



Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity

Professional in the Chemical Sciences

MANUAL OF PROCEDURE MASTER OF CEREMONIES



Manual of Procedure | Master of Ceremonies

Description

As the ceremonial officer of the chapter, there rests in the hands of the Master of Ceremonies (MC) one of the most outstanding experiences in the fraternal life of a member of Alpha Chi Sigma – initiation. Whether it will be remembered as an enriching experience, as it is intended to be, or as a frustrating one contrary to its purpose will largely be a direct function of how well the Master of Ceremonies does the job of planning, directing and staging the ceremony.

Duties

Sergeant at Arms at Meetings - At all formal business meetings of the chapter, which must be held in secrecy, it is the responsibility of the Master of Ceremonies to:

1. Prepare and Secure the Meeting Room – In this instance the word “secure” does not mean “obtain” but to take precautions against intrusion by a non-member. To the extent possible the meeting room should be prepared in such a manner as to prevent any non-member from seeing or hearing any of the proceedings and to prohibit entrance without permission. Remember that “secure” refers to digital intrusions as well, so take care that members in your meetings are not electronically defeating your security.
2. Stand or Post Guard at All Entrances – The Master of Ceremonies should stand guard or post guard at all entrances to the meeting room to assure that all who enter are members of Alpha Chi Sigma. If in doubt, the usual questions may be asked, and no one should be permitted entrance who cannot reply properly.

Responsible for Pledging and Initiation - All of the secret ceremonies of the Fraternity are described in detail in the official Ritual. The Master of Ceremonies is responsible for:

1. **Safety** – During the induction (pledge pinning) and initiation ceremonies, the Master of Ceremonies is the sole individual responsible for the safety of all participants. The Master of Ceremonies should make certain there are adequate safety facilities, including ventilation, charged fire extinguishers and posted emergency exits. Any chemical waste generated by these ceremonies must be manifested and disposed of by the Master of Ceremonies or an experienced individual appointed by the Master of Ceremonies. No chemical waste should be poured down drains for any reason! Each chapter must have SDS on-site during initiation and elsewhere when the chapter is using chemicals.



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2. **Pledge Ceremony** – The Master of Ceremonies conducts the pledge ceremony with the participation of the Master Alchemist. The pledge ceremony is a formal ceremony and should be conducted in a serious, professional manner. Coat and tie or dresses for members and pledges are strongly recommended. The ceremony should make a good and lasting impression upon the pledges. This is the first time the pledges hear the Three Objects of the Fraternity. As always, the members should stand for the recitation of the Objects. It would add to the experience to have some simple props, such as the chapter flag, charter and a table draped with a cloth on which the Badge and Coat of Arms plaques are displayed and on which the pledge pins can be placed prior to their presentation. The pledge ceremony is a secret ritual but is not to be conducted during a chapter business meeting. The pledge ceremony is a separate event and should be treated as such. At least one month before the pledge ceremony, the Master of Ceremonies must be sure there are enough pledge pins available for the anticipated pledge class. Additional pins should be ordered from the National Office.

3. **Initiation Ceremony** – The greatest privilege and most difficult duty of the Master of ceremonies is planning and presenting initiation. Within the Ceremony, the Master of Ceremonies is in charge, even over the Master Alchemist, as it pertains to the execution of the initiation. Each and every initiate is entitled to an initiation that is professionally performed so the true significance of the initiation is not lost. An effective and satisfying initiation cannot be achieved by last-minute preparations nor by haphazardly assigning parts or staging. The greatest aid to an effective ceremony is experience. Many chapters have carefully developed the properties and staging for an initiation and have recorded the instructions. If that is not the case in your chapter, now is the time to start.

a. **Arrange Facilities** – As soon as possible, the Master of Ceremonies should determine the preferred date for the initiation ceremony and an acceptable alternate date. Then the Master of Ceremonies should arrange for the use of the facilities. Whichever facility is used should make possible the staging of the complete initiation without any intrusion by non-members. Be sure the site has adequate safety facilities, posted emergency exits and fire extinguishers at all stations. The Master of Ceremonies should inform neighbors and necessary authorities (such as police, fire, university authorities, etc.) of any activities with which they might be concerned. Often, working with the Chapter Advisor may help in securing permission required.

b. **Assign Memorization and Role Preparation** – Another function of the Master of Ceremonies is to ensure that Brothers participating in the initiation ceremony understand their roles. Do not wait until the last minute to assign roles.



