

# Shrine Protocol

## PROPER DISPLAY OF NATIONAL FLAGS

It is the desire of the Imperial Potentate that each temple of this Order provide and display at all Shrine parades, functions and meetings, the four national flags under which Shrine temples chartered by the Imperial Council operate (United States of America, Canada, Mexico and Panama).

It has been noted that many temples improperly display one or more of the four national flags, primarily in parades and at meetings.

Most nations designate the position on the **right** as the position of honor. International usage dictates that when flags of two or more nations are displayed together, they should be flown from separate staffs of the same height and should be approximately equal in size.

### **In an Auditorium**

At Shrine functions and meetings, the four national flags should be displayed in the position of honor at the potentate's or speaker's right (as he faces the audience). It doesn't matter whether the flags are behind, alongside, or in front of the speaker, on raised platform or not; they should always be to his right. Another important point is that the flag of the country in which they are being displayed should be on the speaker's extreme right. In Canada, however, the law states that when there are multiple flags flown together, the Canadian flag should occupy the central position.

### **At Parades**

When in procession, the flag of the country in which they are being paraded should be either on the **marching right**, that is, the flag's own right or, if there are a great number of other flags, it may be in front of the center of that line. It is strongly suggested that the four national flags always be paraded side-by-side, in front of state, provincial, or other local flags, with the flag of the country in which they are being paraded having the position of honor on the **marching right**.

Other flags which temples may wish to parade should be in a line immediately following the four national flags in the following order, beginning on the right: state or provincial flag; Shrine temple flag; Imperial Potentate's flag; Past Imperial Potentate's flag; and other flags.

One of the most common violations of international flag usage is the dipping of national flags at reviewing stands, during the playing of the national anthems and other occasions. National flags should never be dipped to any person or thing. However, all other flags should be dipped as a mark of honor.

### **In Front of Shrine Temples and Club Buildings**

When the four national flags are displayed in front of a Shrine temple or club building, they should be flown from separate staffs of the same height and the flags should be of approximately equal size. The flag of the country in which they are being displayed should be in the position of honor on the extreme right, that is, a person's own right as he faces outward of the building's front entrance.

### **Half Staff**

When a nation in which the flags are displayed proclaims that its flag should be flown at half-staff, it would be improper to fly the other three flags at full staff; therefore, the flags of the other three nations should not be flown during that period.

### **Imperial Protocol**

The Imperial Potentate's schedule is such as to keep him away from his home and office for weeks at a time. For this reason, it is requested that copies of all correspondence sent directly to him by temples and representatives be sent to the Executive Vice President at international headquarters in Tampa, Florida. This practice will assure an expeditious handling of all such correspondence.

Temples are reminded that complaints or correspondence from individual Nobles on Imperial Council or temple matters must be handled in accordance with Article 38 of the bylaws of The Imperial Council.

## **VISITATION BY IMPERIAL POTENTATE & IMPERIAL OFFICERS**

The Imperial Potentate is the number one Noble of the International Shrine and must be accorded the dignity and respect befitting his high office. Protocol dictates that careful plans and arrangements be made prior to his visitation and completed during his visitation.

The host temple potentate, director general, association president or their official representatives should be at the airport to meet the Imperial Potentate upon his arrival. An automobile and driver must be provided who is responsible

for transporting the Imperial Potentate, his party, and luggage to the hotel. The driver should remain available at all times.

Honor guard, color guard, or their uniformed units are often used to provide pomp and ceremony for the Imperial Potentate's arrival. Their use is not mandatory, however. Motorized Shrine units or official police may be used as motorized escorts from the airport to the hotel.

A suite of rooms should be provided for the Imperial Potentate. Normal courtesies are appreciated and should any additional information be required, please contact the Executive Vice President at International Headquarters.

When an Imperial officer is assigned by the Imperial Potentate as his official representative, the same protocol is followed as would be in effect for the Imperial Potentate. All other visiting Imperial officers are afforded the utmost courtesies. Should your temple have as a member an Imperial officer, the same courtesies should be extended when he is invited to a function as any other visiting Imperial officer. The Imperial Potentate's host and his assigned aide or driver are responsible for the departure arrangements. These arrangements include transportation of the Imperial Potentate, his party, and luggage to the airport. Sufficient time should be allowed so as to assure the Imperial Potentate's arrival at the airport at least one hour prior to the departure flight time.

