

# PROTOCOL GUIDE FOR THE MODERN PROFESSIONAL

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# TERMINOLOGIES

- ◉ Protocol - The customs and regulations dealing with diplomatic formality, precedence and etiquette. Forms of Ceremony and Etiquette observed by Diplomats and Heads of State
- ◉ Etiquette - A code of correct conduct.
- ◉ Diplomacy - The interfacing with foreign dignitaries usually in the furtherance of foreign policy.

# GENERAL PROTOCOL

- ◉ The place of honour in Belize is on the right.
- ◉ The Flag of Belize is always on the left when standing beside the flag. The guest flag is on the right in the place of honour.
- ◉ The National Anthem - when using the instrumental version only the first verse is played; when sung, both verses are sung.
- ◉ Belize has a Table of Precedence headed by the Governor-General. (copy being circulated)
- ◉ Protocol list is determined by the Table of Precedence and the invited guest, it is best to repeat all the names on the list and do NOT say “protocol having been established”.

# GENERAL PROTOCOL

## ◉ Dress Code

- ◉ climate, religion and local habits must be taken into consideration when setting dress code for an event.
- ◉ Appropriate Clothing for occasion - office, field work, meetings, lunches, dinners, reception.
- ◉ Accessories
  - ◉ make up - minimal during the day time, you should look different in the evening.
  - ◉ hair style - avoid elaborate hair styles
  - ◉ shoe type- no slippers or sandals (especially in office)
  - ◉ Jewelry and fragrance - keep it mild and minimal

# GENERAL PROTOCOL

## FORMS OF ATTIRE

- **Business attire** - Men: lounge suit, coloured shirt, tie, dark socks and dark shoe. Ladies: knee length dress or suit, trouser suit. Long Sleeve Guayabera
- **Smart casual** - Men: no tie, shirt or polo shirt, slacks or jeans, jacket, blazer. Ladies: skirt, or trousers, nice top with cardigan or jacket
- **Casual** - Men : as above , no jacket or blazer. Ladies: as above but not too short and revealing.
- **Informal (after 5pm)** - Business attire
- **Formal** - men: black tie/tuxedo/dinner jacket Ladies: knee length dress or long evening dress, high heeled shoes or dressy flats
- **White tie** - men: tails. Ladies: floor length ball gown, gloves ( remove when eating or drinking), high heeled shoes or dressy flats
- **National Dress** - Long sleeve Guayabera used in Belize.

# GENERAL PROTOCOL

- ◉ **Punctuality** - as a host or organizing team, be there no less than 30 minutes before the start of the event. As a Guest be seated at least 10 minutes before the start of the event
- ◉ **Cell Phones** - While necessary in your capacity as member of organizing team, put phone on vibrate. Do not answer while dealing with VIP or once the event starts; if you absolutely must communicate use text and make sure you are not seen.
- ◉ **Create a positive image** - smile, positive pleasant and helpful attitude, stand when introducing or being introduced to someone, make good eye contact and firm hand shake.

# GENERAL PROTOCOL

## ◉ Personal Matters at work

- Discuss with supervisor which is best suited for the smooth running of the office when conducting personal business during work hours- taking time before arrival at work or leaving during the work day.
- Children on the job should not be encouraged unless management provides a room where they can be accommodated - not acceptable to have them in office, particularly if employees will be in and out discussing matters.

# GENERAL PROTOCOL

## ◉ Gifts

- In selecting gifts for guests be mindful of travel and weight restrictions. Select items that are practical and would be used either personally or professionally - avoid books as much as possible.
- Gifts are usually personal so try to find out as much about individual and their interest when selecting gifts.
- In giving a gift bag it may be best to insert a CD in place of written material and consider local items as a way of promotion of national products.
- In the diplomatic and international arena it is customary to give a token of appreciation for kindness displayed. It is always good for the Minister or CEO when travelling to take along small gift bags or items ( key chains, magnets, pens, etc) to show gratitude to liaison officers.



# OFFICE CONDUCT

## ◉ **Assisting others**

- Treat others the way you would like to be treated. If someone knew what to do they would not be seeking help.
- In an open plan, even if you do not look up and see a person entering, respond when they say good morning (particularly those nearest the pathway).