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c. Direct the Ceremony – The Master of Ceremonies has complete control and responsibility for the initiation ceremony. The Master of Ceremonies sets the schedule and the order in which pledges are initiated. The Master of Ceremonies establishes the timing and pace at which the ceremony progresses. Most importantly, the Master of Ceremonies is responsible for ensuring the ceremony is performed in strict accordance with the Ritual and that no hazing takes place.

d. No Hazing – Hazing is absolutely forbidden in Alpha Chi Sigma. The official Ritual is the result of extensive research and consideration, so no “enhancements” to the Ritual are permitted. (The national Ritual Committee and the Grand Master of Ceremonies continuously review the Ritual and are open to suggestions for change.) Initiation is to be completely devoid of horseplay or similar juvenile behavior. There is to be absolutely no physical or mental harassment of the initiates. Demeaning men and women who are about to join our brotherhood is neither fun nor professional and is in violation of the Fraternity’s Health and Safety Policy. Any chapter found guilty of violating our hazing policy at any time may be liable for probation or suspension by the Fraternity and may face disciplinary action from their university. If the treatment should result in injury, the participants may be subject to criminal prosecution in addition to the persons and the chapter being subject to civil suit for damages. Alpha Chi Sigma will offer no assistance in such cases if investigation substantiates the charges.

Safekeeping and Maintaining the Ritual and Regalia - Each chapter of the Fraternity is furnished with a complete set of regalia, the present cost of which exceeds \$3,500. A set of regalia in good condition sets the stage professionally for the initiation. Adequate storage and cleaning are required to keep the regalia in good condition.

1. **Storage** – All ritual and regalia items should be stored in a locked closet, a storage chest or a storage cabinet in a dry location. All chemicals should be stored properly, preferably not with the regalia, in an appropriate location. Regalia may be loaned only for official fraternal purposes, such as the Professional Induction Ceremony and expansion efforts.

2. **Care and Cleaning** – Soiled regalia should be dry cleaned, not machine washed. Torn regalia should be mended. Before returning regalia to storage, it should be thoroughly dry. Before hanging regalia in garment bags, it should be aired for 24 hours in order to avoid mildew. Where applicable, regalia should be stored on hangers or carefully folded and, if possible, placed in suit boxes or wrapped separately. Do not store regalia in plastic. Regalia may be protected by covering it with clean sheets or by folding it neatly and storing it in pillow cases. Wigs and beards may be hand-washed with a gentle detergent, such as Woolite, and thoroughly air-dried. All other properties should be stored in boxes.



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3. **Replacement** – Regalia will be replaced at no cost to your chapter, except in cases of abuse or loss. The Master of Ceremonies should initiate replacement as soon as a need is discovered. Replacements must be approved by the District Counselor.

4. **Keep an Account for the Ritual** – Each chapter is furnished a complete copy of the Ritual in a binder. At no time should the ritual be converted to electronic format.

a. **Storage** – The Ritual should be stored in the Ritual binder and in a locked desk or cabinet.

b. **Replacement** – Worn Ritual parts will be replaced at no cost. Lost Ritual parts or parts unusable due to neglect will be replaced, but a fine will be charged. Replacement Ritual parts should be requested at least three weeks prior to the need to allow time for shipping. Electronic reproduction and distribution of the ritual is prohibited.

c. **Revision** – The Grand Master of Ceremonies is responsible for any revisions to the Ritual. At each Conclave, the Ritual Committee considers the revision recommendations the Grand Master of Ceremonies received from Master of Ceremonies before Conclave or from the delegates at Conclave.

Reporting

The Master of Ceremonies should complete a Charter, Ritual and Regalia Inspection (CRRI) form at least once each year, preferably after each initiation ceremony or just before an officer change. The form must be submitted to the National Office by June 15 each year.

Meet with Your Successor

When a successor has been elected, the Master of Ceremonies should meet with the new Master of Ceremonies to review the regalia, the Ritual and other properties for which the Master of Ceremonies has responsibility. Together, they should check the inventory of these materials to be sure all are available.