

Precedence does not always follow the individual. When the ambassador is on leave, or visiting his/her home country, he/she does not hold the same status as when "on post." When an individual who was invited to attend a function is unable to go and sends a representative, the latter is not accorded the former's place of precedence.

We often consider precedence when we plan for seating at dinners, meetings or ceremonies. The list which follows gives general guidelines for determining precedence among civil officials and Department of Defense personnel. When individuals do not hold such official positions, consider their prominence within their own career areas.

1. President
2.
 - a) Vice President
 - b) Governor of a State (when in own state) according to each state's entry into the union
3.
 - a) Speaker of the House
 - b) Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
 - c) Former Presidents of the United States
 - d) American Ambassadors (when at post)
4. Secretary of State
5.
 - a) Secretary General of the United Nations
 - b) Ambassadors of foreign countries accredited to the United States (in order of the presentation of credentials)
6. Widows of Former Presidents of the United States
7. Ministers of foreign countries accredited to the United States (in order of presentation of credentials)
8.
 - a) Associate Justices of the Supreme Court (by date of appointment)
 - b) Retired Chief Justices of the Supreme Court
 - c) Retired Associate Justices of the Supreme Court
9. The Cabinet (other than Secretary of State)
 - a) Secretary of the Treasury
 - b) Secretary of Defense
 - c) Attorney General
 - d) Secretary of the Interior
 - e) Secretary of Agriculture
 - f) Secretary of Commerce
 - g) Secretary of Labor
 - h) Secretary of Health & Human Services
 - i) Secretary of Housing & Urban Development
 - j) Secretary of Transportation
 - k) Secretary of Energy
 - l) Secretary of Education
 - m) Secretary of Veterans Affairs

- n) Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
 - o) Director, National Drug Control Policy
 - p) Chief of Staff to the President
 - q) Director, Central Intelligence Agency
- 10.
- a) President Pro Tempore of the Senate
 - b) Senators (by length of continuous service; when the same, arrange alphabetically)
 - c) Governors of States (when outside own state – relative precedence determined by state’s date of admission to the union or alphabetically by state)
 - d) Acting heads of executive departments (e.g., Acting SECDEF)
 - e) Former Vice Presidents or their widows
- 11.
- a) Members of the House of Representatives (by length of continuous service; when the same, arrange by state’s date of admission to the union or alphabetically by state)
 - b) Delegates from the District of Columbia, Guam, the Virgin Islands and American Samoa
 - c) Governor of Puerto Rico
 - d) Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
- 12.
- a) Charges d’Affaires of Foreign Powers
 - b) Charges d’Affaires ad interim of Foreign Powers
 - c) Former Secretaries of State
 - d) Former Cabinet Members
- 13.
- a) Deputies of Executive departments when number two official (e.g., DEPSECDEF)
 - b) Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency
 - c) Director, United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
 - d) Under Secretaries of State and the Counselor of the Department of State
 - e) Under Secretaries of Executive Departments when third in rank (e.g., Under SECDEF)
 - f) Ambassadors at Large
 - g) Secretary of the Army
 - h) Secretary of the Navy
 - i) Secretary of the Air Force
- 14.
- a) Chairman, JCS
 - b) Retired CJCS
 - c) Vice Chairman, JCS
 - d) Chief of Staff of the Army (by date of appointment)
 - e) Chief of Naval Operations (by date of appointment)
 - f) Chief of Staff of the Air Force (by date of appointment)
 - g) Commandant of the Marine Corps (by date of appointment)
 - h) Commandant of the Coast Guard

- i) Lieutenant Governors
 - j) Persons with Ambassadorial rank (foreign non-accredited)
- 15.
- a) Director, Office of Personnel Management (OPM)
 - b) Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
 - c) Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission
16. American Ambassadors
- a) Ambassadors on state/official visits to Washington, D.C.
 - b) Ambassadors on state/official visits to the United States outside Washington, D.C.
 - c) Ambassadors of career rank on duty in the United States
- 17.
- a) Chief Judges and Judges of the United States Court of Military Appeals
 - b) Chief Judges and Judges of the United States Court of Veterans Appeals
- 18.
- a) Governor of Guam
 - b) Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands
 - c) Mayors of major cities and the District of Columbia when in own city (>1 million residents)
- 19.
- a) Acting Chief of Protocol when at The White House or accompanying The President on State and Official Visits
 - b) Deputy Director, United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
 - c) American Charges d' Affaires
 - d) Assistant Secretaries, Counselors and Legal Advisors of Executive Departments (by date of appointment)
 - e) Deputy Director, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
 - f) Deputy Director, Office of Personnel Management (OPM)
 - g) Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
20. Deputy Assistants to the President
- 21.
- a) American Ambassadors (designate, in the U.S. under normal orders, or on leave)
22. Mayors of major cities when not in own city
- 23.
- a) Under Secretary of the Army
 - b) Under Secretary of the Navy
 - c) Under Secretary of the Air Force
 - d) Ministers of Career Rank (confirmed by the Senate)
 - e) Acting Deputy Secretaries of Executive Departments
 - f) Acting Under Secretaries of Executive Departments
- 24.
- a) Four-star military officers (Generals or Admirals) by date of rank; retired officers rank with, but after, active officers
 - b) Governor of American Samoa

