



*Michigan  
USA*

Rotary District 6330

## The Official Visit

*Ontario  
Canada*



Part of the rich tradition of Rotary is the annual Official Visit to each club by its District Governor. This tradition is repeated every year in each of the nearly 32,000 Rotary clubs in 529 districts throughout the world. The District Governor is elected to a one year term of office by representatives of the district. During that one special year in the Governor's life, he or she serves as the one officer of Rotary International in the district and directly represents the President of Rotary International. These guidelines are offered to assist clubs in preparing for and executing the Official Visit in a professional manner worthy of the Rotary tradition.

### **Guideline 1 – Pay attention to the visit schedule.**

The Governor elect will provide a tentative schedule prior to his/her year in office, usually at the District Assembly. The club board should review the schedule and notify the Governor elect quickly of any potential conflict. Remember that the Governor has a tight schedule for visiting sixty clubs plus other official duties. The club should first seek to adjust its schedule to fit the Governor's needs, not the other way around.

### **Guideline 2 – Stay in touch with the Assistant Governor.**

The Assistant Governor is responsible for coordinating the visit details between the Governor and the club. The AG should be consulted if there are any questions by the club. It is better to ask than to guess.

### **Guideline 3 – Plan for extra time before or after the visit to handle related activities.**

Some Governors may wish to meet with the club board immediately before or after the visit. Some may wish to secure a tour of the local community to see the club's projects in the community.

### **Guideline 4 – Invite partners to the official visit.**

Rotary is a family oriented activity and in this district at least, the Governor's partner often accompanies him/her to the visit. Partners of club members are always welcome at meetings and are especially appreciated by the Governor's partner. Breakfast and lunch clubs are not as likely to have partners present as evening clubs but the President's partner is especially encouraged to attend the official visit.

### **Guideline 5 – Club members should plan on arriving early for the official visit.**

All club members, especially the President, should plan on arriving at the meeting at least 15 minutes early on the official visit date. This will give the Governor and his/her partner an opportunity to meet the Rotarians in a relaxed, social setting. The club President should always arrive early enough to welcome the Governor and Assistant Governor.

### **Guideline 6 – Assign someone to act as an aide to the Governor and Assistant Governor's partners.**

The Governor will be occupied meeting and talking to Rotarians, often the partners will not know anyone in the club. As a matter of courtesy, it is nice to have a club member or partner available to introduce the Governor and AGs partners to the club prior to the meeting.

### **Guideline 7 – Make sure the Governor, Assistant Governor and partners have a place to sit.**

During the meal, the President, the Governor, the Assistant Governor and their partners should all be seated together and should be served first. A head table is optional.

### **Guideline 8 – Recognize the nation of the Governor.**

This district is fortunate to span two great countries. Make sure that both flags are displayed proudly in the meeting room. The flag of the club's country should be displayed to the left (as viewed from the audience) of the flag of the other country. If the club traditionally sings its national anthem before the meeting and the

visiting Governor is from the other country, sing both anthems. Do the members a favor – have the words to the other country’s anthem available.

**Guideline 9 – Do the official toast correctly.**

If the club wishes to offer a toast before the meeting, here is the official toast: “A toast to the Queen and Canada, a toast to the Office of the President of the United States and a toast to Rotary International”. Canadian clubs should toast the Queen and Canada first, American clubs should toast the Office of the President first. If individuals from other countries are present, typically an exchange student, the head of state of that country is often toasted as well. Remember, the toast is optional. If it is going to be done, make sure everyone has a beverage to toast *with*, even if it is only water.

**Guideline 10 – The Governor is the program speaker of the day.**

This seems obvious but surprisingly enough some clubs have been known to schedule a speaker on the day of the official visit. Allow the governor 20 to 30 minutes to speak. This can be particularly tricky for breakfast and lunch clubs which run on tight schedules. The president may elect to waive other business on this one special day.

**Guideline 11 – The AG introduces the Governor, the President introduces the AG.**

Biographies of the Governor and the Assistant Governor are available in the district directory. The AG can also supply his/her bio to the President prior to the meeting.

**Guideline 12 – Someone should be appointed to thank the Governor.**

The club President or other member should thank the Governor following the speech. Presentation of a small gift is optional. A donation to the Rotary Foundation in the name of the Governor is always appreciated and always appropriate.

The last and by far the most important guideline is to treat the Governor and the official party as you would treat a guest in your own home. Make the Governor feel welcome and show that you respect and appreciate the time she gives.

