

PROTOCOL

Rules & Regulations

INTERNATIONAL TAEKWON-DO FEDERATION



International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF)

Protocol – Rules & Regulations

(Pages 1-17 In force of April 3rd, 2016)



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SECTION 1 - GENERAL

INTRODUCTION

Protocol refers to formal rules that establish what is proper and correct in official exchanges. Every type of social structure has its rules of protocol, whether those rules are described in an official document or simply part of the oral tradition. Following the appropriate protocol is considered to be civilized behaviour.

In ITF Taekwon-Do we follow a protocol, as it is an integral part of the martial arts. General Choi taught us that it is extremely important. However, as we did not have a written ITF Official Protocol rules have been applied differently from one place to another.

The general principle behind ITF Protocol can be summed up as the application of the first of the five Tenets identified by our Founder called: Courtesy which means showing respect for others.

P1. PURPOSE

The purpose of these rules is to introduce a uniform protocol for ITF Taekwon-Do people around the world. It describes the basic rules of protocol to be applied in each particular situation like in the class (Dojang), at promotion examination tests, tournaments and also in the social sphere.

P2. APPLICATION

Protocol applies to all our relations with other ITF Taekwon-Do people. However, the underlying principle of Protocol - respect for others - should also be applied in the other aspects of our lives like family, schoolmates, colleagues at work, etc.



P3. GENERAL RULES

When showing respect for their Seniors, Juniors follow the rules of protocol that give Seniors precedence at all times. Seniors must accept with humility the gestures of respect from their Juniors recognizing that they were once Juniors too and that they were only able to reach their present rank with the help of their own Seniors.

Protocol requires that Juniors bow to their Seniors when they meet. Bowing is always initiated by a Junior and the Senior bows in return.

Some more examples:

- Juniors must bow before addressing to Seniors;
- Juniors must never interrupt a Senior whilst speaking;
- Juniors in presence of Seniors, sit only when invited to do so;
- Juniors never remains seated if a Senior is standing;
- Juniors always walk behind or beside a Senior, never in front, except when showing the way.

P4. BOWING

Taekwon-Do ITF bowing is the traditional way to show respect and discipline in the martial arts. Bowing is not an indication of complete submission to one's Senior. It is a sign of mutual respect.

A bow can be used for different purposes. For example it may be a greeting or an indication that a Junior would like to address a Senior. A bow can mean “thank you” or “I understand”.

During training, before starting and completing any type of exercise involving two or more people, those involved bow to each other.



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Hugs, kisses or other gestures of any kind within the strictly traditional martial classes in the field of promotion examination test, seminars and/or tournaments should be avoided.

It is essential that the bow be executed in full consciousness of the meaning of the gesture.

The following is a description of the bow that is unique to ITF Taekwon-Do:

- a. Stop moving and stand up straight;
- b. Put down anything you are carrying as your hands should be empty;
- c. If you are wearing a hat remove it;
- d. Place your heels together with your feet at a 45° angle (forming a V shape);
- e. Hold your arms relaxed and slightly separated from the sides of your body;
- f. Close your hands slightly;
- g. The person who will lead the bowing shall step forward to bow and then will step back to resume position;
- h. Bend forward from the waist - never from the neck - to a 15° angle from upright. Bending by only moving the neck is considered impolite;
- i. By bowing look forward to the eyes of the person you are bowing to or the object you are bowing to;
- j. When bowing to a person (not to an inanimate object such as the ITF flag), say “Taekwon”.

The longer you maintain the bowing position; the more respect is shown to the Senior. The Junior will always maintain the bow until the Senior straightens up.

P5. SAY “TAEKWON”

It is essential that all individual members of the ITF understand the meaning of “Taekwon” and when it is appropriate to say it.

General Choi explained why we say “Taekwon” when we bow, rather than “Taekwon-Do”: “Taekwon” (foot and hand) represents the physical side of our martial art; so saying “Taekwon” indicates that the person is present physically.



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There is no need to pronounce the word “Do” because when he/she is bowing the person’s physical posture and respectful attitude are a visible demonstration of the Do.

It is important to say “Taekwon” only when bowing to a living person. Thus, when bowing to a Senior, a Junior says “Taekwon”.

