



# Orders, decorations and medals

**A guide to wearing St John insignia**



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Please direct all correspondence in relation to this document to:

St John Ambulance Australia  
PO Box 292  
DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600

Phone 02 6295 9205  
Fax 02 6239 6321  
Email [ehs@stjohn.org.au](mailto:ehs@stjohn.org.au)

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# INTRODUCTION

For over 100 years St John Ambulance under its motto *Pro utilitate hominum – for the service of mankind* has provided first aid services through its volunteers to members of the public throughout Australia. St John Ambulance Australia is in a privileged position of having our Order recognised within the Australian Honours System. This extends to both membership of the Order of St John and the Service Medal of the Order.

This guide provides all members of St John with a precise description of the correct method of wearing decorations and medals of the Order in accordance with the Australian Honours System. It includes reference to the document *Wearing of right breast awards in St John Ambulance Australia*.

This edition has been amended to clarify certain matters and to address the wearing of Stars by Knight/Dame of the Order and above.

Additional information about the wearing of insignia is to be found in *A Guide to the Wearing of Insignia*, published by the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General in 1986.

I wish to convey my thanks and appreciation to Dr Douglas Sturkey, Associate Professor Franklin Bridgewater, James Cheshire and Paul Compton for this updated document.

**Peter LeCornu KStJ**  
**Priory Secretary**

# MEMBERSHIP OF THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

## General

Awards within St John derive from the Monarch who is Sovereign Head of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem (the Order of St John). Guidance on the manner of wearing orders and awards is issued by the Central Chancery of Knighthood in St James's Palace, London, and the practices set out below relate fairly closely to the Chancery's regulations. Recipients of honours and awards are encouraged to wear them whenever it is appropriate to do so. However, there are conventions and etiquette associated with the wearing of such awards and this guide sets out the standards expected of recipients of St John awards in Australia.

The Central Chancery's regulations reflect an expectation that the full array of the insignia of Orders, Decorations and Medals to which a recipient is entitled would customarily be worn only on the most formal of occasions. As civilian dress codes have varied over time, some adjustment ought to be made to the regulations to recognise current circumstances (the armed services have their own rules relating to day and evening wear). Men's Morning and Evening Dress with tailcoats are very seldom worn these days. The amended regulations set out in this Guide have been prepared to reflect the contemporary practice of wearing Lounge Suits and Dinner Jackets (where designated by hosts) at evening functions. For civilian females, these usually equate to Day Dress, and what may be loosely described as 'After Five'.

Clothing fabrics and styles have changed over time and are now generally lighter in weight than those worn some decades ago; and heavy weight attire is uncomfortable in Australian summers. These factors also suggest that some modification of the Central Chancery's regulations is warranted. Medal bars, which can be quite heavy, may damage lightweight civilian clothing. Accordingly, recipients may wear miniatures by day, as well as in the evenings. An added advantage of miniatures is that the insignia of all Orders, Decorations and Medals to which the recipient is entitled are mounted on the bar. Thus, for example, a member of the Order of St John of Commander grade or above who might hold a more senior appointment in, say, the Order of Australia, would wear only the St John neck badge at the Order's ceremonies while displaying all other awards on the bar of miniatures. Conversely, at other than St John functions, the relevant insignia of other awards would be given appropriate prominence, while membership of the Order of St John would be evident on the miniature bar.

A member's grade within the Order of St John is denoted by both the design of the relevant insignia and the place at which it is worn on the body. Given the similarities in design, the latter requirement is particularly important in distinguishing between membership at Officer grade (OStJ) where the full size piece of insignia is worn on a medal bar, and the dress regulations for a Neck Badge of members of higher grades.

# Gazette

Only the Orders, Decorations and Medals approved by The Queen and published in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* may be worn. This includes the insignia of the six grades of appointment within the Order of St John and the St John Service Medal.

## Order of Precedence

Insignia of the grades of membership of the Order of St John are worn in accordance with the precedence accorded the Order of St John in the *Gazette*. Visit [www.itsanhonour.gov.au](http://www.itsanhonour.gov.au) to learn more about the order of precedence. The St John Service Medal is placed where the order of precedence refers to 'Long Service Medals'.

