



New York City Mess Night

Rules of the Mess



- 1.** Mr. Vice will monitor the behavior of the Mess throughout the evening. Upon the request of the President, or as he sees fit to advise, he will carefully identify any violations of the rules of the mess, after which the President may assign fines appropriate to the severity of the infraction identified. Members of the Mess may request to address the Mess in their own defense. In any event, fines will be paid to Mr. Vice, and the decisions of the President, once final, may not be appealed. Similarly, the diagnoses of Mr. Vice are final and may not be appealed, unless overturned by the President.
- 2.** Members may request to address thy Mess by standing up at their seat and asking, “Mr. Vice, [State your preferred form of address and last name, such as “Mrs. McNamara”] requests permission to address the Mess.” Guests at the Head Table, however, are not required to request permission before addressing the Mess directly.
- 3.** Any member of the Mess addressed directly by the President of the Mess may respond directly, without requesting permission from Mr. Vice.
- 4.** Thou shall be punctual.
- 5.** Thou shall wear appropriate attire, and shall at no time wear an ill-fitting, ill-prepared, or discolored uniform. Clip-on ties are completely prohibited.
- 6.** The sounding of “First Sergeants Call” is the last opportunity to a head call until the Mess is concluded.
- 7.** Thou shall not murder the Queen’s English.
- 8.** Thou shall not use foul language, speak smuttingly, or use loud, obtrusive remarks in any language.
- 9.** Thou shall not pick thy nose, ears, or arse.
- 10.** Thou shall not fluctuate, lest thou be severely punished.
- 11.** Thou shall not chew gum.
- 12.** Thou shall not bring cocktails or any tobacco products into the dining area, and thou shall not use tobacco products unless the smoking lamp is lighted. Even so, only cigars provided to the Mess may be smoked.
- 13.** Thou shall be extremely careful to properly extinguish all smoking materials, and to not put ashes on the plates, table, or floor; rather, they shall be placed only in designated receptacles.
- 14.** Thou shall sit in thy assigned seat at the appropriate time.
- 15.** Thou shall not rap on glassware or any other items at the Mess for attention.
- 16.** Thou shall not rearrange the tables settings.
- 17.** Thou shall greet the Guests of Honor and make every effort to greet all members of the Mess at some point during the evening.
- 18.** Women, politics, shop, money, and religions shall not be discussed at the Mess. The Commander in Chief’s policies, in particular, will not be discussed.



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- 19.** Thou shall not haggle over thy date of rank.
- 20.** Thou shall not refuse any course, nor shall ye ask for seconds. Thy meal shall be consumed as served, and in a manner becoming a lady or gentleman.
- 21.** Thou shall not throw food or disgrace the Mess with unruly conduct.
- 22.** Thy elbows will remain off the table.
- 23.** Thou shall not turn glasses upside down or refuse any beverage. Members shall not be required to consume alcohol; however all ye glasses will be filled and shall be lifted to thy lips for toasting at the appropriate time.
- 24.** Wine will be passed from right to left.
- 25.** Thou shall not “bottom up” glasses for every toast, except for the final toast to the Corps.
- 26.** Exclusive of actual emergencies, no member shall leave the dining area until thy head table has exited
- 27.** Thy President and thy Mr. Vice shall be the only consultants of time during the feast.
- 29.** Thou shall move to the Mess when it is time and remain standing until seated by the President.
- 30.** Thou shall keep toasts and comments within the limits of good taste and mutual respect. Degrading or insulting remarks will be frowned upon by the membership. Good-natured needling, however, is highly encouraged. Thou shall not laugh at ridiculously funny comments unless the President shows approval by laughing.
- 31.** When the Mess adjourns, thou shall rise and wait for the President and guests to leave.
- 32.** The Mess will not talk to the head table or servers of the Mess.
- 33.** Thou shall not start a course before the President.
- 34.** Thou shall use proper toasting protocol.
- 35.** Thou shall ensure that thy glass is always charged while toasting.
- 36.** Thou shall participate in all toasts unless thyself or the group is honored with the toast.
- 37.** Thou shall not rise with smoking material in mouth or hand.
- 38.** Members of the Mess shall not maintain a debt against the Mess. Thou shall faithfully pay all fines before departing the Mess, or deposit instructions for swift collection of such fines after the Mess has concluded.
- 39.** Thou shall not have a copy of these rules while in the Mess.