SECTION 2 – PROTOCOL IN THE DOJANG

P6. GENERAL RULES

When in the training hall (Dojang) the students must follow as a general rule the following rules:

- a) It is not permitted for visitors to wear shoes in the training hall (Dojang);
- b) It is not permitted to enter the office of the Master/Instructor unless permission has been received.
- c) Do not lean or sit on the desk of the Master/Instructor;
- d) No smoking, no beverages (except water), no foods or chewing gum are allowed in the Dojang;
- e) Bad or inappropriate words are not tolerated in the Dojang;
- f) It is not permitted to leave the Dobok or personal items in the Dojang as it needs to be kept clean and
- g) tidy at all times;
- h) Silence is the rule in the training hall as it helps students to concentrate on learning;
- i) Don’t do something that could obstruct the learning of others or yourself;
- j) The Dobok should be used only when training or during events;
- k) For official events we normally don’t wear casual dress;
- l) The belt should never be placed on the floor;
- m) When tidying up the Dobok or belt the student must turn to the left, avoiding to be full facing the Senior;



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- n) It is considered rude to touch a Senior Dobok or belt;
- o) Avoid playing with the Dobok or belt;
- p) Always bow before entering or leaving the Dojang;
- q) After bowing to a Senior Juniors must first take three steps back and then turn around to move away. This act should be performed during all events like training, at promotion examination tests, tournaments, social events, etc.

P7. PREPARING FOR THE CLASS

Before the beginning of a training class students must take the following into account:

- a) Come to class perfectly groomed. To be presented in a hygienic manner with short fingernails and toenails;
- b) To train in a clean and ironed official approved Dobok;
- c) To treat the Dobok and belt with respect. After class the Dobok should be folded properly;
- d) Once at the gym students should promptly put on the Dobok;
- e) No jewellery watches or any accessory may be worn during training;
- f) Students (male and/or female) with long hair must wear their hair up during training, with headbands or non-rigid soft elements;
- g) Never go to the Dojang in a drunken state or under the influence of stimulants;
- h) Before entering the Dojang students must bow facing the banner of the ITF and the picture of General Choi if present;
- i) Students will then bow to his/her Instructor/Master;
- j) Students may then exchange greetings with others present;
- k) Students arriving late to a class that has already commenced should make a bow to the symbols and the Instructor/Master before joining the group. They should remain standing in Attention position (Charyot) with their right hand up to be recognized by the Instructor/Master before joining the class. After being recognized they will bow to their



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Instructor/Master and will enter by the back of the class, going to take the appropriate place based on their rank.

P8. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS

At the beginning of each class everyone must respect the following procedure:

- a. Students shall line up in order of their rank waiting in silence facing the Instructor/Master;
- b. The Instructor/Master commands to all students, who take the Attention position (Charyot).
- c. The highest ranked student shall be located to the right of the general formation (the left side looking from the Instructor/Masters perspective) facing the Instructor/Master. The highest ranked student will be responsible for commanding the bow to the Instructor/Master. When they bow, all say "Taekwon";
- d. The highest ranked student located at the top right of the formation (the left, looking from the Instructor/Masters perspective), turns in the direction of the second highest ranked student and all students will turn facing the highest ranked student. The second highest ranked student leads the bow to the highest ranked student saying "Taekwon";
- e. After the above mentioned (a,b,c,d) greetings, the Instructor/Master and all students with their right hand raised, standing in Attention position (Charyot) recite the Student's Oath, or the Tenets of Taekwon-Do facing the official symbols, if present, like the ITF flag and picture of General Choi. After the initial protocol then the class can start normally.

THE STUDENT OATH

1. I shall observe the Tenets of Taekwon-Do
2. I shall respect the Instructor and Seniors.
3. I shall never misuse Taekwon-Do.
4. I shall be a champion of freedom and justice.
5. I shall build a more peaceful world.



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THE TENETS OF TAEKWON-DO

1. Courtesy.
2. Integrity.
3. Perseverance.
4. Self-Control.
5. Indomitable Spirit.

P9. DURING THE CLASS

During every class students shall observe the following:

- a. Students wishing to ask a question should raise their hand and wait for the Instructor/Master's permission to talk. If students are sitting, they will stand up assuming an Attention position (Charyot), bow and will then ask their question. After being answered, they bow and sit down;
- b. Students in need of leaving the training hall for any reason must raise their hand and when they are recognized by the Instructor/Master they may withdraw from the class. If they want to return to class, they wait standing in the Attention position (Charyot) in the entrance of the Dojang. When they receive the Instructor/Master's attention, they bow and take position;
- c. Students withdrawing from training must respect their row, moving out of training walking behind their line, towards the side of the general formation, as a matter of courtesy to the other students. The student may never pass through the middle of the formation.
- d. Students should avoid dropping out of the training class. It should happen only in extreme cases;
- e. Students should avoid talking to their colleagues, spectators, parents and other guests whilst in the training class;
- f. Nobody can teach other students without permission of the Instructor/Master;
- g. Students must always listen carefully to what the Instructor/Master is saying. They must always be ready to react when the Instructor gives a command, and their posture and attitude should reflect this. Standing in the Attention position (Charyot), however when



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the Instructor/Master is giving explanations and if so indicated, students may remain in a relaxed position;

- h. If an Instructor/Master reaches the Dojang during the training class, the Instructor in charge will stop the training in order to have all bow with respect and firmness;
- i. Students when sitting down must avoid showing the soles of their feet to their Instructor/Master as it is considered impolite.

