

Handy Hints for a Visit from Santa

To help you in making Santa's visit a most enjoyable event, we have prepared the following list of suggestions.

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1. **Have your camera/s ready.** Be sure to have all the film, videotape and batteries necessary to take the photos you want or need to get. Be sure to recharge your video camera batteries.
 2. **Reserve a special parking place for Santa.** It should be as close as possible to where he is appearing. And remember, Santa is a senior citizen. If he parks down the street or around the corner and has to walk all the way to your home, or office, he might be a bit winded or exhausted, when he gets there. And remember, he's wearing a heavy velvet suit that gets very hot, (even in December).

If the visit is at your home, leave an opening at the end of your driveway. Just put a temporary barrier in the space. Use a box, a chair or a sawhorse. Have some fun and 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. Again, you can mark the area with a fun sign. This makes it easier for him to be fresh and ready to bring joy to your guests.
 3. **Have your gifts ready.** Santa can carry in one bag of presents for children or guests. They should be well labeled. We suggest 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. Any more and it may be too heavy or awkward for him to bring in. We all know of Santa's "Magic Bag." You know the bag that holds tons of toys and gifts and only weighs ten pounds. Well that bag only works its magic on Christmas Eve!

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 him to have "helper's" to bring the extra gifts in.
 4. **Get everyone together, before Santa enters.** Timing is everything. Santa may only be there for a set amount of time. And, 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. If Santa is to bring in presents, the person meeting him can help fill Santa's bag. Then, at the right moment, Santa can pop in and join 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 coordinate the order of children as they each visit Santa.
 5. **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 works well. Santa likes to sit-up or on the edge of the chair. He should be able to sit comfortably and have a child on each knee.
 6. **Place the Chair near your Christmas tree or in a holiday setting.** Maybe in front of a fireplace with stockings hanging, or any festive type of backdrop. 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.
 7. **Think about photos with everyone.** Yes, some teenagers will shy away or 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, nothing is more fun than having Santa ask Grandpa if he's been a good boy!
 8. **If there is a balance or payment due to Santa, place it inside a Christmas card or envelope.** It never looks appropriate when someone gives cash to Santa. So, as Santa is departing, hand him the envelope and say, "Thank you Santa, and here is a Christmas card from all of us."

Special thanks to Tim Connahan for comprising this list and allowing us to use it.