

Pow-Wow Etiquette

General Public - Dancers & Performers

1. Please be on time. The Pow-Wow Committee is doing everything possible to ensure that activities begin and run smoothly. Please cooperate in this regard.
2. Appropriate dress and behavior are required in the Arena. Anyone unwilling to abide by this rule will be asked to leave by the Arena Director. (If you are going to dance, try to wear dance clothes.)
3. Arena benches are reserved for dancers. Dancers wishing to reserve a space on the bench should place a blanket in that space before the dance begins. Please do not sit on someone else's blanket unless invited. Uncovered benches are considered unreserved.
4. Listen to the MC. He will announce who is to dance, and when.
5. Respect the position of the Head Man and Head Woman Dancers. Their role entitles them to start each song or set of songs. Please wait until they have started to dance before you join in.
6. Dance as long and as hard as you can. When not dancing, please be quiet and respect the Arena.
7. Be aware that someone standing behind you may not be able to see over you. Make room, step aside, sit or kneel if someone is behind you.
8. Show respect to the flag and honor songs by standing during the "Special" songs. Stand in place until the sponsors of the song have danced a complete circle around the Arena and have come to you, and then join in. If you are not dancing, continue to stand quietly until the song is completed.
9. While dancing at any Pow-Wow, honor the protocol of the sponsorship group.
10. Some songs require that you dance only if you are familiar with the routine or are eligible to participate. Trot dances, snake buffalo, etc.; require particular steps or routines. If you are not familiar with these dances, observe and learn. Watch the head Dancers to learn the procedures. Only veterans are permitted to dance some vet songs, unless stated. Listen to the MC for instructions.
11. The Flag Song, or Indian National Anthem, is sung when the American Flag is raised or lowered. Please stand and remove hats during this song. It is not a song for dancing.
12. Pow-Wows are usually non-profit. Success of the Pow-Wow depends upon donations, raffles, blanket dances, etc. for support. Donations are encouraged as a way to honor someone. Any participant can drop money onto the blanket to aid in the pow-wow expenses. Support the Pow-Wow Committee and buy raffle tickets or buy at the auction.

13. Certain items of religious significance should be worn only by those qualified to do so. Please respect traditions.
14. Giveaways, attributes of Indian generosity, are held at many dances. They are acknowledgements of appreciation to recipients for honor given. When receiving a gift, please acknowledge the recipient then everyone involved in the giving. Note: All specials and giveaways must be coordinated with the MC. Please remember that is traditional to make a monetary contribution to the drum for this request. Please clear this through the MC.
15. The Drums are sometimes closed. Check with the Head Signer for permission to sing.
16. If at any time you are uncertain of procedure or etiquette, please check with the MC, Arena Director, or Head Singer. They will be glad to help you with your questions.
17. Bring a chair. Most Pow-Wows will not have enough seating.
18. No Alcohol, drugs & pets are allowed within the Pow-Wow grounds.
19. If taking pictures, ask the dancer first. Group photos are usually alright to take, but you might want to ask the Pow-Wow Committee first.
20. Remember that in each area you travel to and visit, things can and will be slightly different than your area. Different groups have different customs and methods of doing things. Different is not wrong, just different. Be respectful of the uniqueness of each area.