

“WHO is Coming??!!!”

A guide for hosting royalty at your event

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I. Introduction

Prior to Northshield becoming a crown principality several years ago, royalty was seldom seen at events in this region. This was usually due to the fact that many of the Kings and Queens came from states such as Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and Illinois, and traveling past Wisconsin was prohibitive over the expanse of a weekend. Many newer members are probably not aware of this. As a crown principality, we have our own Prince and Princess and Their Stellar Heirs who travel the vast expanse of our lands. In the last year, we have added the King and Queen and Their Royal Heirs to this list as well. Most large events expect to see at least one member of the royal family in attendance. This does not mean that every group has someone who is experienced in hosting royalty, or if they have experience, it is very little. Even if you have served as royalty liaison in the past, there are always things that you can learn.

There are many guides in existence that are designed to help someone who is Chamberlain or working with a reign - but not many are written from the viewpoint of the event staff or royalty liaison. We hope this handout will answer questions that you might have as the host and will help make the royalty comfortable and happy at your event. While we can't cover everything, we hope that we can provide you with enough information so you can effectively locate answers to your questions that are not covered here.

II. Determining if royalty will attend your event

1. What type of event are you having?

The King and the Queen are required to attend three specific events: Their Coronation, Crown Tournament, and the Coronation of Their Royal Heirs., Technically, these are the only events that a King or Queen must attend. Obviously, They attend a great deal more than this. Other events that the royalty might attend include 12th Nights, Regional or Kingdom Arts and Science Championships, Baronial Investitures, Tournaments of Chivalry, yearly camping events, or annual traditional events. The size of an event does not automatically determine if the royalty will be there.

2. Do the reigning sovereigns live in/near your group?

Having royalty within your group does not automatically mean that They will be at your upcoming event, especially if there is an event that requires Their attendance elsewhere on the same weekend. Their proximity to you will, however, increase the odds, so be prepared.

3. Proper channels to consult to determine if the royalty will be attending.

First off, go to Their webpage! Most royalty will have a webpage shortly after they have begun Their reign and it will usually list Their schedule. If They do not have a schedule, you should consult the Kingdom calendar to see if an image of a crown has been placed next to your event listing, indicating that the Crown will be there. If nothing is there, do not assume that They are not coming. It is always advisable to contact Their Chamberlain to make sure. Please state that you are simply inquiring merely for clarification and that there would be no hurt feelings if They had plans to be elsewhere that weekend. Make sure that the royalty know They are welcome but should not feel pressured or obligated to attend your event. If They are coming, this would be a good time to encourage people in your group to send in award recommendations.

4. *What to do if royalty from other kingdoms are visiting?*

This will happen for very special occasions; Northshield’s first Coronation is a good example. Royalty from Calontir, Ealdormere, Outlands and other kingdoms have attended Coronations and other grand events in the past, so this should be expected and planned for. Technically, you need only be responsible for the comfort and care of the royalty from your own kingdom. That being said, there is no reason that you cannot provide similar courtesies to visiting sovereigns. The only thing that should limit you would be the space available at the event site, the size of your staff, or if Their arrival is a surprise.

III. Terminology for people who work with the royalty

1. **Chamberlain:** The chamberlain for the royalty is someone who coordinates all things that pertain to the reign. This includes travel arrangements, schedule, retainers, gifts, wish lists, etc. This person is listed as the main contact for the royalty and is the person that you would call or e-mail if you had questions about the royalty attending your event and what They require.
2. **Head Retainer:** The head retainer is the on-site chamberlain. The chamberlain frequently will act as head retainer, but this isn’t always the case. The head retainer will be your “day-of” contact person at the event. S/he will attend the royalty and make sure that They have all that They need and s/he will also seek the event staff out if the royalty requires anything. Make sure that you find out who will be the head retainer at your event.
3. **Royalty Liaison:** The royalty liaison is a member of the event staff who determines which royalty are coming and makes plans to see that Their needs are met. This staff position is essential when any number of royalty are attending. Obviously, if no royalty are coming, this position is not necessary. As royalty liaison, your first duty is to contact the chamberlain(s) of the royalty that are likely to attend your event to inquire if They are indeed coming and what They will require. Conversely, you will be the first point of contact if the royalty or Their chamberlain requires further information about the event or needs to make additions/changes to the schedule. All inquiries should be forwarded to the proper staff member immediately and you should plan to follow-up to see that the changes/additions were made and that the royalty or Their chamberlain received a reply to their question. You

should make sure to have volunteers waiting at the event in the morning to help unload the car(s) when the royalty arrive. They generally travel with a great deal of regalia for court and having people on hand will help get Them settled all the quicker.