P10. ENDING OF THE CLASS

- a. Students at the end of the training class, might sit cross-legged and meditate for, at least, one (1) minute;
- b. Students will then stand up turn facing to the Senior student, located at the top right of the formation and bow saying "Taekwon";
- c. The Senior student will ask other students to turn diagonally facing to the Assistant Instructor and bow saying "Taekwon";
- d. The Assistant Instructor will lead the bowing facing to the Instructor/Master, (always saying "Taekwon");
- e. Finally, the Instructor/Master leads the bowing, facing the ITF flag and the photo of General Choi (without saying "Taekwon") if present.

SECTION 3 – PROTOCOL PROMOTION EXAMINATION TEST

P11. GENERAL RULES

If there is a moment to display the Protocol in its maximum expression, it is during the promotion examination test for black belts and coloured belts. Necessary care should be taken in order to prioritize the act with special enhancement and excellence.

Therefore the correct "Etiquette", which implies that the examiner(s) should be dressed in a suit and tie colour that identifies their category. The assistant/aide and examinees will be dressed in the official ITF Dobok.

The area where the promotion examination testing takes place must have everything necessary for the test to be conducted properly. In particular, the logo of the ITF and the respective national organization should be on display.



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P12. PROCEDURE

- a. Examination is conducted according to rules laid down in the ITF By laws;
- b. One Assistant might be appointed;
- c. The Assistant will be responsible for enforcing the protocol from the beginning to the end of the promotion examination test;
- d. If it is a public examination, the Assistant will be responsible for ensuring that the observers keep silent, that cell phones are turned off or on silent mode and that no people are moving about during the promotion examination test, and checking that there are no conversations or unnecessary inconvenience, in order to preserve the concentration of examinees;
- e. The Assistant has the authority to have offenders removed;
- f. The Assistant will organize the lining up of the examinees before the examiners come in;
- g. After protocol of the bowing procedure as specified for Class Initiation Protocol: Section 2, P8, the promotion examination test will begin;
- h. The orders given from the Examiner(s) might be channelled through the Assistant;
- i. The Examiner(s) will avoid, if possible, to speak directly to the examinees, except in very special cases;
- j. The examinees should not address to the examiner(s), but to the Assistant;
- k. The examinees may not withdraw from the grading test ceremony, without the permission of the Assistant;
- l. Examinees will raise their right hand, addressing to the Assistant in order to ask to speak or to ask a question;
- m. It might be good to provide toilet and/or water breaks during the promotion examination test;
- n. At the end of the promotion examination test conduct the protocol of bowing as those specified for Class Ending Protocol: Section 2, P10. The Assistant waits for the examiners to go out of the place before breaking the examinees formation, thus concluding the act of examination.



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SECTION 4 – PROTOCOL IN TOURNAMENTS

P13. GENERAL RULES

It is very important to standardize the ITF Protocol for Tournaments, so that the same requirements are applied worldwide. This does not preclude that each national and /or allied organization might create local rules, which enrich the protocol and identify their organization. The intent of these rules is not to detract from the traditional events that identify each organization.

P14. PROCEDURE

- a. Events/tournaments must be properly organized, so that they can begin and end on time according to the schedule written in the official invitation as punctuality is a sign of respect;
- b. Official meetings and other matters which have the presence of the highest ITF authorities (including special guests) must be on time in order to prevent unnecessarily waiting;
- c. The Organizer must provide a VIP lounge at the site of the tournament, for the "primary" reception of the ITF authorities and their special guests;
- d. The VIP lounge should be equipped with a catering service like water, soft drinks and snacks;
- e. The organizer will appoint a "Chief of Ceremony and Protocol", who will have the necessary amount of helpers - properly identified -, and who will be responsible for guiding the ITF authorities and their special guests throughout their stay at the tournament site;
- f. The VIP place at the stadium is for those accredited; they may visit at any time they wish, without limitation of time.

