



STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FOR BUTLERS AND HOUSEHOLD MANAGERS

Introduction

The International Institute of Modern Butlers proposes a high standard of professional practice by butlers and household managers codified in a set of professional standards. We propose such a professional code in the following "Professional Standards of Performance" and "A Butler's Professional Code of Ethics." These standards of performance and ethics represent the highest mark of competence, integrity, and responsibility for butlers and household managers everywhere. Anyone currently working in the profession or preparing for a position may use these standards to evaluate his or her readiness and suitability for the significant responsibilities to practice this ancient and honorable profession. The standards and code of ethics may also be used to help evaluate butler schools or practicing household butlers and managers.

Professional Standards of Performance

I. Role and Scope of Responsibility

- a. A butler is the professional employee primarily responsible for the effectiveness, efficiency, and style of carrying out his employer's household operations.
- b. The butler's primary concerns are the comfort, pleasure, welfare, and security of the members of the household.
- c. The butler usually works directly under the head householder, manages household operations and staff, and also performs many household operations.
- d. The butler and household staff should remain in the background, the focus of their attention and activities being on the wellbeing of members of the household and their guests.

II. Essence of a Butler

- a. A butler must be a consummate professional, characterized by excellent performance of duty, a high standard of moral integrity, and a high standard of professional commitment.
- b. This standard of ethics and performance is reflected in the International Institute of Modern Butlers' Professional Code of Ethics.



- c. Critical attributes of a butler: A butler is:
- i. trustworthy;
 - ii. loyal;
 - iii. technically competent;
 - iv. in the background;
 - v. helpful;
 - vi. gracious;
 - vii. discrete;
 - viii. professional in appearance and performance;
 - ix. able to anticipate;
 - x. dignified in manner and personality;
 - xi. flexible;
 - xii. considerate of other staff;
 - xiii. organized;
 - xiv. detail oriented;
 - xv. well composed;
 - xvi. humble;
 - xvii. healthy and energetic.

III. Trappings and Tools of the Trade

- a. A butler's appearance must reflect the role, with appropriate wardrobe and well presented in every detail in person and dress—neat, clean, pressed, and well groomed.
- b. The butler should have an office as his personal work quarters—properly supplied and furnished, and always tidy, well organized, and clean.
- c. There should be a pantry or other appropriate storage space for household china, crystal, flatware, service ware, table linens, decorative pieces, and flower vases. This workspace may be located and configured to serve as an intermediate preparation area where food is placed in service dishes and otherwise made ready to serve at table.
- d. The butler should maintain a Butler Book as a household database and store of reference notes. This book should contain a variety of information required for the day-to-day operation of the household and personal care of household members and their guests. The butler may also keep a daily journal and detailed calendar as a plan and record household operations.
- e. The butler should possess and employ a suitable professional library.
- f. The butler should possess and employ all of the office tools, equipment, and hand tools required for his various duties and chores.



IV. Butler Etiquette and Aplomb

- a. A butler must know and practice good manners and etiquette.
- b. A butler must master the etiquette associated with his responsibilities.
- c. A butler must be able to resolve and manage awkward circumstances with poise while preserving the dignity of others and the occasion.

V. Principles of Management and Leadership

The butler, as manager of the household, should employ suitable principles of household management, including the following:

- a. a relationship-based management philosophy;
- b. a system for managing resources, such as staff, various machines and equipment required for household operations, household finances, the various materials required for operations, time, and the required expertise for all household operations and services;
- c. the management of “things”;
- d. the management of people;
- e. relationship-based leadership principles;
- f. the management of household routines and non-routine activities;
- g. dealing with problems--surprises, change, conflict, and mistakes little and big.
- h. A butler should follow fair, considerate, lawful, and professionally responsible practices in the hiring, training, treatment, supervision, and termination of permanent and temporary staff.
- i. The butler must keep proper employee records.

VI. Relationship with the Employer

- a. A properly working relationship between an employer and butler includes clearly defined roles, professional courtesy, mutual respect and trust, and effective regular communication.
- b. A butler needs to recognize when an employer (and other individuals) is not merely being difficult, but is of unsavory character and intent.

VII. Supervising Housekeeping

A butler supervises the housekeeping function:

- a. A butler may have direct responsibility for performing some household tasks;
- b. The house must be kept orderly, clean, and furnished according to employer requirements at all times.
- c. The housekeeper and housekeeping staff may be asked to assist the butler as needed on occasion, and vice versa where proper service standards would otherwise be at risk.
- d. Precious items, fine art, flowers, and technical equipment require special care and handling.



VIII. The Butler, the Chef, and the Kitchen and Pantry

The butler employs and supervises the chef/cook; although the chef/cook runs the operation of the kitchen (including direct supervision of kitchen staff) and food pantry, and may have remarkable freedom within that realm on condition of conformance with the employer's desires, and with household management philosophy and style—subject to the butler's oversight, review, and decision authority as may occasionally be required.