## ◉ **Telephone**

- Smile and use proper English (or Spanish when necessary) it will show in your voice, drop the slangs, take and deliver phone messages.
- Always identify yourself to each new person to whom you are transferred.
- If placing a call for someone, identify yourself and indicate who would like to speak with recipient before transferring the call.

# OFFICE CONDUCT

## ◉ Business Lunches

- Where to sit and when to sit, what to order, have host order, when to start eating.
- What to do as soon as you are seated at the table
- Participating in the conversation , follow the lead by superior or host. Make polite conversation and do not contradict your boss or superior officer.

## ◉ Mails

- Always respond to emails and correspondence even if a short standard response, the response may not be important to you but critical to someone else.
- Utilize standard business format for letters and memos, presentation and grammar is important.

# OFFICE CONDUCT

- **Correct behavior and manners**
  - Salutations - handshake, bowing, eye contact, kisses (mindful of cultural differences)
  - Business Cards - present them face up, do not exchange cards while seated at dinner or lunch, take time to read card before putting it away.
  - Rising - men should stand when higher ranking or an older persons or lady enters the room and remain standing until they are seated. Ladies should stand only if a much older or higher ranking lady enters the room
  - Introducing yourself and others - I am Diana Locke, Director of International Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; introduce others lower rank to higher rank, younger to older, men to women

# MEETINGS/EVENTS

- **Venue** - Type and size of event will determine the venue.
  
- **Small Business Meeting**
  - Have guests seated with back to the door.
  - Delegations should be on opposite side of table with host and primary seated directly in front of each other and the most senior on either side of principal moving outward.
  - Small name plates are recommended
  - Technical or support staff not directly participating may sit at back of host or guest to avoid a crowded table.
  
- **Event requiring Head Table**
  - Guest of Honour and persons speaking sit at Head table, try to keep head table to 6 persons maximum if possible
  - Guest of Honour and host in middle others on either side in order of seniority. MC may or may not sit at head table.

# MEETINGS /EVENTS

- ◉ **Room lay out and seating arrangements.**
  - Use of 2 or 3 sections to facilitate ease of movement.
  - VIP section can be in the middle
  - Hosts sits next to Special Guest and Spouse (if applicable)
  - Persons presenting should be seated in front.
  
- ◉ Floral Arrangement for head table or front of room
  - ◉ Floral arrangement on head table should be designed low and long
  - ◉ If needed for the front of the room, place in a location which would not be distracting - in front of podium

# MEETING/EVENTS

## ◉ Seating Times

- Governor-General - 5 Minutes before the start of event
- Prime Minister - 10 Minutes
- Chief Justice - 12 Minutes
- Members of National Assembly - 15 minutes
- General Public - 20 Minutes
- Once the Governor-General Arrives and is escorted to his seat the programme should begin.
- All VIPs should be escorted to their seats.
- Seating is done according to rank with the most important person in the middle.
- The Governor-General or Guest of Honour and spouse is normally seated next to the host or the Prime Minister.
- The Governor-General's ADC is ALWAYS seated directly behind the Governor-General.

# MEETING /EVENTS

## ◉ Flags

- The Belize (host) flag is flown on the right (when facing the flag from the audience). The guest flag is flown on the left.
- Single flag can be placed to right of the podium or just behind on the right to provide a backdrop for the speaker.
- If more than two flags are flown the Belize practice is to place them in alphabetically order.
- All countries in attendance must have their flag displayed. In CARICOM or SICA meetings it is customary to fly all flags whether a country attends or not.
- If an organization's flag is used along with country flags the organization flag goes to the end.
- Flags - condition, times and illumination.

# MEETING /EVENTS

## ◉ Refreshments

- Offer coffee before the start of the meeting
- If a High level business meeting , coffee and light refreshments should be served by someone.
- Avoid pre-packaged refreshments as much as possible - it avoids waste and looks less appealing.

## ◉ Coffee Break

- Arrange coffee break at back of room if it is continuous service.
- Items can be place before the start of the meeting or if large meeting at a scheduled time for break or continuous service throughout the meeting.
- Select items which are easy to handle and not crumbly or messy.



# MEETING /EVENTS

## ○ Opening Ceremonies

- The ideal time frame for an opening ceremony is 45-60 minutes, it can be a bit longer if there is entertainment.
- Speeches should not extend beyond 3-5 minutes per person, with the Key note speaker being allowed up to 15 minutes depending on time.
- There can be a head table or speakers can be seated in front row.
- The National Anthem is normally played (instrumental) at the opening ceremonies followed by the invocation if this is included.

