

Military Protocol Saluting

UNIFORMED SERVICES- CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

1. Saluting is one of the most common and basic forms of military courtesy. It is basically an exchange of greetings between military and/or uniformed services personnel.

It is extremely important that you are able to render and properly return a hand salute. Failure to do so not only reflects negatively on the individual but the organization as well.

2. Salutes must be rendered and returned to all members of the Uniformed Services: The Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard. If two officers or an officer and enlisted member approach with the intent of **conversing, salutes are exchanged then and also after the conversation is completed.** Forgetting to salute after conversation has ended is a common mistake. It is the junior person's responsibility to initiate this courtesy prior to departing just as the junior person should salute if passing someone senior to them.

3. Saluting when not in uniform and uncovered is not usually performed by members of the Coast Guard however it is common practice and an accepted standard in **the Air Force**. If you are saluted and you are not in uniform or in uniform and not covered, tradition dictates that you do not return the salute.

4. Execution of the Hand Salute is performed as follows: "the right hand is raised smartly until the tip of the forefinger touches the lower part of the headdress or forehead above and slightly to the right of the right eye, thumb and fingers extended and joined, palm to the left, upper arm horizontal, forearm inclined at 45 degrees, hand and wrist straight; at the same time turn head toward the person saluted. To complete the salute, drop the arm to its normal position by the side in one motion, at the same time turning the head and eyes to the front".

It has been said that a sloppy salute is worse than not saluting at all. Your technique and your confidence to apply your saluting skills are directly proportional to how much you practice. Sloppy saluting is a very clear reflection of your lack of personal pride and respect in the Auxiliary and the Coast Guard. It is also appropriate to accompany your salute with "Good Morning Sir or Ma'am" depending on the situation. Officers who are at the rank of Commander or above are usually addressed by their rank i.e., "Good Morning Commander Jones" or "Good afternoon Admiral Smith". You can never go wrong by using "Sir" or "Ma'am", but it is a nice touch if you can properly address a senior officer.

5. As stated before, the junior person must salute the senior officer present. This is straight forward if there are only two individuals present. **Confusion can arise if there are more than two people present and of different officer ranks.** The general rule that applies is that you always salute the senior officer no matter how many other officers are present. If you are outdoors and with a group of officers an/or enlisted and an officer senior to all the officers present approaches, all of the members must stop what they are doing, face the senior officer, come to the position of attention and render a hand salute. To avoid missing a senior officer passing close by you must be attentive to people around you while outdoors.

It is important to bear in mind that the person rendering the salute is saluting the rank and uniform of the wearer, out of respect to the grade, and to honor the history of the organization and that uniform.

Failure or refusal to render a proper salute is a clear sign of disrespect and dishonor to the uniform, to the organization, and to the individual. Failure or refusal **is not** an acceptable practice in the Coast Guard or Auxiliary.