

Reception of District Representative for an Official Visit

*(The correct title of each District Representative is: **Sir Knight _____, Eminent District Representative of the _____ District of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Minnesota.** He is a representative of the Grand Commander and the following will be used for an official visit of the District Representative. The Eminent Commander will direct the Junior Warden to present the District Representative West of the Altar for introduction.)*

(The Junior Warden will present the District Representative West of the Altar and state the following:)

JW: Eminent Commander, I present to you and through you to the Sir Knights present, Sir Knight _____, Eminent District Representative of the _____ District of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Minnesota, who is here for an official visit.

(The Eminent Commander will then direct the Junior Warden to escort the District Representative to the East. Once in the East the Eminent Commander will welcome him and then he will offer the District Representative his sword and ask him to preside over the Commandery and offer any remarks.)

(NOTE: For an Official Visit, the District Representative must be in uniform. If the District Representative is not in uniform, he will then receive a hearty welcome - clapping of hands only.)

District Representative Training and Guidelines

District Officers should meet with the Principal Officers present during each Official Visit. The purpose of the meeting is two-fold. The first, to assure the officers that you, and the Grand Commandery are there to assist, not to take over. If they need help, they have but to ask for it. We need to be good stewards, as well as good officers. While we are a uniformed order, we are not the Military – make sure that this is stressed during meetings.

The second point of the meeting is to listen to them, to hear concerns, issues, and problems they are having. Solicit their feedback on events, priorities, and the general well being of their Commandery. Once this is brought back to the Grand Commandery, and discussed as needed, present feedback to them once you can, and at the first available time. Timely responses are critical if we want to win back our Commanderies, officers and members.

A District Officer should note that a good calendar is essential. The calendar should have enough room to make notes for important events, notes for things that need to be done and things that must be done ASAP. Frequent reference to this calendar is a must.

The District Officer should notify the body at least one month before his Official Visit. When the date arrives, he should be punctual. He should make certain to speak to everyone present. Courtesy above all else is essential and it builds a solid foundation for friendship. If he is making an Official Visit as a District Representative, he is to be in uniform.

The District Officer is expected to make at least one Official Visit per year per body during his tenure. He should think about the remarks that need to be made during the Official Visit. It is suggested that the remarks be written down or utilize a brief outline in order to address expected topics. He should remember to keep his remarks brief and complimentary and thank the officers and members for the privilege of addressing them. Before closing, he should always mention the Philanthropy (Knights Templar Eye Foundation *KTEF*)

The District Officer should get to know the officers in his District, and offer assistance with their festivals/meetings, fund-raisers, or anything with which he may be helpful. He should remember that he is a direct representative of the Grand Commander. The esprit-de-corps (professionalism) demonstrated by the District Officer is a reflection on him and the Grand Commander whom he represents, and is oftentimes emulated by others. If called upon to help with a problem, no matter how large or small, his prompt attention and immediate response is imperative. He should keep copies of all written correspondence to and from the body as evidence that he is aware of the problem and did respond.

The District Officer should visit often and make himself known! He shouldn't limit himself to Official Visits. He should visit the bodies in surrounding Districts. He should visit the Chapters and Councils in his District. He should NEVER hesitate to mention the York Rite during a Blue Lodge visit; there may be brothers present who are uneducated in York Rite Masonry. He should be willing to talk about York Rite Masonry at any Masonic body and always keep a good supply of York Rite petitions.

The District Officer should attend the Orders in his District and as many of the surrounding districts as possible. If asked, he should be prepared to take an active part. Orders and meetings are good places to talk about the philanthropies to the newly made York Rite Masons, therefore; he should take advantage of the moment.

It would be well noted here that the District Officer may need a copy of the "Constitutions, By-Laws, Regulations and Statutes" of the Grand Commandery bodies. They are obtainable through the Grand Secretary/Recorder's office, and are available on the York Rite Website (www.mnyorkrite.org).

After a visitation to a stated communication, it is necessary to let the Grand Commander know how that body is doing. The District Officer will be supplied with the appropriate form. He should fill in the blanks and then mail it to the Deputy Grand Commander (through eMail or through other delivery) quarterly. A good District Officer should also be a good leader. In short, as a District Officer, he should "BE PREPARED" to meet the opportunity of the moment. The checklist listed below should be used as a guide. These traits are essential to all officers.

PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS

A good leader will:

- Be dedicated
- Have dignity
- Have a healthy outlook on life
- Be impartial
- Have feelings for others
- Be tactful
- Be firm when necessary
- Be kind
- Be patient
- Have even temperament
- Speak clearly and slowly
- Be enthusiastic

KNOWLEDGE

A good leader must:

- Know his companions. (So he can use talents to best advantage.)
- Be familiar with needs of organization. (New members, better attendance, etc.)
- Have thorough knowledge of constitution and By-Laws.
- Know how to conduct a meeting. (Prepare agenda for each one.)
- Know duties of each officer. (Assign other duties besides those in ritual.)
- Be a good planner. (Not only for next meeting but should set up plan for next 12 months.)

AS AN INSTRUCTOR

A good leader must:

- Know how to interpret rules and regulations.
- Give information to develop understanding, not permit controversy.
- Explain the results of a prepared action if group seems undecided or confused.
- Help organization (members) to achieve goals.
- Give officers opportunity to actively serve.
- Know when to expedite business by general consent.
- Teach what they should know and know what they should know.

ART OF PRESIDING

A good leader will:

- Prepare an agenda and have it in proper business order.
- Recognize those addressing them and assign them the floor.
- Give credit where credit is due.
- Not attempt to make decisions which should be made by the group.
- Share his ideas and plans with other officers (not spring them at a meeting).
- Speak of himself in the third person (i.e., "Your District Representative," etc.).
- Keep discussions directed at presiding officers (not permitting discussions between members).
- Enjoy being presiding officer. Do not complain about the work it takes.

An outline for Comments for District Officers

- Always start the same way: *"I Bring you greetings from Sir Knight XXX, the Right Eminent Grand Commander of Knights Templar of Minnesota."*
- Reinforce the Mission of the Grand Commandery. Our mission should be committed to memory by all Grand Officers: *"The Purpose of the Grand Commandery of Minnesota is to provide guidance and support to the Commanderies and Sir Knights of Minnesota, under the oversight of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States, consistent with our Core Values, our Masonic Traditions and the Christian Faith"*
- Reinforce our Philanthropy by reminding the Sir Knights present of what they are and how they can contribute. Marketing materials are available from the Grand Recorder. Examples are below, but should be tailored to those present and your comfort. It should always be stressed that the HLP Fundraiser is the weekend after Labor Day at the Minnesota Renaissance Festival
 - KTEF: The Knights Templar Eye Foundation, incorporated in 1956, is a charity sponsored by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar. It is exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code and contributions made to the Foundation are deductible by donors. The original mission of the Foundation was "to provide assistance to those who face loss of sight due to the need for surgical treatment without regard to race, color, creed, age, sex or national origin provided they are unable to pay or receive adequate

assistance from current government agencies or similar sources and to provide funds for research in curing diseases of the eye."

- Remind the Sir Knights present of any Grand Commandery or Constituent Commandery events such as Festivals, Orders or Observances in your District or the state. Start to remind them of the Grand Session in April of each year.
- Thank the Commander and his officers for their hospitality and remind them that we, as Grand Commandery Officers, are there to serve them.