

Handy Hints for a Visit from Santa

Guidelines for Home Parties

By National Santa, Tim Connaghan

Thank you for inviting us to bring Santa to your Holiday Event. To help you in making Santa's visit a most enjoyable event, we have prepared the following list of suggestions. If there is something missing from this, or your booking agreement, please feel free to contact us. Our goal is to make things easy and enjoyable for everyone!

1. **Have your camera/s ready.** Be sure to have all your cell phones or cameras charged. If you need film or video tape and batteries, do you have enough? Do you have good lighting? Nothing worse than trying to take photos when there is not enough light. Just good room lighting is all you need. Also check your camera or phone memory. Do you have enough room for lots of photos. Download or delete old photos so you have plenty of room.

2. **Reserve a special parking place for Santa.** It should be as close as possible to where he is appearing. And remember, Santa is a senior citizen. If he parks down the street or around the corner and has to walk all the way to your home, or office, he might be a bit winded or exhausted, when he gets there. And don't forget, he's wearing a heavy velvet suit, with fur trim, that gets very hot, (even in December).

If the visit is at your home, leave an opening at the end of your driveway. Just put a temporary barrier in the space. Or back a car down a little and when the host goes out to greet Santa, they pull their car up and Santa pulls in and parks behind. You can also use a box, a chair or a sawhorse. Have some fun and put a sign out "Reserved for Santa!"

If your event is at a company facility, office building or hotel, please make arrangements for Santa to park his "Sleigh" in a valet or loading area. Again you can mark the area with a fun sign. This makes it easier for him to be fresh and ready to bring joy to your guests. And we ask that you arrange for validation or payment for the parking Santa's Sleigh.

3. **Timing is everything.** Santa may only be there for a set amount of time. And, if everyone is scattered around the house or office, you lose valuable time. Santa and you can coordinate. He should call you when he is five minutes away from arriving. That's your cue to get everyone together, maybe to sing some Christmas Carols,

4. **Someone should meet and guide Santa.** When Santa arrives a host should go outside to meet Santa. Someone should always go outside to greet Santa. Especially if he is coming to an office building, restaurant or public location. If you do not send someone to escort Santa, other people at your location will assume he is there for them too! They will try to stop him for their photos and want to take him to their location, which delays your event.

The host can also help Santa fill his bag, handle any last minute details, plus any final payment for the event. And then lead him to his appointed destination. Then, when Santa is ready to enter, the host goes back in, and that is a cue to get everyone singing "Jingle Bells!" As they are singing, and at just the right moment, Santa will pop in and join everyone in their singing. If you have a large group of children to see Santa, you should assign someone to be Santa's helper and coordinate calling out names of the children for coming up to Santa

5. **Have your gifts ready.** Santa can carry in one medium sized bag of presents for children or guests. They should be well labeled. We suggest a large black marking pen and writing directly on the gift, as tags can easily fall off. All packages should fit into one 35-gallon trash bag. Anymore, and it may be too heavy or awkward for him to bring in. We all know of Santa's "Magic Bag." You know the bag that holds tons of toys and gifts and only weights ten pounds. Well that bag only works its magic on Christmas Eve! If you have more than one bag, check with Santa and see if there is a way to have the gifts near his chair before he arrives or if there is a way for him to have "helper's" to bring the extra gifts in.

6. **Have a sturdy chair for Santa to sit in.** Folding chairs and low chairs (the one's you sink into) are not good. Santa usually likes a chair that is sturdy and stable. A good straight-back dining chair with no arms works well. Santa likes to sit-up or on the edge of the chair. And an arm chair is like an airline seat and he cannot put children on his knee or lap. He should be able to sit comfortably and have a child on each knee.

7. **Place the Chair near your Christmas tree or in a holiday setting.** Maybe in front of an unlit fireplace with stockings hanging, or any festive type of backdrop. Please do not put Santa near a fire. It is too hot and he is already wearing a very warm suit. Your photos will have more impact when the background has a festive look. Leave a foot or two between the chair and the tree or wall. This will allow room for others to gather around and behind Santa's chair for group photos.

8. **Think about photos with everyone.** Yes, some teenagers will shy away or think it is too childish, to have a photo with Santa. Don't worry; Santa can stand up for a "buddy" photo. What about grandma and grandpa? Take a photo with Santa and Grandma Hugging. And, nothing is more fun than having Santa ask Grandpa if he's been a good boy! And don't forget group photos with the ladies or maybe a "posse" or "Gangsta" group photo with the guys