25.
 - a) Assistant Secretary of the Army (by date of appointment)
 - b) Assistant Secretary of the Navy (by date of appointment) (ASNs)
 - c) Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (by date of appointment)
 - d) Director, National Security Agency (NSA)
 - e) Director, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)
26.
 - a) Three-star military officers (LtGen and VADM) by date of rank; retired officers rank with, but after, active officers
 - b) General Counsels of military departments
 - c) State Senators in their own states
27. Former American Ambassadors in order of presentation of credentials at first post
28.
 - a) Acting Assistant Secretaries of Executive Departments
 - b) Chief of Staff to the Vice President
 - c) Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs
 - d) Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency
29.
 - a) Non-accredited ministers of foreign governments assigned to foreign diplomatic missions in Washington, D.C. (includes Deputy Chiefs of Missions)
 - b) Special Assistants to the President
30.
 - a) Deputy Under Secretaries of Executive Departments (e.g., Deputy under SECDEF)
 - b) Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Executive Departments (by date of appointment)
 - c) Deputy Counsels of Executive Departments (by date of appointment)
31. Consuls General of foreign powers (Legations)
32.
 - a) Two-star military officers (MajGen and RADM) by date of rank; retired officers rank with, but after, active officers
 - b) Deputy Assistant Secretaries of military departments (by date of appointment) (e.g., DASNs)
33. Chief Judges of lower federal courts
34. One-star military officers (BrigGen and RDML) by date of rank; retired officers rank with, but after, active officers

NOTES:

1. Precedence list based on SECSTATE Precedence List provided by SECSTATE Protocol Office to N09BX on 3 October 1997.
2. Order of precedence among civilians who previously held a precedence list position:
 - The placement is based on tradition, social usage and courtesy.
 - The person is ranked at his/her previous precedence position. When in company with the person who currently holds that position, the incumbent is senior followed by the

previous office holder. SECSTATE precedence list includes a position for former cabinet members. It does not include a place for former service secretaries. A former SECNAV should be placed with, but junior to, the current SECNAV.

3. Order of precedence among uniformed / retired personnel:
 - Active
 - Reserve
 - Retired
4. For precedence ranking, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries of the Navy (PDASNs) are ranked at the same level, but senior to Deputy Assistant Secretaries of the Navy (DASNs).
5. The precedence list addresses mayors of large cities (i.e., population greater than 1 million or more), but does not address precedence ranking of mayors of smaller cities. This is the recommended precedence ranking of mayors when in their own cities and involved in official functions with other personages listed on the precedence list
 - Ranked at, but below a 4-star: mayors of cities with a population greater than 750 thousand up to 1 million people.
 - Ranked at, but below a 3-star: mayors of cities with a population from 500 to 750 thousand people.
 - Ranked at, but below a 2-star: mayors of cities with a population from 250 to 500 thousand people.
 - Ranked at, but below a 1-star: mayors of cities with a population from 100 to 250 thousand people.
 - Precedence ranking of mayors of cities with a population less than 100 thousand people is situationally dependent. Precedence ranking would be at the O-5 / O-6 level.
6. When more than one Medal of Honor recipient is present at an event, it is requested by the Congressional Medal of Honor Society and the recipients themselves that they NOT be arranged by rank. Precedence may be alphabetically, by war, by action date, by birthplace, by state, by age – almost any arrangement is correct except that of rank. (The recipients themselves feel that none “outranks” the others and therefore they should be treated equally.)
7. Senior Enlisted Service Representatives (SMA, SGMMC, MCPON, CMSAF, etc.) are typically afforded precedence equal to that of a three-star officer and are placed somewhere midway between the senior and junior general/flag officer present. This is not an exact rule, but one which can be used to arrive at the proper placement for most situations.
8. Foreign attachés who are accredited to the Department of the Navy are assigned relative precedence in accordance with several factors. Initially, each attaché’s position is considered with all principal attachés taking precedence over assistant attachés. The next determinant is the officer’s grade, which is equated with a U.S. Navy rank. Then, the final consideration for officers within the same grade is the date of their official accreditation to the Department of the Navy. When an officer is promoted after accreditation has been completed, his/her date of precedence at his/her new rank is that of his/her date of rank. Assistant attachés take precedence among themselves in a manner similar to the principal attachés.