



North Carolina Azalea Festival Invited Guest Escort Agreement

BETWEEN: 2023 North Carolina Azalea Festival and the Board of Directors

AND: INVITED GUEST ESCORT

We are delighted you are joining the North Carolina Azalea Festival family as one of our Invited Guest's escort. There are a lot of fun and exciting events during the week and we are looking forward to having the opportunity to share them with you!

The duties of an Escort are important to the success of the Festival as you are the face of the Festival and Wilmington to our Invited Guest. To better assist you in your responsibilities we have outlined the Azalea Festival expectations for our Invited Guests' Escorts. It is imperative that there are two (2) escorts available at all times during your Invited Guest's stay. ***By accepting this role as an Invited Guest Escort, your first and only priority Festival week must be to care for your Invited Guest and cater to his/her needs.***

1. **Preparations**

- a) Attendance at the Invited Guest Escort Meeting is required. This meeting will be at End of Days Distillery on Monday, April 10th at 4:30 pm.
- b) Prepare a Survival Kit- sunscreen, bug spray, band-aids, antibacterial wipes, safety pins, Tylenol, umbrellas, etc. for your Invited Guest. Keep this in your car at all times.
- c) Bring a small cooler to keep with you at all times with snacks, drinks. You may take drinks and snacks from the Hotel Ballast Hospitality Room to fill your cooler.
- d) Bring a large golf size umbrella in case of rain. DO NOT FORGET THIS!
- e) Bring a blanket and/or chairs – for use at Airlie Gardens.
- f) Reach out to your Invited Guest before the Festival to introduce yourself.
- g) Escorts will be driving their own cars, so please make sure to have your car cleaned and detailed, inside and out, as well as have a full tank of gas to begin the Festival.

2) **Escort your Invited Guest from the time he/she arrives until the time he/she departs**

- a) Meet or pick up your Invited Guest upon his/her arrival:
 - i) For an Invited Guest flying into Wilmington – pick up and drop off at airport in your car
 - ii) For an Invited Guest driving into Wilmington – meet at hotel upon his/her arrival, see him/her off upon departure
- b) Assist Invited Guest with checking in and out of his/her hotel room and helping with luggage.
- c) *Provide meals for your Invited Guest until the Official Festival events begin and in any downtime. **
- d) We recognize your desire to have social time with acquaintances. However, please do not leave your Invited Guest at any event to be guarded by another person.
- e) While at any events where we leave at leisure, please make prompt arrangements to leave with your Invited Guest ***at his/her request.***

3) **Protect and assist your Invited Guest at all events throughout the duration of the event**

- a) This includes acting as a buffer between the Invited Guest and any crowds that gather. We encourage having the Invited Guest meet people, but you must use discretion in determining the amount of contact with the general public, consistent with maintaining the Official Party's schedule.
- b) Do not leave your Invited Guest completely alone at any event but be considerate of his/her need for privacy and personal space.

- c) If pictures are being taken of the Invited Guest, kindly step aside so that the Invited Guest and the fan are in the picture alone. Offer to take the photographs.
- d) You are NOT expected to be with your Invited Guest during unscheduled times unless the Invited Guest specifically asks for your assistance.
- e) Your role is to keep to your Invited Guest's schedule; mirroring the events he/she attends or does not attend. Should your Invited Guest become sick or not able to attend a scheduled event, Escort should communicate this to the President/Official Party Transportation Coordinator/Executive Director immediately. It is the Escorts' responsibility to stay with the Invited Guest and at no time should Escort attend events without their Invited Guest. If your guest becomes sick or stays back at the hotel for any reason, you need to be at the hotel as well, available for any needs.
- f) All errands for your Invited Guest before, during, and after the Festival MUST be handled by the Escort; which is why it is imperative there are always two escorts for each Invited Guest at all times. **DO NOT** ask the Festival office, Festival staff, Festival board members, or any other Festival team member to handle any last-minute needs of the Invited Guest. **THIS IS THE ESCORT'S RESPONSIBILITY AT ALL TIMES.**
- g) Keep your Survival Kit, cooler, umbrella, blanket, and chairs with you at all times!
- h) As stated above, Escorts become a highly-visible "face" of the Festival due to their close proximity to our Invited Guests. As such, alcohol consumption must be kept to a minimum and AT ALL TIMES one Escort must refrain from drinking in case the need arises to run an errand or the Invited Guest or Festival needs assistance in a matter. You have been chosen to represent the Festival and must be ready at all times to put your best face forward for the Festival.

4) Follow the Private Schedule tightly to ensure you and your Invited Guest are on time for each event

- a) It will be your responsibility to ensure you and your Invited Guest are punctual every time.
- b) Brief the Invited Guest daily on what they can expect for the day.
- c) Follow event protocol for each event and ensure your Invited Guest is available for interviews and last-minute adjustments if necessary.
- d) Make sure you personally are ready to go well in advance of the departure times (30 -45 minutes early), as you may be called upon to assist your Invited Guest in getting ready or any last-minute needs they have.
- e) Traveling to/organizing activities outside of the private schedule must be approved by the Azalea Festival President and communicated to Official Party Chair in advance.
- f) Thursday and Friday night are "Free Nights" for most guests in the Official Party (Queen Azalea and Miss NC have a scheduled appearance on Friday night). Please communicate with your Invited Guest on what they prefer to do (take a night off to rest in their hotel room, visit the Hospitality room, have dinner on their own with friends in town, go to the Concerts, etc.). This is also an opportunity to take them to various restaurants in town (don't forget your Escort Gift Card – as you will not be reimbursed for these meals). Should your Invited Guest wish to go to the Concerts please get with Official Party Transportation Chair Erica Mearns to receive complimentary tickets and Hospitality wristbands to the UPSTAIRS VIP LOUNGE ONLY. Transportation these nights will be up to you as the Escort – if attending the Concerts we recommend Uber or Lyft or the short walk from the Hotel to the Concert venue. Please note you may use the Cowan Street VIP entrance but will get scanned in as all concert attendees do and have to abide by all venue rules (ie. only clear bags, no large chairs, etc.)

5) Have fun!

- a) Your Invited Guest will feed off your enthusiasm and excitement.
- b) Promote Wilmington.
- c) Promote the North Carolina Azalea Festival.

- d) Encourage the use of the Festival's social media tags when you and your Invited Guest use social media. Take your own photos and tag your Invited Guest and the Azalea Festival in your postings.



NCAzaleaFest



NCAzaleaFest

Don't forget the hashtag! #NCAF or #NCAzaleaFest and also #VisitNC

6) Escort Perks

- a) Hotel Ballast Accommodations
 - i) You will receive one room night stay for each night your Invited Guest is here. If he/she checks in Wednesday and out on Saturday, you will receive a hotel night for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.
- b) Free admission at all events your Invited Guest attends as part of the Official Party Entourage.
 - i) You will be considered part of the "Official Party Entourage" for the duration of your Invited Guest's stay, which includes admission for events attended. **This is for you only; this does not extend to your family or friends.**
- c) **A \$150 gift card will be provided to you. This is to be used for the Invited Guest for any extra meals outside of the Official Party Schedule, or any extra needs your Invited Guest may have (gum, coffee, etc.). Please remember the Hospitality Room at the Hotel Ballast is available for snacks...you should be prepared at all times so as not to spend additional money on items already available to you. Receipts must be kept and turned in to the Festival Ticket Office along with the gift card (and any remaining balance) the week following the Festival.*

No additional escort reimbursements will be given.

Thank you for your participation....and get ready for a fun time!

Denise Szaloky
2023 North Carolina Azalea Festival President