

Livery formal Dress Codes

This note sets out a dress code guidelines for formal livery events. It should be noted that some individual companies will have their own practices and customs. Whilst liverymen will be very familiar with these codes, it must be emphasised that their guests must be briefed so as to avoid embarrassment if they arrive improperly attired. The dress code stated on the invitation card should be adopted in all cases.

White Tie or Evening Dress

This consists of a black tail coat which does not button up, dress trousers with a satin stripe, a stiff white shirt, usually martex faced with a winged collar, and a white martex bow tie, and white waistcoat. Patent black shoes are normally worn. The Ladies equivalent is a long dress, with shoulders covered, and gloves may be added.

Black Tie or Dinner Jacket

This consists of a black dinner jacket which may be single or double breasted with or without satin or grosgrain lapels. Dress trousers with satin stripe, a white (only) dress shirt, and a black (only) bowtie. A conservative cummerbund or black waistcoat may also be worn. Any other colours in shirts or bowties are generally frowned upon in the City. The Ladies equivalent will be long, or below the knee dresses or skirts, or evening trousers. It is usual at dinner for ladies' shoulders to be covered.

Some formal livery dinners and banquets offer the choice of White or Black tie. Guests who are serving or retired military officers may choose to wear their appropriate mess kit uniform. Also guests from foreign and other nations may wear their formal national dress attire.

Morning Coat

This consists of a black tail coat that differs from the formal dress jacket by a single button up. The matching waistcoat must be black for City function, dove grey and coloured versions are for weddings and social occasions. Morning coat trousers are usually a striped design, worn with a plain white shirt. A livery company, club or regimental tie is ideal. Cravats should not be worn. Ladies equivalent would be a smart day dress, and frequently a hat.

It is a custom for principal participants to wear a morning coat at Common Hall gatherings and the United Guilds Service. Those other attendees in the audience or congregation are free to wear either morning coat or a business suit. Buckingham Palace Garden Parties no longer stipulate morning coat, but most livery Masters will wear one. Also male guests at the Sheriffs' Breakfast are expected to wear morning coat and Ward Club civic lunches still encourage male guests to wear morning coat.

Badges

Livery Masters are generally encouraged to wear their badge of office if they have been invited to a formal event in their capacity as the Master. If they are present in a private capacity, they should not, unless the permission of the host Master has been obtained. The same rule applies to Wardens, Court Assistants, and Past Masters.

Livery sashes, medals, badges etc should only be worn when attending the members' own company and not when a guest elsewhere. Ladies livery brooches, however, may be worn as wished.

Medals

At white tie events, miniature military medals should be worn. At black tie formal events, some companies may allow either miniature or full-size medals to be worn. Always check with the Clerk on the policy.