## Grades of the Order

| Grade                    | Post-nominal |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Bailiff/Dame Grand Cross | GCStJ        |
| Knight/Dame of Justice   | KStJ/DStJ    |
| Knight/Dame of Grace     | KStJ/DStJ    |
| Commander                | CStJ         |
| Officer                  | OStJ         |
| Member                   | MStJ         |

The styles of Knight/Dame of Justice and of Knight/Dame of Grace are equal members of the Order of St John of grade 2 level.

## Insignia

|                  |      |              |       |           |        |
|------------------|------|--------------|-------|-----------|--------|
| <b>GCStJ</b>     | Star | Neck badge * |       | Miniature | Ribbon |
| <b>KStJ/DStJ</b> | Star | Neck badge * |       | Miniature | Ribbon |
| <b>CStJ</b>      |      | Neck badge * |       | Miniature | Ribbon |
| <b>OStJ</b>      |      |              | Medal | Miniature | Ribbon |
| <b>MStJ</b>      |      |              | Medal | Miniature | Ribbon |

\* Women wear the neck badge in the form of a full-size piece of insignia mounted on a bow unless in Ceremonial Order uniform when it is worn in similar manner to men around the neck on 16 mm ribbon.

# Promotion in the Order

On promotion within the Order, the insignia of the lower grade is removed. The recipient wears only the insignia of the grade to which promoted.

## Titles

Appointments to the grades GCStJ and KStJ/DStJ are not accompanied by the titles of “Sir” or “Dame”.

## Post-nominals

It is accepted custom that post-nominal letters representing the grade of appointment within the Order of St John may only be used in St John correspondence or in a St John context.

# DISPLAYING ST JOHN INSIGNIA

## Medals

Medals (full-size) are mounted side by side with no overlap, in accordance with the order of precedence. However, if more than four medals are worn, they may be overlapped to enable a single row to be formed. Medals are not worn in rows. When promoted from OSTJ, the full-size OSTJ medal is removed from the row of medals. The obverse side of the St John Service Medal (effigy of Queen Victoria) faces to the front.

All medals are worn on a brooch (pin backed metal bar) or preferably, for the sake of appearance, Court mounted and then attached to the jacket. Court mounting is where a collection of medals are mounted on a stiff board. This holds the medals in place as well as suspending them. The medals should conceal any medal ribbons beneath and be pinned 10 mm above the pocket (or where a pocket might be). The St John Service Medal may be embellished with silver bars, gilt bars or a gilt laurel leaf to indicate additional periods of service. Medals are not worn on the Event Health Services Duty Order uniform.

## Miniature Medals

All grades of the Order are represented by a miniature, as is the St John Service Medal. Miniatures of other Orders, including their neck badges where appropriate, are also mounted on the miniature bar. Therefore members of more than one Order are enabled to display the full range of their awards. Miniature medals are mounted side by side, and usually overlapped if more than four, in a single row.

All miniature medal ribbons are 16 mm wide. Members of the Order of the grades of Commander and above who have miniature medal bars may wear both the miniature of their grade on the miniature medal bar and the full-size insignia on those occasions when the wearing of miniatures is appropriate. The obverse side of the medal (effigy of Queen Victoria on the St John Service Medal) faces to the front. These can be Court mounted. Miniature bars are attached to the miniature of the St John Service Medal, as appropriate. Miniature medals are not worn on the Event Health Services Duty Order uniforms.

## Medal Ribbons

Medal ribbons are worn above the left breast mounted on a bar 12 mm in depth and placed 10 mm above the top of the pocket of a uniform. They are either stitched in place, or are mounted on a bar with clutch grips or a pin. Their order is in accord with the Order of Precedence published in the *Gazette*, with the most senior being the first (on the recipient's right). St John medal ribbons are 38 mm in width. Medal ribbons should be mounted with each ribbon fully exposed. Normally medal ribbons do not exceed four per row (but this is dependent on the physique of the wearer), with subsequent rows placed below the preceding row. Medal ribbons should not be obscured by collars and lapels. A silver St John cross is attached centrally on the medal ribbon of the Order. The St John Service Medal may be embellished with silver crosses, gilt crosses or a gilt laurel leaf to indicate the bars awarded to the holder of the Medal for additional periods of service. Medal ribbons are not worn on civilian attire or on the Event Health Services Duty Order uniform.

