



Frequently Asked Questions for Graduation Events

May 23-27, 2017

Graduation at West Point is a celebration for the graduating class. The activities surrounding graduation are open to families and guests of cadets. Some do require tickets. ALL guests entering the installation require valid government-issued identification. If you are from a non-compliant state, please bring additional documentation (e.g., state driver's license). *Please review the information posted under security message at the end of this document. The information below is intended to assist with planning.

Guests must park in designated areas and use the shuttle bus service. On graduation day, there is no parking allowed in the vicinity of the stadium. Guests will be directed to parking and shuttled to the stadium. Handicapped buses will be available for those with mobility challenges or to accommodate guests in wheelchairs.

Superintendent's Award Review – This parade honors company achievements with the presentation of streamers for achieving excellence. The parade is held on **Wednesday, May 24** at 9 a.m. on the Plain.

What is the Superintendent's Reception and who attends?

Members of the graduating class in each regiment are invited to attend a reception in their honor, hosted by the Superintendent during graduation week. The receiving line winds through the Superintendent's residence (Quarters 100) with the receptions in the Superintendent's Garden. Cadets are welcome to bring parents and family members. First and second regiment receptions are held on Wednesday, third and fourth regiments are on Thursday.

Attire for the reception is informal – suit or coat and tie for men, dress or suit for ladies.

Date and time – **Wednesday, May 24 - First Regiment – 1 - 2:30 p.m.; Second Regiment – 3 – 4:30 p.m.**

Thursday, May 25 - Third Regiment – 1 – 2:30 p.m.; Fourth Regiment – 3 – 4:30 p.m.

In the event of inclement weather, the receiving line and receptions will be held in Eisenhower Hall.

Constitution Island – Boat ride and tour – **On Wednesday and Thursday, May 24 & 25**, guests will have an opportunity to take a boat ride from South Dock to Constitution Island, located just to the east of West Point in the Hudson River. Guests will step off the boat at the Constitution Island dock where they will be greeted by a guide who will share the history of the island. Travel time to the island is approximately 15 minutes. The crew will share information on the history and geography of the river while in transit. There are 7 tours planned. The first tour will depart at 12:45 p.m. Tours will continue every 30 minutes with the last tour departing (South Dock) at 3:45 p.m. returning by 5 p.m. Tours (including boat ride) will last approximately 90 minutes. Please use the shuttle service from Clinton parking lot (near the Supt's Review Box) to South Dock. Parking at South Dock is very limited. Tour capacity is 36 passengers. Reservations NOT accepted. First come first served. All passengers must disembark upon arrival at Constitution Island.

What is the Brides' Coffee? – *This is an invitation-only event sponsored by the Daughters of the United States Army intended for fiancées of cadets as a "Welcome" to the Army Family. Mothers, future mothers-in-law, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, etc., are all welcome to attend with the brides to be. An announcement is sent out to the cadets during spring semester inviting fiancée's of cadets who may wish to attend. The coffee will be held on Thursday, May 25; 8:30 – 10:30 a.m., Cullum Hall Ballroom. Light refreshments will be served. For more information please send an email message to DUSAWPBrides@gmail.com.*

During Grad Week, please call (845) 938-7000 for weather related updates.

For Graduation Activities and additional Parent Information please visit – www.westpoint.edu/parents.

Document will be updated as needed – Information current as of May 19, 2017.

Academic Awards – On Thursday, May 25 (9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., locations TBD), 13 academic departments will host award ceremonies. The ceremonies are open to family and guests of those cadets who are receiving awards. Cadets receiving awards will have the appropriate information to share regarding time and place. A master schedule of all academic award ceremonies will be available in May.