P15. OPENING CEREMONY

- a. The day and time of the Opening Ceremony will be determined by the Tournament Organizing Committee and informed well in advance to the ITF authorities and their special guests;
- b. The Opening Ceremony will last a maximum two (2) hours having a presentation of national delegations, umpires, swearing-in procedure, speeches, demonstrations, etc;



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- c. The "Chief of Ceremony and Protocol" will be responsible for coordinating and guiding the entrance of the ITF authorities and their special guests just before the competition begins. All competitors, instructors, coaches, umpires and the general public will be invited to stand up as a demonstration of courtesy to the ITF authorities and their special guests;
- d. The Chairman of the Umpire Committee will be responsible for directing the protocol and bowing to the ITF authorities and their special guests, as well as to all present;
- e. The ITF authorities and their special guests will be located in a VIP location so that during the speeches of the Organizer or authorities they avoid standing with their back to the ITF authorities and their special guests in general;
- f. The "Chief of Ceremony and Protocol" will be responsible for providing the required seating locations for the ITF authorities and their special guests. They should put the names of each person in their proper place, in order to facilitate its location. This will avoid incurring lack of respect and discourtesy to the special guests and authorities.

P16. INAUGURAL SPEECH

- a. The Tournament Organizer shall appoint a Presenter who may be the Chief of Ceremony and Protocol, or preferably a professional speaker or entertainer) who during the presentation should announce the correct names of the ITF authorities and their special guests, their positions and the countries they represent;
- b. The Presenter, once having made the presentation at the Opening Ceremony and after having listened to the national anthem of the organizing country, shall invite the Tournament Organizer to give the welcome speech;
- c. After the welcome speech, the Organizer will invite - if present - important authorities to give their speech. The ITF President shall be the last person to give a speech and declare the Championship open;
- d. Once finished the Opening Ceremony and before the ITF authorities and their special guests leave the place, the Chief of Ceremony and Protocol will take care to invite all competitors, instructors, coaches, umpires and the general public to stand up, following the protocol for bowing, directed by the Tournament Organizer.

P17. CLOSING CEREMONY

- a. The Closing Ceremony of the tournament should be repeated with the same procedure of the Opening Ceremony, reducing the time to maximum one (1) hour;
- b. With the presence of the ITF President at the very end of the Closing ceremony the ITF flag will be presented by the actual tournament organizer to the organizer of the next Tournament;



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- c. The ITF President shall then declare the closure of the Championship.

P18. ETIQUETTE DURING TOURNAMENT CEREMONIES

During the opening and closing ceremonies the ITF authorities will follow appropriate clothing etiquette as listed in the By Law of ITF and summarized as below;

- a. Assistants Instructors between 1st and 3rd degree use a blue tie: Boo-Sabum;
- b. Instructors and International Instructors between 4th and 6th degree use a red tie: Sabum;
- c. Masters from 7th to 8th degree use a gold tie: Sahyun;
- d. Grand Masters 9th degree use a white tie: Sasung;

Appropriate etiquette is required for official events, therefore wearing of casual clothing such as jeans, shorts, or open sandals is not considered appropriate.

SECTION 5 – SOCIAL PROTOCOL

P19. GENERAL RULES

As a general rule it should be noted that the ITF Protocol must be met in all areas where the students interact with other members of the ITF, whether people are in the Dojang, at promotion tests, tournaments, social events and/or in public.

Outside the classroom (Dojang) Junior students must properly meet the Grand Masters, Masters, Instructors and Seniors. They must always bow first.

As stated in the event invitation at social events such as dinners, banquets or any type of social activity participants must not attend without the appropriate dress.

P20. BOWING TO SENIORS

- a. Juniors should not offer their hand to the Seniors. They should expect that Seniors come first;
- b. Greet with an outstretched right hand, placing the left hand under the right elbow performing a respectful bow;
- c. For a more personal greeting some Seniors might use both hands, taking the other's hand with the right hand and placing left hand above;



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- d. For very respectful and formal greetings: place the left hand under the right elbow directly. The farther away the left hand is placed in relation to the right, the more respect is shown to Seniors;
- e. Seniors must be addressed as: Sir/Madam, Instructor/Master, Professor, Grand Master, Boo Sabum, Sabum, Sahyun, Sasung. Always use the title and last name and never the first name;
- f. Always perform a bow to approach a Senior prior to any contact;
- g. Always use correct language, never vulgarity or profanity;
- h. Never intentionally show your back to a Senior. Upon leaving take three steps back and then turn to leave;
- i. Always say: "Thank you very much Sir/ Madam; Instructor, Professor, Master/Grand Master, Boo Sabum, Sabum, Sahyum, Sasung", and: "Yes/No, Sir/Madam; Instructor, Professor, Master/Grand Master, Boo Sabum, Sabum, Sahyun, Sasung", with a clear and audible voice;
- j. Juniors may disagree with the Seniors as long as they express their feelings in a respectful and polite way;
- k. It is considered rude to interrupt a Senior therefore Juniors should first raise their hand indicating the intention of speaking;
- l. Open doors for Seniors, including car doors;
- m. If the Senior is carrying something the Junior should be friendly and politely offer to carry it;
- n. Avoid giving opinions on: politics, religious, institutional matters, etc., to the Seniors, especially when they are in public;
- o. When giving or receiving an object, always use both hands. It is considered a gesture of respect and consideration.

