

# HANDY HINTS FOR A VISIT FROM SANTA

To help you in making Santa's visit the most enjoyable event possible, I have prepared the following list of suggestions:

- 1) **Have your camera(s) ready.** Be sure to have all the video cards, thumb drives, film, videotape and batteries necessary to take the photos you want, or need to get. Be sure all batteries are charged.
- 2) **Reserve a special parking place for Santa.** It should be as close as possible to where he is visiting. Santa is not as young as he used to be and needs to park directly in front or next to the house or party location. He cannot park down the street or in a parking garage & hike to your location. He will be winded or exhausted, when he gets there.  
If at a home, a car could back down the driveway a little, leaving a space in front of the car. When Santa arrives, the host could pull the car up and Santa parks behind it. Or, put a temporary barrier in the space reserved for Santa. Use a box, a chair or a sawhorse. Have some fun; put a sign out "Reserved for Santa!" If your event is at a company facility, office building or hotel, try to make arrangements for Santa to park in a valet or loading area. This makes it easier for him to be fresh and ready to bring joy to your guests.
- 3) **A host should meet Santa when he arrives:** to assist him, to show him where to park, to help load any presents into his special Santa bag, and to escort him to the location of the event. If there is a balance or payment due to Santa, place it inside a Christmas card or envelope. Never give Santa money in front of the children. It can ruin the magic of the moment. The host or coordinator meeting Santa outside should take care of any final payments that are due, before Santa enters.
- 4) **Have your gifts ready.** Santa does not normally bring any candy canes or gifts with him. He will hand out your candy and gifts and can carry in one bag of presents for children or guests about 30 pounds. Presents should be well labeled. It is suggested a large black marking pen and writing directly on the gift, as tags can easily fall off. All packages should fit into one 35-gallon trash bag. He will transfer the gifts to his "official" Santa bag. If you have more than one bag, check with Santa and see if there is a way to have the gifts near his chair before he arrives or if there is a way for you to have "helpers" to bring the extra gifts in after he enters.
- 5) **Get everyone together, before Santa enters.** Timing is everything. You have scheduled Santa for a set amount of time, which begins the minute he arrives. Unless otherwise arranged, he will not be able to stay longer than he has been booked for. If everyone is scattered around the house or office, you lose valuable time. Santa and you can coordinate. He should call you when he is five minutes away from arriving. That's your cue to get everyone together, maybe to sing some Christmas Carols, and to have someone go outside to meet Santa. Then, at the right moment the host enters and gets all the children singing "Jingle Bells!" Santa will then pop-in and joins everyone in their singing. If you have a large group of children to see Santa, you should assign someone to be Santa's helper, and to hand him the presents.
- 6) **Have a sturdy chair for Santa to sit in.** Folding chairs and low chairs (the one's you sink into) are not good. Santa usually likes a chair that is sturdy and stable. A good straight-back dining chair, with no arms, works well. He should be able to sit comfortably and the chair needs to support him plus a child on each knee.
- 7) **Place the Chair near your Christmas tree or in a holiday setting.** Your photos will have more impact when the background has a festive look. Place a wreath, a few Christmas cards or your children's drawings on the wall to make a wonderful difference. Leave a foot or two between the chair and the tree or wall. This will allow room for others to gather around and behind Santa's chair for group photos.

- 8) **Think about photos with everyone.** Yes, some teenagers might think it is too childish, to have a photo with Santa. Don't worry; Santa can stand up for a "buddy" photo. What about grandma and grandpa? Take a photo with Santa and Grandma Hugging. And Santa can take group photos with all the ladies or a "Team" photo with the guys. And yes! Santa loves "Selfies!" More photos of Santa show up on Facebook than almost any other celebrity.
- 9) **Santa's suit gets quite warm.** Remember Santa's suit is designed generally to keep him warm outside, so this usually means that he gets quite warm inside. Fireplaces do look nice but remember putting Santa too close to a real fire is not good for his comfort or health! Having a bottle of water for a any visits over a few minutes is always helpful.
- 10) **Lifting.** Santa does not lift any child into his lap. This is due to liability, but also safety. Lifting a child over and over again from a seated position is not good for a person's back. Santa will have the parent lift the child or he will need a helper to assist getting children into his lap.
- 11) **Photos with young children.** Children in strange situations can often be afraid. Parents should always stay with their children as they go up to Santa to help reinforce support to the child. The best photos are generally taken within the first five seconds. Helpers should inform the parent to keep the child's attention on them while walking up to Santa, place the child on his lap and then quickly move out of the photo area.
- 12) **Photos with animals.** Santa loves taking photos with animals, but due to possible allergies with other clients he is unable to hold any animal or have them in contact with his suit. The animal's dander can transfer to Santa, and then transfer to another child. Please make sure that any parents with animals are aware of this.
- 13) **Shy children / Special needs.** Santa is trained to deal with children that are shy. If a child is obviously scared, please do not force the child onto Santa's lap, not only is this not enjoyable for the child, but often times the child may inadvertently harm Santa. For special needs children, Santa knows quite a few tips to help a child overcome their anxiety, but if the child feels that the parent is anxious, they will feed off of that and it can make their anxiety worse. Once Santa develops a rapport with a child, please remind the parent to allow Santa and the child to talk, when a parent interrupts it can actually cause a child to close up.

Hopefully these suggestions will help you to have the most enjoyable event possible.