodge Affair

When the Lodge and Eastern Star Chapter are together, the Sisters will be seated to the left of the presiding officer or to the right of the Brothers. If the capacity of the Church will not permit this seating arrangement, the Sisters will be seated behind the Brothers.

Chapter Affair

When the Sisters are the hosts, the Brothers will be seated on the left of the presiding officer or to the right of the Sisters. If the capacity of the Church will not permit this seating arrangement the Brothers will be seated behind the Sisters.

Other Masonic Organizations

Follow the protocol of the sponsoring organization. If the organization does not have established protocol, then follow the procedures for Lodge and Chapter affairs.

PREPARING FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE M.W. GRAND MASTER OR OTHER GRAND LODGE OFFICERS

When a Masonic body is to be visited by the Grand Master or other Grand Lodge Officer, the host must make advance preparations for the visit. The Worshipful Master or head of the Masonic order to be visited will appoint a committee to make the prearrival, arrival, and departure arrangements.

Prearrival Arrangements

The Chairperson of the committee will coordinate the estimated arrival and departure time of the Grand Master or Grand Lodge Officer and the name(s) and number of members in the visiting party. Arrangements will be made to accommodate ALL members of the visiting party. If the Grand Master will be accompanied by his spouse or other special guest the committee will make arrangements for an escort, reserved seating, and other accommodations. The committee will make arrangements for reserved parking space(s) as near to the entrance to the building as possible. If arrangements cannot be made for reserved parking, the committee will ensure personnel are assigned to meet the Grand Master or Grand Lodge Officer on arrival.

Arrival

On arrival of the Grand Master or Grand Lodge Officer the committee will assist with parking arrangements and escort the Grand Master or visiting Grand Lodge Officer to the location of the event. The committee will escort the Grand Master or Grand Lodge Officer and their guests to their seats. The committee will provide other assistance as requested by the Grand Master or Grand Lodge Officer or members of their guests.

Departure

After the program/event the committee will assist the Grand Master or Grand Lodge Officer and escort the visiting party back to their vehicles for departure.

RECEPTION OF THE M.W. GRAND MASTER

Masonic Body

When the M.W. Grand Master visits any Masonic body, a committee consisting of the Senior and Junior Deacons with crossed staffs, the Marshal, and the Stewards will receive him. He will be escorted into the Lodge under the crossed staffs of the Senior and Junior Deacons led by the Marshal and escorted by the

Senior and Junior Steward, who will assist by carrying articles of the Grand Master. He will be escorted to the East and presented to the Worshipful Master or presiding officer. The Worshipful Master or presiding officer will raise the body when the Grand Master enters the room. All will remain standing. The Grand Master will be received by the Worshipful Master or presiding officer. The Worshipful Master or presiding officer will introduce the Grand Master and will lead the body in giving Private Grand Honors to the Grand Master. The Grand Master will be presented the gavel and the Lodge or body will be in his charge. When the Grand Master visits a Lodge, the Worshipful Master uncovers and remains uncovered until the Grand Master returns the gavel to him or the Grand Master departs. The Grand Master makes comments and performs any other act he desires. On conclusion of the Grand Masters comments, if he is to depart the meeting the Worshipful Master or presiding officer will raise the body and all will remain standing until the Grand Master has exited the Lodge. The Grand Master will be escorted from the Lodge in the same form used to escort him into the Lodge. If the Grand Master remains and returns the gavel to the Worshipful Master the Grand Master is seated to the immediate right of the Worshipful Master.

When the Grand Master is accompanied by other Grand Lodge Officers the Grand Lodge Officers will take their corresponding seat in the Lodge. The Lodge Officers will relinquish their seats to the corresponding Grand Officers and take their position on the right of the Grand Lodge Officer, respectively.

No other person should ever be requested to or permitted to make comments after the Grand Master has made remarks. The Worshipful Master or presiding officer may proceed with any business of the order that is on the agenda, but no Brother should be permitted to make comments regarding the Grand Masters comments or to open discussion on the Grand Masters comments unless specifically requested to do so by the Grand Master. In the Masonic Order, no one should be permitted to speak after the Grand Master has spoken.

Public Function

When the Grand Master is a participant in a public program that is hosted by a Masonic body, the Grand Master will be seated in the seat of honor (see seating page 4). If a procession is formed the Grand Master will be the last to enter. The presiding officer will request that everyone rise to receive the Grand Master and remain standing until seated. The presiding officer will receive and introduce the Grand Master and lead the order in presenting Public Grand Honors. The Grand Master will either seat the assembly or request the presiding officer to seat the assembly.

The Grand Master will make opening remarks if he desires or he may elect to hold his remarks until a later time. The Grand Master will be the last to make final remarks at the close of the program. At public ceremonies the only remarks to be made after the Grand Master's comments are announcements and the adjournment (including the invocation) by the presiding officer.

At the end of the program the assembly is requested to rise and remain standing until the Grand Master has departed.