P21. TABLE MANNERS

- a. Always wait for the Seniors to take their place at the table and sit first;
- b. Seniors will be placed at the head or in the middle of the table, with their wife/husband and or companion at their side. Others will sit down together with their wives/husbands and or companions on both sides, from the rank of senior to junior, alternating from right to left;
- c. The host of the event should sit next to a Senior, regardless of rank;
- d. The host will arrange for the menu to be presented first to the Seniors, so that they can order their food/drink first, followed by others in descending order of rank. Wait patiently for the Seniors to open the menu and order their food first;



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- e. Once the food and drink is on the table, wait until the Seniors take and try their food first;
- f. In a toast, make sure the top edge of the Junior's glass is below the Senior's glass. Use both hands (as in greeting);
- g. Seniors should never pour their own drink as this will be done by someone of lower rank. Be sure to fill the Senior cup before that of the Junior;
- h. Juniors should pay attention to so that the Senior cup is always fairly full;
- i. If a Senior is in need of something, it's the responsibility of the Junior to arrange it;
- j. Always ask permission to approach or leave the table;
- k. Always when Seniors are approaching or getting up from the table Juniors must stand up and sit down only after the Seniors has done so;
- l. Observe good manners, never slouching or resting the elbows on the table.

P22. WHEN IN A VEHICLE

- a. The driver will open the door for the Seniors;
- b. Seniors will always enter the vehicle first, followed by the others, in order of rank;
- c. Seniors will sit in the back seat (behind the front passenger seat). The host or interpreter will sit in the front passenger seat, the others will be located next to the Senior category in descending order of rank (the rank of the driver will not be taken into consideration in this case);
- d. The driver of the vehicle disembarks first and opens the door of the Seniors. The other passengers leave the vehicle in order of rank.

P23. WHEN SPEAKING ON THE TELEPHONE

- a. While speaking on the phone or any of its existing variants like Skype, video conferencing, etc. Juniors should follow the protocol, showing the same respect as when talking face to face with the Seniors;
- b. Juniors will address the Seniors saying: "Yes Sir", "No Ma'am" etc;
- c. It is important that Juniors listen carefully and do not interrupt Seniors therefore always requesting permission to ask a question.



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P24. EXCHANGING CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Protocol should be respected also in written correspondence using appropriate forms, where possible to direct to Seniors;
- b. The tone of the correspondence should always be respectful;
- c. Due to e-mail and other electronic media currently in use, correspondence is almost instantaneous and therefore there is a marked tendency to relax the standards of both grammar and etiquette. However, whether the correspondence is done through conventional media, e-mails or other, it is important to follow the protocol;
- d. Each person will be treated courteously and with the respect according to rank and/or position.

**"IT IS OUR WISH THAT ALL THESE RULES MAY SERVE TO IMPROVE
RELATIONS BETWEEN ALL TAEKWON-DO STUDENTS, FOR THE
WELLNESS AND THE FUTURE OF ALL THAT INTEGRATES THE GREAT
ITF FAMILY"**

MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR

It is very important for myself to have had the opportunity of formalizing the "Official Protocol of ITF Taekwon-Do" as asked by the President of the ITF, Grandmaster Pablo Trajtenberg and members of the Executive Committee.

I thank my colleagues for having the confidence in me to develop such an important contribution to the "Protocol" of our martial art, and I hope sincerely that this is a guide to human behaviour in the society in which we are living.

Humility forces me to recognize the teaching of many Masters who have enriched my knowledge and wisdom in the course of my Taekwon-Do training, emphasizing the martial art.

I cannot ignore the lessons learned due to my closeness, affection for and the place that has given me opportunity to have known our "Father of Taekwon-Do", General Choi Hong Hi.

It is also important to remember that part of what has been done in this document was developed by the writings by Grandmaster Tran Trieu Quan, who with great tact left us documented very important and relevant concepts of the Protocol and the teaching of the "Do". Therefore I wish to acknowledge the valuable work of Grandmaster Tran Trieu Quan.



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