

## **Protocol Guidelines**

The purpose of this is to provide a uniform presentation of rules for protocol that is designed to serve the needs of the Court and to be within the guidelines as set forth by H.I.M., The Absolute Empress I, Jose, The Widow Norton, founder of the International Court System. Here are specific rules and distinctions for Imperial Courts, Royal Ducal Courts and Baronies. However, for purposes of this document we will only deal with Imperial Courts. Information on other types of monarchies can be obtained from the Master of Protocol.

At the beginning of all Coronations and Investitures the Gay, American, Canadian, Mexican and other local specific flags should be presented by flag bearers. Bearing flags at other state functions will be optional and at the discretion of the Reigning Monarchs. The flags should be held firmly upright and presented with equality of time and space.

With the presentation of the flags, the anthems should be presented. It is only necessary to present an anthem if a representative of its country is in attendance. Anthems should be done alphabetically with the US anthem presented last. When an anthem is presented all flags must lower evenly with the exception of the flag of the country whose anthem is being played and the American flag that is never lowered. The flag of the anthem being presented should be spotlighted and held upright. During the playing of the anthems and the introduction of flags, audience members should be directed to stand and gentlemen should remove their hats.

Simply put, the dress code for State Functions is formal. Female members should be presented in full-length evening gowns and if there are no sleeves in the gown, you should wear elbow length gloves, either white or dyed to match the gown. Male members should dress formally with white or black gloves. When possible they should be leather. Leather and denim are discouraged unless they are part of your title identification or are approved by the Reigning Emperor or Empress to be worn. Faded or ripped jeans are appropriate only where they are in support of the theme of the event. Exposed buttocks are never appropriate. Local fashion trends may alter these established policies. However, when traveling, remember to be respectful of what their wishes and customs may be.

If one has a female title, he should present himself as a female and not walk in male face or dress. Likewise, male titles should not walk in female face or dress. Exceptions can be made for illness or with some presentations. Many in-theme presentations do not allow time to change into formal dress or gender specific face.

When one of a lesser title is presented to an Emperor/Empress, a simple bow or curtsy is required. The tradition of bowing and curtsying originates from a notion that respect is shown by having one's head lower than the Monarch. Male titleholders should present a slight bow from the waist and should be at least an arm's distance from whom they are bowing to. Female titleholders should present a curtsy, which is done with a straight back, usually with the right foot behind the left foot. With the right knee directly behind the left knee, a small bend completes the curtsy.

Those of equal or higher title do not bow or curtsy when presented. An acknowledgement is done with a nod of the head and looking each other in the eye. When one is being presented to a pair of Monarchs, one bow or curtsy for both will suffice. Hugs and kisses should be reserved for step down performances and are discouraged when presented to the dais. Double dipping should be discouraged. When you have bowed/curtsyed on your entrance, it is not necessary to do so as you leave.

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When a reigning Monarch is presented you should always stand out of respect. It is not necessary to do so for all past Monarchs and to do so is a sign of ultimate respect.

In most instances, you will be entering on the opposite side of the Monarch of your gender. As you approach the dais, the male should cross the female in front of him and be on the gender specific side to acknowledge the Monarchs.

It is customary to present stepping down gifts to the Monarchs. At State functions there should be attendants to receive and organize such gifts. Monarchs can appoint court members to carry and present their gifts. If the Monarchs wish to personally present the gifts, the Court member carrying them should approach the Monarchs as they arrive on the dais and make the exchange. Monarchs usually give souvenir pins to those present and such pins should never be pinned onto the recipients.

It is appropriate to invite any heirs apparent present to come to the dais and witness the crowning ceremony.

Titles are given at the discretion of the Monarchs. The highest titles walk last and you only walk with your highest title. Court members walk arranged by the importance as set forth by the Court standards

The Serene Line walks after everyone with a lesser title and the Imperial Line walks last followed by the King Father and Queen Mother.

When Lifetime Title Holders are presented the most recently appointed should walk first.

The two Monarchs who reigned last year are addressed as the Dowager Emperor/Empress. They are presented first in the COM, which is then presented down through the lineage to the first reign.

The COM should be addressed as His/Her Most Imperial Majesty.

The elected Reigning Monarchs always walk last and should be addressed as His/Her Most Imperial Sovereign Majesty. (Sovereign when used in a Monarchs address indicates they are reigning.) After stepping down you don't use Sovereign anymore.

Remember that Coronation ceremonies are a show and consideration to your visiting Courts must be given. Length is a major problem. Crowning ceremonies should be geared to happen by midnight. Command performances should be given to outstanding entertainers and not to good friends who have little performing experience. Five-seven minutes is an acceptable time restriction for command performers.

Step down performances are the time to acknowledge friendships, and hugs and kisses abound. Remember that an audience can quickly tire watching if it becomes too self-indulgent. We have all seen people step down who drag it out by refusing tips for a long period of time and then accept a tip every 45 seconds so it appears that they are the most loved and had the world's longest tip line. If you have taped numerous numbers and the tip line stops you should not continue to perform songs.

MC's should be given an advance copy of the script so they can rehearse title pronunciation and consider the pacing of the evening. MC's can make or break your event. Consider carefully whom you ask and make sure it is someone who can handle taking on a microphone and adapt to unexpected situations. Also, make certain it is not someone with a reading problem. You want someone who can "run them through like cattle".

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Lastly, have fun. Choose innovative themes and encourage upbeat performances. Have organized and brief walks. Give sufficient warning to all participants who must appear onstage so that they are ready.