



JCI Etiquette and Protocol Guide

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Introduction

Once you have been elected or appointed as a JCI Officer, you are a JCI Officer everywhere you go in the JCI world during your term of office. Even in your home country or home chapter, you are a JCI Officer first, representing the organization, and then a member of your home National or Local Organization. The only exception to this would be as outgoing National President at your year-end meeting. In this situation, the focus is on the accomplishments and activities of the previous year, and not on your activities and responsibilities of the current year.

Representing JCI is a huge responsibility and sharing with members from around the world is a challenge. As a JCI Officer you will be sharing with people from different countries, cultures and beliefs. This manual is intended to give you some guides on how to behave in the multicultural environment of our organization.

The JCI Dress Code

Dress Code

A frequently asked question by JCI officers and members alike is: What is the appropriate dress for any given situation? This is a delicate question as dress can vary greatly by country. When traveling, please check with the National President or your assigned country host for clarification.

The following guide can be used for JCI events - Area conferences, World Congress, Global Partnership Summit, etc., but is not necessarily true for all countries in the listed area of the World.

- Business Formal (business suit)
 - Asia: western-style dark suits; women: conservative dresses and suits in muted colors
 - Europe: men should avoid wearing white socks with dress shoes; long-sleeved dress shirts, which should extend about ½ inch below the sleeve of the jacket are appropriate
 - Women: in general, very high heels or boots are inappropriate; jewelry and accessories should be high quality and tasteful (e.g. no costume jewelry); makeup should be applied conservatively
- Business Casual
 - Africa: conservative; more formal in English-speaking countries and less formal in French-speaking countries
 - Americas: khakis or dress pants; sweater, polo, sport coat; women: skirt, capris or casual dress
 - Asia: suit but no tie
 - Europe: jeans, dress shirt, sport coat
- Casual
 - General: jeans, shorts, JCI polo, JCI t-shirt or other causal shirt
 - Asia: suit without a tie or jacket
- Cocktail and semi-formal
 - Men: dark suit
 - Women: knee length dress
 - President chain is appropriate
- Formal
 - Men - tuxedo
 - Women - traditional dress or floor length dress
 - President chain is appropriate

JCI Pins

Because of all the different events JCI Officers and members participate in, a common question asked is what pins to wear and when?

- First, your nametag is always worn on your right shoulder near the lapel. When greeting someone with a handshake, you extend your right hand. When you do,

your nametag, if on the right side of your body, extends as well making it easier for the person you are meeting to see. In general, nametags should not be worn during formal events.

- The JCI member pin can be worn in all settings. It is to be worn on the left shoulder/lapel area. A gold pin indicates members who hold an officer position at the national or international level. A silver pin indicates general members and local officers. The size of the member pin is subject to local preference and tradition.
- The officer pin is reserved for formal events and is to be worn on the right shoulder near the lapel.
- If you have a foundation pin, this is also reserved for formal events. It can be worn on the right shoulder near the lapel next to your officer pin, or in the center of the chest underneath a man's bow tie. If you are also wearing a nametag, it can be worn on the left shoulder near the lapel.
- Wear your senate pin on the right shoulder near the lapel only when at a JCI Senate function in your home country.

Protocol Precedence Rules

Precedence refers to priority in importance, order or rank. In JCI, precedence is particularly important in ceremonial situations.

Table Seating

In JCI, if there is a main table at an event, the chairperson of the event sits in the middle of the table. The most important guest sits to the chairperson's right, the second on the chairperson's left, and then continue alternating between right and left according to descending rank. It is recommended to have an odd numbers of seats at the table with the chairperson seated directly in the middle and the same number of individuals on either side.

Flag Display

If flags are displayed at the event, please note the following rules:

- The host-country national flag and the JCI flag should not be displayed next to each other.
- The national flag is always on the right of the entrance or stage and the JCI flag is on the left.
- If displaying more than one national flag, the host-country flag must be larger or the same size as the guest flag(s).

JCI Officer and Senator Precedence

Please note, while you are always a JCI Officer even when attending events in your National or Local Organization, if another JCI Officer is visiting your National or Local Organization who is either assigned to your home country or holds a higher office, appropriate respect and recognition should be given to your fellow officer.

Similarly, some JCI Officers have been honored with a JCI Senatorship. From time to time, as JCI Officers, we will attend JCI Senate events and interact with other senators. While this recognition is truly an honor, even while attending senator events, that individual is still a JCI officer first, representing JCI during his or her term of office.

Salutations and Speaking Order

The list of greetings at the beginning of a speech can be confusing. Who is supposed to be recognized and in what order? Who speaks and when? Does each speaker have to go through the entire list of formal greetings? If you are visiting a country, please check with the National President or your assigned host for protocol specific to that country. If you are at a JCI Event (Area Conference, World Congress, etc.), check with JCI World Headquarters for the appropriate list. Following are general guidelines for JCI events:

- In regards to opening speeches, the first person to address the audience shall go through the official greetings, and the remaining speakers can skip them by greeting the audience generally and saying "All protocols observed".
- All past JCI Presidents and National Presidents shall be addressed as "President" and not "Past President" out of respect.
- When greeting the audience, the order shall be: highest governmental official from the host country or city, JCI President, other governmental officials, Event Chairperson, JCI Board of Directors, JCI Presidents who served the organization throughout the years, host National or Local President, Senators and members, ladies and gentlemen.
- The order of speeches shall be the opposite of the above-mentioned list. Speakers should be chosen carefully according to the event, as not everyone in the previous list will speak.