## Neck Badge

The full-size piece of insignia with which members of the Order of CStJ and above are invested are known as a Neck Badge. Only one neck badge should be worn with civilian attire and with Ceremonial Order of St John uniform. It is expected a member of the Order of these grades would wish to demonstrate the value attached to membership of the Order by giving prominence to St John insignia at St John functions. All other awards held by the recipient would be displayed on their bar of miniatures.

*Men* – With day and evening wear, neck badges for male members of the Order holding the grade of CStJ and above are suspended on 16 mm black ribbon worn under the collar and hanging 20 mm below the tie knot. Bailiffs Grand Cross should wear the 57 mm neck badge of a Knight of Justice with day wear, however they may choose to wear the 83 mm badge, detached from the broad riband of the Bailiff grade, with evening wear.

The buttoned tunics of ceremonial armed service uniforms permit the wearing of one badge at the neck and a second or third at lower buttons. The cut of a Lounge Suit does not permit this. Also, men's soft fabric shirts do not lend themselves to the wearing of two neck badges: the wearing of more than one under the shirt collar looks cluttered.

*Women* – Members of Commander and above are invested with full-size insignia mounted on a bow. This should be worn with day and evening wear on the left side, below any medal or miniature bar.



# Star

Breast Stars for male and female members of the Order, holding the grade of KStJ/DStJ and above, are worn on the left side centrally below the breast pocket (or where a pocket might be). New guidance has been issued in respect of these grades, which is expressly restricted to formal functions of St John in Australia. It provides for uniformed members of St John Ambulance Australia of the appropriate grades wearing the Star, together with a single neck badge (whose manner of wearing is described above) and any medal or miniature bar on St John Battle Jackets and Mess Dress; and civilian members of the Order doing likewise on evening wear and Lounge Suit or jacket and tie, and day or evening dress for women. It is not customary for Stars to be worn at daytime functions in other jurisdictions on uniforms or civilian wear.

There is an order of precedence for wearing multiple breast stars on exceptionally formal occasions, with the Order of St John Star(s) amongst them, but such functions are rare. The Australian Honours and Awards Secretariat at Government House should be consulted regarding the placement of the stars of the various Orders.

## St John Service Medal

This medal is worn on the left breast in the position identified in the *Gazette* for the wearing of Long Service Medals (of which it is one). If the recipient also holds a grade of membership in the Order of St John of Officer or Member, the St John Service Medal will appear on the medal bar to the recipient's left of the insignia of the grade in the Order. If other medals are also worn, they are placed in accordance with the Order of Precedence, which may require some of them to be positioned between the grade of the Order and the St John Service Medal.

## St John Life Saving Medal

When awarded, this medal, or the medal ribbon, is worn on the right breast in a similar fashion to other medals and medal ribbons.

## Lapel Badges – Rosettes and Buttons

The *St John (Order) Regulations 2003* provide for the acquisition and wearing of Order lapel badges by male and female members of the Order. These are Rosettes for KStJ/DStJ and above, and Buttons for CStJ, OStJ and MStJ. Rosettes and Buttons are worn on the left lapel of a coat, or in a proximate position on a dress. Rosettes and Buttons are not worn when insignia of the Order is being worn. They may be purchased from the National Office in Australia.

# WHEN TO WEAR WHAT?

The organiser of a function will normally stipulate what attire is appropriate. Some functions are known to be formal and St John Ceremonial Order is worn if in uniform, unless the member is on duty. Generally Church Parades, Annual Reviews and Priory Chapter Meetings are ceremonial occasions. Divisional Inspections may be ceremonial. Mixed orders of dress are not appropriate among uniformed personnel.

For civilians attending such functions, medals, and for those entitled to do so one neck badge and star are worn with Lounge Suit/jacket and tie, and on female day/evening wear.

## Dress Code – Uniforms

Medals and medal ribbons are not worn while wearing Duty Order 1 or 2. Star(s), one neck badge and medals (as appropriate) are worn on Battle Jackets (or shirts if Battle Jackets are not being worn) when in Ceremonial Order of the St John Event Health Services uniform. They are not, however, worn on jumpers. Star(s), one neck badge and miniatures are worn with St John Mess Dress.