## ○ Forms of Address

- Reference should be made to all those present who appear on the table of precedence according to rank.
- It is recommended that a list be placed on the podium and all speakers asked to refer to this list.

# MEETING/EVENTS

## FORMS OF ADDRESS

- ◉ The Governor-General is addressed as “Your Excellency” when speaking directly to him or “His Excellency” when addressing him in the audience.
  - Spouses should always be acknowledged and in Belize’s case Lady Young. The Governor-General is the Head of State and his wife would be referred to as the First Lady.
- ◉ Prime Minister - Hon. ...., Rt. Hon is reserved for Prime Ministers and persons admitted by the Privy Council.
- ◉ Your Honour Justice -----, Chief Justice
- ◉ Hon..... Leader of the Opposition
- ◉ The spouses of the Prime Minister, Chief Justice and Leader of the Opposition are referred to as Mrs. ....
- ◉ Senators are addressed as “The Honourable”, however if a member of the Cabinet, referred to as “Senator the Hon.”

# MEETING/EVENT

- ◉ **Coordinator, Liaison Officers, Transport officer**
- ◉ **Accommodation, venue, airport arrival and departures**
- ◉ **Social programmes, cultural activities, field trips**
- ◉ **Interpretation**
- ◉ **Media coverage and photographs**
- ◉ **Audio visual, internet access and recording**

# RECEPTIONS

## ◉ Guest List

- Morning and mid-day events, customary to invite only business associate.
- Evening events spouse should be included especially if of a social nature.

## ◉ Time Frame for Receptions

- Receptions during the day time are normally 2 hours .
- Evening events are also normally 2 hours but can be extended longer.
- Customary that the host or a senior representative be on hand to greet guest at the door for at least 30 minutes from the start of the event. Host stands first follow by hostess or guest of honour
- If on a time schedule the bar can be closed at a specific time, waiters can signal close of bar by making last call for drinks.

# RECEPTIONS - CONT'D

## ◉ Invitations

- Not on every occasion will staff be able to be invited to a reception. Invitations are generally issued based on interaction with personnel.
- Guest lists are prepared in order of protocol, special guests, working relationships and persons in the field.
- Invitations should be sent out at a minimum 2 weeks prior to the event.
- When no invitation is received it is not proper to solicit one.
- Follow up on invitations, particularly for those persons on the table of precedence.
- Avoid sending invitations by post if time is limited
- It is acceptable to send electronic invitations, which must be followed up by telephone call.

# RECEPTIONS CONT'D

## ◉ Service at receptions

- If entertaining foreign guests, it is always best to serve local items, which are easily handled. Select a caterer who is creative and has a wide selection of items to choose from.
- Immediately on arrival guests should be offered a drink, the bar can be closed during the short programme; however as soon as the official activities are over and entertainment (if any begins) the bar should be reopened.
- If using a buffet self serve table, invite special guest and host to buffet first followed by other guests. A pre-prepared plate can be served to the special guest and host.
- If possible provide seating for host and special guest and elderly invited guests.

# RECEPTIONS CONT'D

- A reception is used by many as another means to conduct business and network.
- If the office hosts an event and the staff is invited, please be reminded that the guests must be served first (even though you are a guest, you are an employee first).
- Pay keen attention to alcohol consumption by colleagues.

# LUNCHEES & DINNERS

- ◉ Table can be square, round, or oblong
  - Square and round table facilitates conversation with all parties, an oblong restricts conversation to just those seated next to each other.
- ◉ Men and women are seated alternately.
- ◉ Spouses can be invited to social lunches, but usually it will only be the business associate.
- ◉ Couples are not seated side by side.
- ◉ Consider language barriers and similar interest.
- ◉ Name cards recommended with name on both sides.
- ◉ Waiters serve food from left and remove from right ; pours drinks from right and remove from right.
- ◉ Lady on host's right side is served first; host is serve the last.
- ◉ Different glasses for each kind of drink, different plates for each course and cutlery is used from outside to inside.



**THANK YOU FOR BEING A WONDERFUL  
AUDIENCE AND FOR PARTICIPATING TO MAKE  
THIS DISCUSSION FRUITFUL!**