

Protocol for Introducing Dignitaries

Dignitaries often visit contests. Since they have given up their personal time to attend your contest, it is good form and proper etiquette to acknowledge their presence. The Contest Chair is the best person to do this. Sometimes the SAA may do so.



If the SAA is to do the introductions, it is important either before the contest or during the Briefing Period that they discreetly ask the Organizer, the Chairs, and the Chief Judge for help in compiling the dignitary list. Then, depending on the time available and the number of dignitaries, there are two ways to introduce them. Ideally, invited dignitaries will have confirmed their attendance, and it's entirely OK to request that they do so!

The Shorter Way:

This is a blanket approach. It is best used when timing is tight or when there are many dignitaries.

★ **Best Practice:** if there are more than 6 dignitaries, use the shorter way.

"We are very honoured to have you here with us. And especially all the dignitaries. We have Current District, Division and Area Directors as well as Past District, Division and Area Directors. In addition, a special mention to Past International Directors. Thank you all for coming."

★ **Best Practice:** "Recognize dignitaries at or above the level of the contest".

For example, officials at Division level and above might be recognized at a Division contest, or District level and above at a District contest.

The Longer Way

Sometimes a contest might have a special guest like a Mayor, or a member of the current or past District Office (e.g., District Director, Program Quality Director or Club Growth Director), or a current or past International Director, or even the current or past Area Director. If you are going for the longer way, be sure enough time is available on the agenda for the introductions.

You want to list the dignitaries by **order of importance** and include the **persons' rank or title**.

"We are honoured to have you all here. I'd like to acknowledge the Dignitaries who joined us. When I mention your name, would you please stand?"

Introduce them by Rank/Title - person's name

Let's have a round of applause for these special guests.

Thank you so much for joining us this evening. Please be seated."

Order of Introductions:

You want to introduce current officers **before** past officers (e.g., Area Directors before Past International Directors). Please note: if a past officer is competing in a speech contest, then they should **not** be introduced as a dignitary even if their name appears on this list (in order to prevent bias by the audience and judges toward these contestants).

The complete order for introducing dignitaries is as follows:

1. Visiting Non-Toastmaster Dignitaries (religious first, civic/government second)
2. Honourary Toastmasters & other Guests of Honour
3. Current International Officers (i.e.,
4. Current International Directors (our Region first followed by other Regions)
5. Current Region Advisors (our Region first followed by other Regions)
6. Current District Officers (DD, PQD, CGD, PRM, IPDG/D, AM, FM)
7. Current Division Directors (host Division first, then alphabetically)
8. Current Area Directors (host Area first, then alphanumeric)
9. Current District Officers from other Districts (Division Director and above)
10. Past International Presidents (start with most recent; Immediate Past IS a current officer)
11. Past International Directors (start with most recent; Immediate Past IS NOT a current officer)
12. Past District Directors (start with most recent, Immediate Past is a current officer)
13. Past District Directors of other Districts (numerically)



Best Practice

If you use the word “*acknowledge*,” you are asking the Dignitary to stand and be recognized.

If you use the word “*invite*,” you are asking the Dignitary to come to the lectern/speaking area and say something.

Be specific!