### **Order of Formation for Temple and Association Parades**

1. Police escort.
2. Dignitaries other than Masonic.
3. Parade Marshal.
4. Colors, singly or massed.
5. Musical unit (if possible).
6. Director General.
7. Imperial Potentate or other ranking Imperial Officer present. The Imperial Potentate will ride alone, or may invite any distinguished male guest passenger. Only the Imperial Potentate may ride on the back of the seat of his car. All others must remain on the seats of their cars.
8. Imperial officers other than the Imperial Potentate -by rank. One officer to a car and no guests.
9. Past Imperial Officers - by seniority rank.
10. Association officers (when in Association parades only).
11. Distinguished guests (Grand Master and heads of other Masonic organizations).

12. Host temple potentate and his divan.
13. Visiting potentates, divans, and past potentates.
14. Uniformed units of host temple followed by other temples in the order determined by the association.

(Automobiles other than antique cars requiring special display, used for the purpose of transporting dignitaries, divan members or association officers, with the exception of the potentate or association president, must be not less than two abreast. The general public's interest is in parade units, not automobiles. This will make the parade more interesting to those who have come to watch it.)

### **Shrine Parade Regulations.**

1. **Non-Shriners.** Other than the police escort, dignitaries and distinguished guests, only Shriners are permitted in Shrine parades.
2. **Cadence.** Marching cadence will be 110 steps to the minute, except for specialized units, which may require a different cadence.
3. **Interval.** Intervals of not over 80 feet between temples and 40 feet between units are to be constantly maintained.
4. **Impersonations.** No impersonations of ethnic groups, females, or political figures are allowed in parades.
5. **Vehicle equipment.** No motorized vehicles shall engage their sirens, flashing lights or colored lights. They are to use their turn indicators and items required by law.
6. **Safety laws.** Motorcycles, scooters, and other motorized vehicles shall obey local laws regarding speed, prudent operation and the use of hard helmets instead of fezzes.
7. **Throwing objects.** Neither candy nor other objects shall be THROWN to spectators along the parade route.
8. **Demeaning displays.** No demeaning displays, or discharge of firearms of any type, or other items that may be considered in poor taste are permitted.
9. **Alcoholic beverages.** Members of participating units shall not drink any alcoholic beverages before or during any parade, and they shall be circumspect in the use of soft drinks in public places so as not to give the impression they are drinking alcoholic beverages.
10. **Reviewing Stand.**
  - a) At Imperial Session parades, a reviewing stand is reserved for the exclusive use of the Imperial Potentate, Imperial officers, Past

Imperial officers, and such guests as invited by the Imperial Potentate.

- b) At the reviewing stand during Imperial parades, temple divans will give the hand salute and will not stop to salaam. The Imperial Potentate (or ranking Imperial officer) receives the salute. When temples from an Imperial officer's state or province pass in review, that officer receives the salute of these temples along with the Imperial Potentate.
  - c) At association of temples parades, the ranking Imperial officer along with the association president or potentate (as appropriate) receives the salute of all temples. Other Imperial officers and association officers will follow the same procedure as above.
  - d) At association of temple parades, the temple potentates may leave their cars and accept the salutes of their units.
11. **National flags.** No national flag shall be lowered or dipped when passing the Reviewing Stand or elsewhere.
12. **Enforcement.** Parade marshals shall enforce all Shrine parade regulations and they shall report any violators to the potentate of his temple. Failure on the part of a temple potentate to cooperate with parade marshals shall be reported in writing.
13. **Potentate responsibility.** Each potentate is personally responsible and accountable for knowingly permitting any violation of parade regulations. Temple potentates are required to review parade regulations with their temple marshal, the parade marshal, and their unit heads.

## **CIVIC PARADES**

- 1. **Approval.** Units and clubs that participate in non-Shrine parades may do so only with approval from their potentate. Should they be requested to participate in the jurisdiction of another temple, they will also need the permission of the potentate of that temple. Practice good Shrine etiquette when parading in non-Shrine parades and follow the protocol set up by the host sponsor of the parade.
- 2. **Non-Shriners.** Non-Shriners are prohibited from participating in Shrine units in civic parades.