- a. The chef/cook is to be treated with appropriate respect, but cannot be allowed tyrannical or abusive behavior.
- b. The kitchen should be well arranged and properly equipped, and must be hygienic, safe, clean, and orderly.
- c. The food pantry should always be well-stocked and in perfect order.
- d. Food must be safe, tasty, and well-presented for the occasion.

IX. The Bar and Wine Cellar

- a. The butler is expected to have considerable knowledge of wine and spirits.
- b. The butler may be expected to maintain a well-stocked bar and wine cellar.
- c. The butler may be expected to be able to prepare and properly serve a broad range of alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks.
- d. The butler is expected to be able to match wines with various foods and the needs of various occasions.
- e. The butler is expected to be an expert in the service of wine.

X. Cigars

- a. The butler should know something of the history, geography, technology, rituals, and etiquette associated with cigars.
- b. The butler should be familiar with quality brands and distinguishing features of different cigars and, if called upon, be prepared to assist in the selection, preparation, and lighting of cigars for his employer and household guests.

XI. Other Administrative Duties

- a. The butler has a number of household administrative responsibilities for purchasing, safety and emergency preparedness, administrative paperwork, household financial accounts, the maintenance of a household inventory, and the employer's motor pool. These administrative duties should be performed promptly and effectively, with meticulous care and also concern for the natural environment.



XII. Looking After Guests

- a. Any guest is a very important person (VIP) and should be treated as such. The Household staff should cater to guests' tastes, preferences, and comfort, consistent with house rules and standards, according to the employer's wishes.
- b. Guest quarters should be immaculate, well-furnished, and prepared with proper comforts, conveniences, and niceties, such as electronic CD and DVD players, a selection of CD's and DVD's, flowers, and current reading material. The guest bathroom should be well-furnished with toiletries (new), hygiene supplies, and bath linens.
- c. Guests may be encouraged to sign a "Visitors Book."

XIII. The Valet (A Gentleman's Gentleman)/Lady's Maid

The valet (or lady's maid for female employers) is responsible for the welfare and comfort of an employer. The valet's duties usually include awakening the employer, providing a morning tray and often breakfast, drawing the employer's bath, purchasing and caring for the employer's wardrobe, assisting with the dressing of the employer, packing and unpacking the employer's suitcases when traveling, and preparing the employer's clothing and personal supplies for the day. The standard of care is excellence in every regard and detail.

XIV. The Personal Assistant

- a. A personal assistant looks after the organizational, correspondence, administrative, calendaring, and travel affairs of an employer. In private service, he or she may sometimes also be responsible for valet or lady's maid duties. The personal assistant often may personally accompany his or her employer throughout daily activities, meetings, etc., and travel with the employer; although some employers may prefer and circumstances may require the personal assistant to work behind the scenes, and more in the background separate from the physical presence of the employer.
- b. The personal assistant should have considerable knowledge and expertise in correspondence, time management, human relations, computers and personal digital technology, financial management, organizational dynamics and management, personal professionalism, travel, concierge services, privacy protection and personal security, the spoken and written language arts, current events, personal care and grooming, and wardrobe selection, purchase, and management.
- c. A personal assistant must maintain health, energy, and focus; and be humble, appropriately deferential, and respectfully assertive, when necessary, with impeccable integrity and unwavering commitment to the welfare and success of the employer.



XV. Food Service

- a. A butler should create and present artistic, refined, elegant eating experiences catering to the palate, convenience, and pleasure of each individual, whether a simple tray for one or dinner for many, while remaining appropriately in the background.
- b. A butler should be able to present a meal using any of a variety of service styles: banquet, synchronized, plated, Russian, French, *gueridon*, service *en famille*, or informal family style.
- c. A butler should master the service of a morning tray, breakfast, brunch, informal lunch, business luncheon, English afternoon tea, dinner, formal dinner, and supper.
- d. A butler should master the brewing of tea and coffee, and preparation of any drink preferred by the employer or household guest.

XVI. Other Social Occasions

The butler's responsibilities for various social occasions demand attention to a large and diverse amount of activity and detail. These responsibilities require some kind of system and tools to manage such occasions effectively. Checklists offer a simple and efficient answer to these needs.

XVII. Moving House

When managing a house move for the employer, the butler may facilitate the move and ease any associated stress for the employer and family, himself, and household staff by assuring the following:

- Proper administrative preparation
- Preparation of the old house
- Preparation of the new house
- A competent and responsible moving company and security company
- A secure and complete move of household items, valuables, without mishap
- Arrangement and detailed set-up of the new house, ready for occupancy, with a white-glove inspection
- Good public relations in the new community
- Staff preparation, orientation, and training
- A suitable welcome and orientation of the family

XVIII. Security

- a. A butler may be employed in part to assure personal safety and security of an employer and the employer's household.



- b. Security measures should be used to deter, prevent, and respond to physical dangers and intrusions into the household.
- c. A butler-bodyguard who carries a gun should obtain the weapon legally; be properly licensed, insured, and trained; and should follow the law in the use of the weapon. A butler-bodyguard may also require proficiency in physical defense techniques and other methods of personal security.
- d. A butler should learn and use suitable techniques to transport the employer safely by motor vehicle or other transport in case of harmful intent or acts by others.
- e. The butler should learn and practice state-of-the-art measures to protect against violations of computer security, identity theft, and violations of the privacy of the employer and household.