4. **Attendant/Retainer:** An attendant or retainer is someone who volunteers to follow around the royalty throughout the day. Usually, several people will serve in this capacity during an event. Do not be surprised if the Chamberlain/ Head retainer has already made arrangements for people to attend the royalty but please make it known if you wish to volunteer within this capacity. As an attendant/retainer your job is to remain within a 5-foot radius from the person you are attending and to be prepared to provide said person with whatever assistance They require. This may include carrying/holding things, recording items that They receive, providing names of people They meet, delivering messages, taking messages, and generally being useful and pleasant – but not obtrusive. The ideal attendant/retainer is a person who quietly offers assistance (sometimes reminders of the time or appointments) but knows when to step back and give the Royalty privacy for a discussion. Discretion is the key phrase when attending Royalty; it’s OK to share funny stories or “magic moments,” but it is not acceptable to discuss “matters of state” or other things that you may be exposed to in your duty as attendant/retainer. Please do not be offended if the Royalty is too busy to be able to chat and get to know you; bonus for you if this occurs, but it is rare at large, hectic events.
5. **Guard:** A guard is someone who stands at the entrance to the royalty room or in front of the thrones during court. As a guard, you should keep unnecessary people out of the royalty room; this is especially important if the royalty are in the middle of a meeting or if They are preparing for court. It is not always obvious who is and who isn’t necessary. If you are unsure, do not hesitate to stop someone and gently ask him or her what they are looking for (and can you be of assistance). Be warned that some people will be horribly offended that you stopped them, but please be polite and pleasant and explain that you are only following the instructions given to you by the royalty. When guarding the thrones, your presence is one of symbolic and not actual need. It is customary in some kingdoms that anyone called within the presence of the Crown should not be wearing any live steel; as a guard, you should stop someone before s/he approaches the throne if s/he still has a knife on their belt. If you need to stop someone, please do so politely since it is highly unlikely that they bear any grievance with the royalty and have simply forgotten this custom in the excitement of court. Some royalty will ignore this custom and will simply motion that the person can come

forward with their weapon. Pay attention to the Royalty, and perhaps clarify this before Court, as some Royalty choose to waive this custom altogether.

6. **Champion:** A champion is someone who is chosen by the royalty to represent them in various activities: marshal, arts and sciences, youth, etc. A champion will usually attend the royalty in court and if you are aware that a particular couple has a number of champions, room should be planned for them around the thrones. Not every royalty will have champions and it is likely that the only person who will have any dealing with them will be the Chamberlain. Sometimes, however, the King’s Champion or Queen’s Champion will work directly with the guards for Court and the Royalty Room.

IV. What you will need to provide

1. **Royalty Room:** A private space at the event for the royalty to keep their belongings, change, meet with officers or Peers, and generally get away from the event if they need to. As a general guide, the royalty room should be large enough so that each royal person can have a space that is roughly 50 sq. ft. If several members of the royal family are coming, you should consider using separate rooms if that is available (i.e. a room for the King/Queen, a room for the Prince/Princess). If there is only one room available for the royalty, you should make every effort to divide up the space so that the King and Queen can have a separate area from the Prince and Princess, etc. Since They will likely need to change in this space, you should consider providing a place where They can have privacy. A mirror is very helpful, along with a rack, shelf or table on which to place coats, bags, dresses, or other items. A table is essential, since many things will be piled under and on top of it. Several chairs should be in the room, so that the royalty and Their attendants can rest. Most events will have a court, and therefore a space should be set aside for use by the scribes. Whenever possible, it is a good idea to use a space that is separate from the royalty room so that the scribes will have enough room for their work and the royalty can use Their room for Their own purposes. (Also to avoid prying eyes and keep paints and inks away from expensive court clothing and regalia!)
2. **A place to hold court:** Court should be held in a space that has enough room for 80% of the attendees to witness the activities. If the site does not have enough chairs to do this, make sure that this is noted on your website or flyers so that people can bring their own. Some events will have more than one court and it is easiest to leave the thrones and the

regalia in one space throughout the day rather than to move them from one building to another. Fabric banners behind the thrones can help add interest and decoration to otherwise drab walls and interiors. Another item that is a nice addition for court is a platform to raise up the thrones. Be sure to provide access to the platform by way of stairs, so that people can gracefully approach the thrones when they are called up. Another duty for the guards will be to offer assistance to people traveling up and down the stairs, to make sure that they do not take a fall.