Baccalaureate services – *Each of the respective chapels will host a baccalaureate service – a religious service honoring those in the graduating class. All services begin at 6 p.m. Bus service will be available to all chapels on post.*

Graduation Parade – There are **no tickets** required for this event. **Please** accommodate guests with mobility challenges when possible. Standing room is available on the sides of the Plain (along the fence) near Doubleday Field and near Thayer Statue. You are welcome to bring chairs for those areas. The fence lines are also excellent areas for those in wheelchairs. (Please do not sit in the areas to the immediate right and left of the Superintendent’s Review Box. Those areas are reserved for TAC teams and guests of the Superintendent. If there is room available, these areas will be open just prior to the start of the parade.) The parade is one event that is NOT to be missed. . . the parade is a time-honored tradition where the graduating class “leaves” the Corps and is honored as the rest of the Corps passes in review. Throughout the parade a narrator will describe the customs and traditions. The West Point Band will provide the music for the event. The parade will last approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

Date and time – Friday, May 26 – 10:30 a.m. Updated – 5/19/2017

Pre-Banquet Reception – The pre-banquet reception is open to all cadets and guests. The reception will be held in Eisenhower Hall. Each regiment will have a designated area where they can socialize with classmates, family and friends. Buses will be available following the reception to transport guests around post.

Date and time – **Friday, May 26 - 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.**

Graduation Banquet - The banquet is limited to graduating cadets plus **three** (total of 4 seats). Additional seats may be available via the cadet’s company. *Additional family members and guests can enjoy the banquet from one of two satellite locations, either the West Point Club (845) 938-5120 or the Hotel Thayer (845) 446-4731. For those attending the banquet in the Cadet Mess please arrive at your seats by 6:45 p.m. The banquet will begin promptly at 7 p.m. At the conclusion of the banquet, please be patient as the shuttle buses make their way around West Point transporting guests back to their cars/parking lots.*

Date and time – Friday, May 26 – 7 p.m. – (Please be in the Cadet Mess no later than 6:45 p.m.)

What is the attire for the banquet? Attire is formal – see attire guidance box on page 4 of this document.

Cadets will be dressed in India Whites, a formal summer uniform. Military personnel will wear the equivalent dress uniform, men typically wear a tuxedo or a dark suit, women – long or cocktail type dresses or evening pant suit.

What if a guest needs a wheelchair?

If you are traveling with a family member who needs a transport chair, recommend bringing it with you (if possible) or **contact Home Health Pavilion (845) 569-1250 for a rental**. They are located in Newburgh and have been very accommodating. For those who are able to walk, but have some challenges, a wheelchair may still be a good idea as there is a lot of walking required.

Handicapped guests and transportation for graduation – For those guests requiring handicapped transportation to the graduation ceremony, only **one** family member may accompany that guest on the handicapped bus. The handicapped buses are limited in size and it is necessary to limit access in order to accommodate all those in need of special transportation; more information on specific parking areas to follow. Guests will be accommodated on the *During Grad Week, please call (845) 938-7000 for weather related updates.*

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flat area of the stadium near Gate 6/6A and in the Kimsey Center – 4th floor. **Clinton Lot, near the Plain and Malek Tennis Courts is designated for handicapped guests on Friday and Saturday.**

Superintendent's Awards for Excellence, Achievement & Distinguished Cadet Awards & Awards Convocation Dinner – This is a change from previous years – this ceremony will be held in the Eisenhower Hall Theater. This is an event where the Superintendent and Academy leadership will present certain members of the graduating class with awards, representatives from a variety of organizations and donors will present awards to deserving graduates. Not all cadets attend.

Date and time – Thursday, May 25, 5 – 9 p.m.

Graduation Ceremony – Ten tickets will be available to members of the graduating class for their families and guests. The ten tickets are normally distributed during grad week. Additional tickets will be available through the Army Ticket Office, located at Gate 3 of Michie Stadium. A ticket is required for admission into the stadium. All seats are assigned. Additional tickets are normally available in early May and must be picked up in person.

Babies and graduation tickets – Infants sitting on a parent's lap do not need a ticket. However, please keep in mind if you have an infant carrier, it will require some space. In that case it would be polite to have a ticket to account for that space. Ages 2 and older do require a ticket. Strollers are allowed in the stadium, but not in the bleacher area.

Hat Toss - Children ages 4-10, 42-54" tall can participate in the Hat Toss at the end of the graduation ceremony. The children (and adult escort) will be asked to join groups as assigned. Groups will be broken down by age (4-5, 6-7 and 8-10 years of age). Each child is allowed one hat. The hats sometimes have notes of inspiration/encouragement tucked inside. The conditions for the Hat Toss will be very controlled for safety reasons. Groups will run for the hats as directed by the staff/cadets managing the area, allowing the younger children a head start.