Written Communication

Proper grammar and etiquette in written communication is just as important as it is while speaking. Keep in mind the following guidelines when sending any official written communication:

- The only individual authorized to write on behalf of the organization is the President.
 - This applies to the local, national, and international level. However, the President may delegate communication to other individuals, such as the Secretary General or other officers.
- Administrative communication shall be done by the Secretary General.
- All other official communication (condolences, congratulations, etc) shall be done by the President.
- Official invitations shall be signed by the President and Event Chairperson and sent out by the SG.
- If more than one person is signing the letter:
 - Signature blocks can be situated either side by side or one beneath the other.
 - Generally, the individual with the higher designation should sign first, even if the person with the lower rank prepared the letter.
 - If the signees are coming from different levels of the organization (JCI, National Organization, Local Organization, etc), the person belonging to the group the letter originates from should sign first.
 - Example: If the National Organization is sending out a letter regarding hotel information for the Area Conference it is hosting, the National President would sign first and the Executive Vice President would sign second.
 - Check with the National President or your country host for cultural differences. For example, in Italy the most important signature is on the right when the signature blocks are side by side.

Etiquette around the world

Cross-cultural Dining

Dining in a foreign country can be an intimidating experience. The most important thing to remember is to relax, be open to new experiences, and enjoy! If you are new to a country, no one will expect you to perfectly master local table manners. However, a basic understanding of etiquette is important so as not to disrupt a meal with any gross violations. Following are some suggestions to help you have a successful and enjoyable meal:

- Always try the local cuisine. Refusing to eat local cuisine is one of the quickest ways to offend your hosts.
- Let your host know if you are allergic to anything so the servers can be alerted as necessary. This will avoid a potentially unpleasant experience and otherwise embarrassing questions during the course of the meal.
- Eat what you can without making yourself sick.
- Keep criticism to yourself. What may be odd to you might be a cultural delicacy to your host.
- Be adventurous. You may be offered local delicacies as a challenge. A foreigner good-natured enough to try such foods is widely appreciated.

General Dining Information While Traveling

The following is a list of situations to be aware of when traveling. Check with the National President or your assigned country host for cultural expectations.

- Seating
 - Protocol as to who sits where
 - Who sits first?
 - Wait for your host to ask you to sit and wait for your host to be seated.
 - In some situations, the highest-ranking officer should sit first. Check with the National President or your assigned country host for cultural expectations.
 - Is it acceptable etiquette for men and women to sit next to each other?
- Body language
 - How should one sit? Is it appropriate to cross your legs or push back your chair from the table?
 - Is it bad etiquette to rest elbows on the table?
 - If seated on the floor, what is the correct position?
- Conversation
 - Is the meal a proper place to engage in conversation?
 - Is discussing business appropriate?
- Eating
 - What utensils, if any, are used (knife, fork, chopsticks, hands)
 - What is the etiquette regarding using the appropriate utensils?
 - Is it good etiquette to compliment the cook and how?
 - Should you finish everything on your plate

- It is polite to ask for a second helping?
- Home or restaurant?
 - What differences in etiquette or protocol are there between the different settings?
 - Should you take a gift to the home?
 - Who pays the bill at a restaurant?

Utensils

- Americas
 - Eat with fork in dominant hand.
 - If right handed, switch fork to left hand and use knife with right hand while cutting. Switch fork back to right hand to eat.
 - When numerous utensils are set out on the place setting, during the course of the meal, work from the outside in.
- Asia
 - Becoming adept with chopsticks will be appreciated. However, if you are offered Western-style implements, you may opt for them if you don't have the talent for using chopsticks.
 - Use the clean, back ends of the chopsticks to take food from a communal tray or bowl.
- Europe
 - Knife in right hand and fork in left
 - Do not gesture with the knife. This can be considered threatening in many countries, and poor manners in most.
- Middle East and Northern Africa
 - In some countries traditional meals are eaten with no utensils. If eating with no utensils, use your left hand to drink when eating greasy food with your right hand.
 - In and around the Arab world, the left hand is considered unclean. In some countries, it may be expected to only eat with your right hand, even if you are left handed.
- When in doubt, follow the lead of your host!

Business Etiquette

Proper etiquette in a business or social setting can make or break your visit as a JCI Officer. There are many cultural differences and nuances you need to be aware of during your travels. Below is a small list of information to consider. Please check with the National President or your assigned country host for cultural expectations and norms.

- A smile has numerous meanings depending on the country and situation you are visiting. It could indicate pleasure, displeasure, or even embarrassment.
- Always be polite! Some cultures, including Japanese, will seldom say “no.”
- In general, sit straight with both feet on the floor.
 - Men may cross their legs at the knees or ankles.
 - Women may cross their legs in some cultures. When crossing at the knee, be mindful if wearing a short skirt.
- Silence is understood differently in different cultures. Some cultures understand silence as respect, others use it to cover embarrassment, while others use it to show defiance. The meaning depends on the situation and surrounding events.
- Appropriateness of male-female touching varies by culture.
- The meaning of hand gestures varies widely between countries and cultures.
 - For example, make sure you know what a thumbs up or thumbs down or pointing a finger may mean.
- Formal greeting varies greatly by culture. Make sure to check with the National President or your assigned country host prior to arrival!
 - Handshake?
 - Hug?
 - Kiss?
 - How many?
 - Which cheek(s)?
 - What is the typical greeting in the country’s official language?
 - How do you exchange business cards?
 - Two hands or one hand?
 - Do you take time to read the business card when it is handed to you, or keep eye contact with the individual you are meeting?
- Are photos appropriate?
- Who stands where in photos?
 - Generally, with two individuals the most important person, or highest-ranking officer, is on the right. With a group, the most important person, or highest ranking officer is in the middle, the next ranking individual is to the right, the third ranking individual is to the left, and continue alternating until everyone is arranged.