3. **A space for Their presence:** The most common use of the term “presence” is used to indicate the space during the day that contains the thrones, banners and other items that represent the Kingdom, Principality or Barony (but isn’t necessarily the same space as Court). If the event is outdoors, you should provide a space for the presence that will provide the Royalty with a comfortable environment from which They can view the activities of the day. If the presence is separate from where court will be held, see if the royalty would like you to provide different chairs so that They can leave Their thrones in one place for the day. When setting up the presence near the fighting field, always consult the Chamberlain to see if the royalty has a particular preference where They would like to be seated. At an outdoor event, shade is crucial and you should provide something under which the royalty can be comfortably seated. Technically, the presence is also the area contained within a 10-foot radius around the sovereign. As a rule, you should stand just outside this space until the royalty acknowledges you and invites you in.
4. **Food and refreshments during the day:** This is extremely crucial, since the royalty are very busy during the day and are not able to leave the site. The likes and dislikes of the royalty should be received from Their chamberlain prior to the event and every care should be given to make sure that They have food that They enjoy. This is especially important if the royalty have any dietary or allergy concerns. Food safety should be maintained at all times and it is recommended that only a small amount of food be left out at a time and that trays should be replenished with items kept in a cooler or fridge. Since the royalty will have many attendants, make sure that you have enough food so that they can help themselves as well. You are not required to feed Their staff, but it will make their job easier if they do not need to leave the site for their own food. This is often an opportunity for members of your group to “show off” their culinary skills – within the constraints of the Royalty’s preferences and dietary restrictions, of course. If your group simply cannot provide food for the staff for whatever reason, it is a considerate gesture to offer to collect funds and fetch food – perhaps at Subway or some other fast food provider.

5. **Head table for feast:** The head table is reserved for the attending royalty and Their guests to sit at. As head cook, it is recommended that you plan for the head table to seat up to 12 persons. The royalty choose who will sit with Them and They may choose to have more or less than 12, but in general this is a safe number. Do not expect the royalty to bring Their own linens and always make sure that the head table has a tablecloth. This does not need to be fancy; a simple, white cloth is sufficient. Be certain that it is clean and that it is wide enough to hang down on the side that faces the other diners, so that the legs of the people sitting at it are hidden. The tables in many rental halls can vary greatly in appearance and a tablecloth can cover a multitude of sins. You can choose to add other items such as runners, candles, flowers, fruit, ribbon and other items to decorate the table. Be careful and don't add too much since you will need space for the food. Again, remember to check – royalty may be allergic to something unusual, such as pine or citrus, or something as commonplace as scented candles.
6. **Designated parking space:** make sure that this space is clearly marked and convenient to the door. If the nearest parking space is a bit of a hike, make sure that there is an area to pull up near the door so that the royalty can unload quickly, easily, and most directly to the Royalty Room. Have a volunteer stationed at the entrance to direct Them to this spot. Their car can be moved once it is empty. Make sure that you have a space for each royal vehicle, and do not assume that each couple will be traveling together. (Again, ask the Chamberlain and/or Head Retainer.)

I. Additional items to consider

1. It is generally customary to waive any fees for the event and the feast for the Royalty. If your event can afford it, it is nice to waive either the event fee and/or the feast fee for at least one retainer – but not necessary.
2. If the royalty are coming from a long distance, your group may want to consider making a donation to Their travel fund or providing Them with a hotel room for the weekend. As much as most Royalty enjoy staying in the home of a resident, quite often They arrive so late that They feel bad about making Their hosts stay up to wait for Their arrival. And we all know how few SCA homes are pet-free and/or smoke-free...it may not be by choice if They ask about a hotel.
3. If They are flying in for the event, They may need someone to pick Them up and return Them to the airport. Because They will have to pack light,

the group might also be asked to help find or provide thrones (nice chairs) or other regalia (banners) if They choose to hold a court or eat feast (plates/bowls/cups/tableware). These items can often be borrowed from larger groups.

4. Banners/ pennants/ and other items with the kingdom device and colors will help to liven up a modern space and will allow the royalty to leave some of Their items at home.

VI. Event Checklist

The event checklist is a tool that the Royalty Liaison can use when preparing for the arrival of royalty at an event. Since it is contained on two pages, this document can easily be carried by the Royalty Liaison throughout the day. It lists a number of the common items that you will need to be aware of during the day and will help you on schedule and organized. Of course the checklist that we have created may not suit your organizational style or the theme and activities of the event. You should feel free to customize this document so that it best meets your needs.

V. 1. Determine if royalty will attend your event.

- Visit your kingdom’s website and check the royalty’s webpage for Their schedule.
- If they do not have a schedule posted, then consult the Kingdom calendar.
- Contact Their Chamberlain to make sure the royalty is or is not coming.