XIX. Treatment and Compensation of the Butler

- a. As the chief operating officer of the household, the butler should be treated with the respect, consideration, and professional courtesy afforded any other senior manager position. The employer and other members of the household, guests, staff, and other contracted service agents should be expected to follow this standard.
- b. A butler's compensation and benefits should be in accordance with his or her experience and duties, on a level commanded by other professional managers and executives of similar responsibilities and stature.

XX. Suggestions for Those Seeking and Acquiring a New Position

- a. A standard job application package includes a well-presented curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé, a list of two to four contact references, and reference letters from previous employers or butler school instructors.
- b. It is usually wise to employ a reputable employment agency (that focuses on finding a right fit for everybody concerned) specializing in the placement of household staff. The butler should work personally and closely with them through the employment process.
- c. The new butler should prepare for employment in the profession, preferably receiving a diploma from a reputable butler school.
- d. A formal interview should take place before employment. The butler's appearance, preparation, and manner must be professional and courteous in every way. The butler should consider this interview both from his perspective of the position and the employer's perspective of the butler. It is wise to courteously ask thoughtful and pertinent questions about the household and position, as well as answer the employer's questions.



- e. Make the transition onto staff by first learning the household and job requirements. Make changes thoughtfully, cautiously, and patiently, with kind consideration for everyone involved.
- f. A well-prepared butler is competent, possesses great integrity, is highly responsible and dependable, and is considerate of others.

XXI. Other Skills and the Butler as Toastmaster

Butlers may have any number of valuable talents and abilities other than purely household and management skills. They may be skilled motorists, musicians, magicians, photographers, financial experts, athletes, adventurers, decorators, scholars, tutors, chefs, etc. These skills make them more employable as they can improve the quality of life for the members of the family and often add dimension, spice, and quality to various household and family activities.

An ability that may be of particular value is that of toastmaster. As toastmaster, the butler should understand and master the following:

- a) The butler toastmaster should wear a crimson tailcoat and eveningwear.
- b) The role of toastmaster is to introduce speakers, offer toasts, and orchestrate toasts offered by others. The toastmaster also may help organize an event by arranging and supervising the speaking and entertainment parts of the event.
- c) When making toasts, the toastmaster tailors them to the occasion, but should favor shorter toasts over very long ones.
- d) The person making a toast should stand, unless on board a Navy ship (at least in the British Royal Navy), where tradition allows toasts to be made while sitting.
- e) The butler toastmaster should keep the occasion on schedule.
- f) In order to attract the attention of the audience for a person about to offer a toast, the butler toastmaster should stand behind the person, rap the table, and announce the person by name and the intent to give a toast.
- g) The toastmaster introduces himself to the audience at the beginning of the program and speakers on the program at the beginning of each speech. Brief introductions of less than one minute usually are adequate, except perhaps for a very distinguished speaker for a very special occasion, the introduction for whom may extend from one-to-two minutes. Very long introductions are boring and distract from the main message of the program.
- h) The toastmaster directs attention to the program rather than to himself, except, of course, for the crimson tailcoat.



A Butler's Professional Code of Ethics

Integrity

Always act in the best interest of your employer and household, placing their interests above your own. Maintain the highest level of professional standards of performance in all relationships and duties.

Service

Serve members of the household and guests as they choose to be served, in keeping with your own moral code and the law.

Confidentiality

Faithfully keep confidences regarding your employer, members of the household, guests, and other employees.

Probity

Abide by the highest ethical, moral, and legal standards, including knowing and complying with applicable local and national laws.

Dedication

Diligently perform your duties to the best of your ability. Your activities outside working hours should reflect personal and professional integrity.

Personal and Professional Development

Endeavor to improve and enhance yourself personally and professionally. Serve to increase your service knowledge and improve your skills through formal training and personal study. Share edifying information and experiences with your peers.

Respect

Work toward achieving a strong foundation of mutual respect in your relationships with your employer, other household members, guests, other staff, vendors and other service providers, and your peers. Strive for a high standard of



competence, moral integrity, commitment, and dependability in all these relationships. Behave respectfully toward all persons and property associated with the employer and guests.

Promotion

Embrace opportunities to promote superlative service in the industry. This may be done through your own personal and professional example, mentoring others, promoting industry standards, and active involvement in professional relationships and organizations.

Professional Relationships

Strive to maintain appropriate relationships and boundaries in all aspects of service. While being free to hold your own opinions and views, avoid discrimination in any form based upon age, disability, gender, religion, ethnicity or race, sexual orientation, politics or any facets of life, preferring instead to deal with employees, guests, and employers on their merits, and in consideration of their dignity, and compassion for them, as fellow members of the human race.

It is not necessary or expected that you condone, support, or facilitate serious illegal activity by the employer, guests, or others associated with the household. It is expected and necessary to treat such activity with rectitude, wisdom, dignity, and a