Graduation photos – Legacy Studios will be present at graduation and will photograph the cadets as they receive their diplomas - <http://usma.legacystudios.com/>. **More information will be shared once available.**

Severe weather plan – In the event graduation has to be moved indoors due to **SEVERE** weather, the following sites will be utilized for additional guests – Eisenhower Hall Theater will be the primary location for the graduating class and limited family members. Alternate locations include - Thayer Hall - Robinson Auditorium, Washington Hall (Cadet Mess), Holleder Center (Tate Rink) and possibly Mahan Hall Auditorium.

For those **not able to attend**, the ceremony will be available online. The link can be found on the West Point website - www.westpoint.edu. A place holder will be posted a few days prior to the event.

Changing Uniforms/Commissioning Ceremonies – After the graduation ceremony, the graduates will be required to complete their clearing process. Once complete, will change into their Army Service Uniforms in preparation for their bar pinning or commissioning ceremonies. The ceremonies are held in various places around West Point. Cadets (graduates) will often make arrangements to share their ceremony with good friends, teammates or company mates often asking a respected instructor/mentor or family member (must be a commissioned officer active or retired) to administer the oath. The American flag is required to be present for the ceremony. An additional document is provided to assist with planning. **This is a change from previous years - Designated time for commissioning ceremonies is 2-6 p.m. (This is a change.)**

Graduation Day Picnics & Luncheons – Please visit www.usma.edu/parents for more information.

Graduates and departing West Point – The graduates will have to clear their rooms, complete paperwork and pick up their new military identification cards by 5 p.m. on graduation day. It may be prudent to discuss the day with your cadet ahead of time so you can plan accordingly for the attending guests. Some will plan a light picnic or possibly relocate to their hotel while waiting for the graduates to complete these tasks.

SECURITY Message - All visitors must enter through Thayer or Stony Lonesome gates only and should expect minor delays. All persons 17 and older are required to show the security guards at the gates a valid, government-issued photo ID and *During Grad Week, please call (845) 938-7000 for weather related updates.*

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must keep the ID in their possession at all times. All vehicles entering the installation are subject to being searched, this includes those with DoD decals. Visitors planning to attend events associated with grad week are strongly encouraged to use the shuttle bus system as parking is very **limited**.

On graduation day all visitors may be required to pass through metal detectors prior to entering Michie Stadium. Arrive early to allow time to pass through security. The following items will **not** be allowed into the stadium: large bags, backpacks, coolers and umbrellas. **Water bottles** and baby bottles **are allowed**. Please plan accordingly.

As guests at West Point we ask for your vigilance. Your help in the detection and reporting of criminal activities will help ensure that this year's graduation is a success. Anyone observing suspicious behavior or activity is urged to promptly report it to the Military Police at (845) 938-3333.

*Beginning January 30, 2017, the gates/security cannot accept driver's licenses from the states noted on this [MAP](#) for official purposes as they are considered noncompliant for Real ID.

Visitors from these states (Maine, Montana, Minnesota and Missouri) arriving after hours during the week or on the weekends will be required to show the security guard additional documentation such as a vehicle registration, a bill with their name and address on it, passport or some other corroborating documentation together with their driver's license. Without additional information, an escort will be required to access West Point.

To reiterate - visitors from the following states will be required to show the additional documentation – Maine, Montana and Missouri.

While regular licenses from Minnesota will require additional documentation, enhanced licenses from Minnesota will be accepted.

More information will be shared as it becomes available. The most up to date information can be found at this link - <https://www.westpoint.army.mil/visitus.html>.

REMEMBER, IF YOU HEAR SOMETHING, SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING!

Any additional questions may be directed to Deb Dalton,
Parent Communications Liaison for West Point, (845) 938-8826 or deb.dalton@usma.edu

Recommended Event Attire

<i>General daytime and nighttime</i>	<i>casual</i>
<i>Review and parade</i>	<i>casual</i>
<i>Superintendent's Reception</i>	<i>informal</i>
<i>Awards Convocation</i>	<i>informal</i>
<i>Graduation Banquet</i>	<i>formal</i>
<i>Graduation Ceremony</i>	<i>informal</i>
<i>A helpful link regarding attire – http://www.usma.edu/dca/SitePages/Dress%20Codes.aspx</i>	

With regard to attire – you may also want to consider how you would like to be captured in photos.

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