2. Yes, They’re coming. Now what?

- Encourage people in your group to send in award recommendations, via the online database, email or in a letter.
- Get a Royalty Liaison for the group/event.

3. Advance tasks for the Royalty Liaison:

- Inquire with the Chamberlain to determine who will be the event’s Head Retainer.
- Introduce yourself to the Head Retainer (may be same person as Chamberlain).
- Provide as much information in advance as possible. Send a flyer/event announcement a.s.a.p. If a preliminary schedule is available, send that, too. Advise the Head Retainer regarding showers on site, alcohol, candles, etc.
- Give the Head Retainer your contact information: SCA and modern name, mailing address, home phone, day phone, cell phone (if available), email address.
- Inquire about details:
 - When are They coming, and how (car or plane)? [Will they need transportation?]
 - Where will they stay (hotel or crash)? Provide detailed information about these arrangements – street address, phone numbers, confirmation number (hotel).
 - Make sure all travelers have adequate directions and information to reach the crash site or hotel, and also for finding the site.
 - What time will They arrive on site?
 - Do They have meetings that will need to be on the schedule? (If yes, advise and/or consult with the Event Steward.) Do They prefer Court to be held before - or after - Feast? Are there other considerations for the schedule?
- Inquire if they will be bringing regalia, or if the group will need to help provide/organize chairs, banners, etc. Consult with the Event Steward to determine if your group can afford to waive the event fee for the Royalty

and/or a particular number of their staff. Inform Head Retainer of this information.

- Consult with Event Steward regarding designated parking for the royalty vehicles. Make some sturdy, weatherproof signs with large print. Figure out how to display the signs in a way that will be visible and easily recognizable.
- Consult with the Event Steward to figure out what room at the site will be adequate for a Royalty Room. Decide what sort of decoration and amenities you will be able to provide (mirror, clothes rack, tables, chairs, etc.) Make some nice, legible signs to place outside the room, to clearly designate the Royalty room. Be sure to offer at least the basic necessity: bottled water! Inform the Head Retainer about these arrangements, especially if the Royalty will need to share the room with other royals and/or scribes.
- Inquire with your group’s members to see who is interested in being an attendant during the day, for court, a guard, etc. Offer these names to the Head Retainer and help coordinate the rotation of attendants.
- Line up additional folks who will be at-hand to assist with unloading the vehicles and setting up thrones in the morning - and - for taking down thrones and packing the vehicles in the evening.
- Arrange for someone to wait at the main entrance for the arrival of the royalty. This person should be able to lead the royalty to the Royalty room, and then alert appropriate event staff (to assist with unloading, etc.).
- Arrange for a check-in paperwork to be in the Royalty room upon the arrival of any staff or royalty, so that they can pay (or not) in private.
- Consult with the Event Steward to determine if you will be able to offer a lunch for the royalty. Find a person to organize the lunch itself or a lunch-run (this may be you). Check the royalty’s website for allergies and preferences. Inform the Head Chamberlain about lunch arrangements.
- Consult with the Event Steward and Head Retainer in advance, if possible, to arrange a space for the Presence. (Indoors? Outdoors? Extra chairs needed? Location of Presence in relation to combat activities?)
- Consult with the Event Steward and Head Retainer in advance, if possible, to arrange a space for Court.
- Inquire with Event Steward if there will be a feast. If yes, give the Royalty’s list of allergies and preferences to the Feastocrat right away, so that any adjustments to the meal can be made early on in the planning stages, before food is purchased.
- Consult with the Event Steward and Head Cook to determine if the group can afford to waive the feast fee for the Royalty and/or a particular

number of their staff and/or guests. Inform the Head Retainer of this information. Consult with the Feastocrat regarding the number of seats that will be available for Head Table (this may, or may not, coincide with the number of complimentary tickets). Inform the Head Retainer how many seats will be available for Head Table.

- Arrange decoration for the Head Table; at a minimum, provide tablecloths, plain white will do. Consider adding runners, candles (if permitted), ribbon, etc.
 - Consult with the Head Retainer to determine if there are any special or unusual requests that the Royalty might have, such as: an arts and sciences display of items created by local members; wanting to spend time at the youth activities; needing a “vigil space” for someone that day; requiring court guards to be in fealty to the crown, etc.
- 4. Day-Of tasks for the Royalty Liaison:**
- Place parking spot signs before the Royalty arrive.
 - Put up the sign for/at the Royalty Room before the Royalty arrive.
 - Be available for unloading, directing traffic, assisting the Head Retainer with any last-minute errands, messages, coordination, etc. Check in with the Head Retainer frequently throughout the day.
 - Help close out the Royalty Room, making sure that They don’t leave anything important behind and that They remember to take any gifts, etc.