Right breast awards are worn in accordance with the publication *Wearing right breast awards in St John Ambulance Australia*.



*Ceremonial Order with medal ribbons*



*Ceremonial Order with medals*



*Ceremonial Order with medals*



*Mess Dress with neck badge, star and miniatures*

# Dress Code - Civilian

## Day Wear

*Men* – Lounge Suit, or jacket and tie. For grades of Commander and above only one neck badge, and medals or miniatures are worn. Medal ribbons are not worn. The Order's Star may be worn by those entitled to do so.

*Women* – For grades of Commander and above, the full-size insignia of the grade must be worn on a bow on the left side of Day Dress, below any medal or miniature bar. Medal ribbons are not worn. The Order's Star may be worn by those entitled to do so.

Orders, Decorations and Medals are not worn on overcoats by men or women.

## Evening Wear

*Men* – Dinner Jacket or Lounge Suit. One neck badge, miniatures (as appropriate) and Star(s) are worn. Medal ribbons are not worn. Knights and above will wear the Star on the left side centrally below the pocket.

*Women* – The requirement for females is the same as for day wear, except that miniatures should be worn in the evening. Commander and above will wear the full-size insignia of their grade on a bow on the left side, below any miniature medal bar. Dames and above will wear the Star on the left side, above the waist and below the full-size insignia of their grade.



Men's day wear with neck badge and medals



Men's day wear with neck badge and miniatures



Men's evening wear with neck badge and miniatures



Men's evening wear with neck badge, miniatures and star



Women's day wear with neck badge and medals



Women's day wear with neck badge and miniatures



Women's evening wear with neck badge and star

## Mantles and Academic Dress

No medals, miniatures or stars are worn on the St John Mantle. Rather, appropriate insignia is worn on the uniform or civilian attire beneath the Mantle. This practice would usually apply also in relation to Academic Dress unless the host organiser specified otherwise.

## Wearing of medals of a relative

A custom has evolved whereby the medals of a deceased close relative may be worn on the right breast on ANZAC Day and at certain other memorial and remembrance services. This practice is normally confined to civilian dress, and stars and/or neck badges of the deceased relative are not worn.

# Other Medals and Awards, and Tips

Recipients of other approved honours and awards need to ensure that they wear their insignia in line with convention. Points to consider:

- ✘ Usually the senior neck badge is worn, but circumstances will dictate this. For example, when attending a St John function, it would be appropriate to wear a St John neck badge even if one held a more senior award (e.g. an AO or AC).
- ✘ Usually only one neck badge is worn at a time, however there is provision for up to three to be worn on military uniforms (Service Dress Ceremonial, Patrol Whites and Blues) on ceremonial occasions.
- ✘ A male's neck badge is worn with 16 mm (miniature) ribbon rather than the ribbon with which the recipient was invested.
- ✘ Female members, who have two or more awards with grades of Commander or equivalent or above, may choose to wear the insignia of these awards (e.g. AO and CStJ) separately and on their bows with the most senior on the right.
- ✘ Medal ribbons should not be covered with plastic or other coverings.
- ✘ Dirty, frayed or otherwise damaged medal ribbons, mounted medals and miniature medals should be replaced or repaired in keeping with the dignity of their award.
- ✘ Foreign awards may not be worn unless express authority to receive and wear the award has been received from the Governor-General. Acquaintance with someone who is wearing a particular foreign award does not convey authority to do the same. Specific authority to wear the award must be sought in writing from the Governor-General.
- ✘ State and territory awards. At present, there is no authority to wear state and territory awards on the left side, and there is no place in the Order of Precedence for them. Right breast awards are worn in accordance with the publication *Wearing right breast awards in St John Ambulance Australia*.
- ✘ Medals awarded by private organisations are not authorised to be worn on St John uniforms.
- ✘ The Order of St John insignia and the St John Service Medal may be worn on other recognised uniforms, such as military, police, fire etc. In such circumstances the insignia is worn in keeping with the rules laid down by the respective organisations and should generally conform to the guidance provided herein.