RECEIVING GRAND LODGE OFFICERS

Grand Lodge Officers of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Alabama will always be received with due respect and invited to a seat in the East when on an official visit to any Masonic body. If the Grand Lodge Officer is representing the Most Worshipful Grand Master then he will be given the same protocol as that accorded to the Grand Master, except Grand Honors. Care must be taken when receiving a visiting Grand Lodge Officer and other Grand Lodge Officers are present. If a Grand Lodge Officer of a higher office is present then the body will not be gaveled up for the visiting Grand Lodge Officer, although he will be received, introduced to the craft and offered a position in the East. However, if the visiting Grand Lodge Officer is representing the Grand Master on an official visitation then the body will be gaveled up and the visiting Grand Lodge Officer will take precedence, although lower in position than other Grand Lodge Officers that are present. A representative of the Grand Master takes precedence over all other Grand Lodge Officers except the Grand Master.

When attending public Masonic functions or gatherings the Grand Lodge Officers will be introduced just prior to the Most Worshipful Grand Master and in inverse order (lowest to highest in precedence). If the Grand Worthy Matron, Grand Worthy Patron, and Grand Chapter Officers are to be introduced the Grand Chapter Officers will be introduced in inverse order (lowest to highest in precedence). The Grand Worthy Patron will be introduced just prior to the Grand Worthy Matron. No member of the Grand Chapter or any other body will be introduced between the introduction of the Grand Worthy Patron and the Grand Worthy Matron.

GRAND LODGE OFFICERS OF OTHER MASONIC JURISDICTIONS

Visiting Grand Lodge Officers of other Masonic Jurisdictions will be given the same respect as Grand Lodge Officers of this jurisdiction. They will be received, introduced to the Craft, and invited to a seat in the east. If the visiting Grand Lodge Officer is a Grand Master and the Grand Master of this jurisdiction is not

present the visiting Grand Master will be given Grand Honors. However, if the Grand Master of this jurisdiction is present and a visiting Grand Master is to be received the Grand Master of this jurisdiction will receive the visiting Grand Master.

PROCESSION FOR FUNERALS AND CORNER STONE CEREMONIES

The ceremonies for laying a Cornerstone by a Lodge and funeral services are often performed as a public ceremony. It is important that the Lodge performing these public ceremonies are aware of the proper procedures and processes. Members of the Jurisdiction of Alabama are directed to refer to Funeral and Corner Stone Ceremonies of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Alabama for instructions and information on the procedures for conducting these and other ceremonies.

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION

Official correspondence to the Most Worshipful Grand Master or any Grand Lodge Officer will be formally addressed. The formal address of the Most Worshipful Grand Master is;

Most Worshipful Full Name
Most Worshipful Grand Master
Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Alabama

Example: Most Worshipful James L. Doe, Sr.
Most Worshipful Grand Master
Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Alabama

The formal address of other Grand Lodge Officers is;

Right Worshipful Full Name
Right Worshipful his office
Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Alabama

Example: Right Worshipful Dr. James L. Doe, Jr.
Right Worshipful Grand Senior Deacon
Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Alabama

The salutation to the Grand Master should be “Honorable Sir” or “Most Worshipful Sir” or “MW Grand Master”. Salutations to other Grand Lodge Officers should be “Right Worshipful Sir” or “RW Grand Senior Deacon”.

The complimentary close should be formal and simple and should not include cryptic or allegorical phrases, i.e., “GATOU” or other catchy phrases. Suggested

complimentary closes are, Sincerely Yours, Very Truly Yours, Fraternally, Respectfully, etc. The complimentary close should be spaced two lines from the last line of text of the letter. The senders signature should be spaced six lines from the complimentary close and should be the senders normal name. Below the signature line should be placed the title of the sender and the Lodge number, i.e., Worshipful Master, No. 345 or Secretary, No. 190 or Past Master, No. 210. Do not include degrees attained, i.e., John R. Doe, 33° or any other symbols. If the letter is addressed to the Grand Master and a courtesy copy is being provided to others, then indicate this by listing the recipients by name and title below the signature line. A courtesy copy of any formal correspondence with a Grand Master, Grand Secretary or other Grand Lodge Officer of another jurisdiction will be provided to the Grand Master and Grand Secretary.

CONCLUSION

Masonic Protocol is complex and sometimes confusing; however, it is the inherent duty of the head of all Masonic organizations to practice standard Masonic protocol. This guide provides basic procedures to be followed in the Jurisdiction of Alabama. Any situation or circumstance that arises that is not addressed by these procedures will be resolved by the organization hosting the affair. Under no circumstances will protocol be left to chance. Proper protocol should be a part of the planning for the affair. When protocol procedures are not addressed in this or any other directive or guide the best rule to follow is to use common courtesy and show proper respect. It is hoped these procedures will standardize protocol throughout the Jurisdiction of Alabama and will assist you in practicing good protocol.

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