

District 31 Toastmasters * Summer TLI – 2006 * Sgt-At-Arms

Schedule the meeting location. Without a meeting room, your club can't meet. You are responsible for working with those who manage the meeting site to secure the room for club meetings. Some clubs schedule their meetings a month or two in advance, while others schedule them six months or more in advance

Maintain club equipment and supplies. After each meeting, pack up all club property and store it in a secure place. Some clubs have storage space at the meeting place in a closet or on a shelf

Arrange for a replacement or for assistance. Occasionally you may not be able to attend a club meeting or you know you will be late. In these cases, arrange for someone to handle your tasks for you. Otherwise, someone else will be rushing at the last minute to prepare the meeting room in your absence. As a result, the meeting may start late and not proceed smoothly. Likewise, if you know you will be tardy, ask someone to do your tasks until you arrive.

- If the club has a special event which requires extra attention, arrange for someone to assist you.
- Sometimes trying to do all of these things during a short time can be difficult. Instead of facing “burnout,” you may organize a committee to help you share the various tasks.

Prepare your successor for office. As you gain experience during your term, take notes and think of how you will prepare the person who will come after you. Give all necessary records and materials to your successor and offer to assist the new officer as he or she is learning the sergeant at arms duties.

Arrange the room before the meeting begins. Just as actors rely on a production staff to supply scenery, lighting, and sound effects, Toastmasters clubs rely on their sergeant at arms to set the stage properly. Arrive at least 10 or more minutes early to provide ample time to arrange the tables and chairs. Once the seating is arranged, set out your club's lectern, gavel, banner, timing lights, ballots, and any other item or material required.

Greet members and guests. Remember the first time you visited your Toastmasters club? You weren't sure what to expect, but from the moment you entered the room, someone was there to greet you, introduce you to others, and perhaps explain a little about the Toastmasters organization before the meeting began. Now, as sergeant at arms, it's up to you to present that vital first impression. Anxious visitors should relax once they shake your hand and hear your welcome. Current members appreciate your reliability and depend on you to create a friendly and comfortable atmosphere that will allow them to stretch and develop their abilities.

- All members should be encouraged to welcome visitors and fellow members to each meeting.
- Put together a few guest packets. Enclose a Toastmaster magazine, an application to join, copy of newest newsletter, brochure or any other interesting information. Guests will appreciate the materials.

Greet visiting officers. Occasionally the area governor or other district officer may visit your club. Welcome the officer, introduce yourself, and escort him or her to the club president.

Ensure the meeting starts on time. The Toastmasters educational program teaches meeting leadership and management. One important point we stress is that meetings start and end on time.

Collect ballots and tally votes for awards. If your club presents awards to the “Best Speaker,” “Best Evaluator,” and others during most club meetings, you also will be responsible for the voting process. Keep a supply of blank ballots (Catalog No. 163) on hand and distribute them before the meeting begins. When members have marked their ballots, collect them and count the votes for each award. Give the results to the Toastmaster, or announce them yourself when called upon for the results.