



THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE OF ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

COVID-19 – Frequently Asked Questions & Guidance – April 3, 2020

How long before we can meet in person? When can we have a regular communication?

We will follow [the Governor's Order](#) which now has a “stay at home” order, business closed and no groups larger than 10 can meet through May 4th. This likely will be extended. No lodge meetings at least through May 4th.

Do we need dispensations for our canceled regular Communications due to the virus?

Dispensations will not be issued, assume you have it. Please notify the Grand Master's office in writing of your canceled Communication for record keeping purposes.

May we have a regular Communication online?

No. Regular Communications will not be allowed at this time.

May we rehearse online?

Yes, however no grips, words, signs etc.

May we conduct business online?

The Master, Wardens, Secretary and Treasurer should consult regularly via phone, email or online in order to approve and pay regular bills. All transactions should be recorded and made available to the members at your next in person communication. Any capital projects and/or large expenditures should be on hold at this time. No reading of applications, no candidate interviews, no ritual etc. are permitted. A preapplication meeting between the Master/Wardens/Applicant may happen online. The name still must be read in open lodge (when we are able to do so), the investigating committee must meet with the applicant in person (after we are allowed to do so) and the vote must be taken when the lodge meets again - all after due notice to members via standard lodge notice. Be advised that info-check will not be up and running until the court system is open.

Do NOT make any of your online meeting public. They should be by invitation only. In other words, do not make your meeting link open to the public. There have been reports that unidentified individuals have accessed and disrupted meetings.

May we ballot on our candidates online?

No. Balloting needs to be done in a tiled lodge.



THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE OF ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

May we gather informally online?

Yes, you are encouraged to do so. Here are some options for free online meetings:
<https://www.howtogeek.com/661906/the-6-best-free-video-conferencing-apps/>

See info here on how to protect your online meetings:
<https://uit.stanford.edu/service/zoom/meetingsecurityguide>

May the building be used for blood drives by the Red Cross?

Yes, for “essential” services only as provided in the Governor’s COVID-19 Order No. 13 that took effect at noon on March 24th, then updated on March 31st. If the building is used, a program to disinfect it must be created and utilized to protect members and the public.

May we use our current dispensation for a table lodge (or other event) if we change the date due to the virus?

Yes, but please send a letter to the Grand Master indicating the change.

Do we have to make up the missed meetings (9) and LOI’s (7-out-of-10)?

There will be no requirement to make up missed meetings. However, the Grand Master will issue a statewide dispensation to hold communications in July, August and other months when you lodge may not regularly meet (according to your by-laws).

May we do Memorial aka Funeral Services for a departed Brother?

It is important we do not ignore a request for a Masonic Memorial Service. Contact the family – express the Lodge’s condolences, as well as your own. Explain the restrictions we are bound by. Funeral homes may not allow us to attend and may only offer private services during this time. If we can participate, we obviously may only send a small group of brethren to comply with the Governor’s request. In this situation, please explain to families many more brethren wished to attend. Consider offering the family the opportunity to come to a future Lodge meeting to honor him when things improve. If they would prefer a personal ceremony instead, find a way to honor that request. We are called to care for each other in this time of need, now more than ever. Being there for the families of our departed brethren is no exception.



THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE OF ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

What about Master's Path?

The Master's Path program will be held in these locations in 2020:

Southeast: ~~canceled~~ Saturday, March 28 at Brockton (279 Prospect St)

Northeast: Saturday, May 23 at Wilmington (Aleppo Shriners) (99 Fordham Rd)

Southeast: Saturday, June 27 at East Bridgewater (38 Franklin St)

West: Saturday, August 15 at East Longmeadow (43 Chestnut St)

These sessions are generally 8:00 AM to 3:15 PM.

Attire is jacket and tie, as appropriate for meeting with the Grand Master.

Wear your nameplate or nametag, but no pocket jewels or apron.

What about Exemplification?

The requirement for Exemplification may be waived this year depending how long the Governor's Order is in place.

What about LOI (Lodge of Instruction)?

You may conduct LOI online, but you need to run two separate ones - one with the candidates and the other with everyone else. During the candidate instruction, do not reveal any of the "secrets" of Freemasonry (or at any other time for that matter!).

If the COVID-19 crisis continues, how do we nominate and elect officers for the new Masonic year (Sept. '20), present annual reports etc.? What if we cannot adhere to our by-laws because we cannot meet?

The Grand Master will issue a statewide dispensation to move any dates forward (even if in conflict with your by-laws) to hold elections and installations at future dates, as well as present annual reports and other requirements of your by-laws. Please send in your revised schedule to the Grand Master.

Do NOT interpret this as a way around your by-laws. This is only for meetings cancelled for COVID-19.

Our lodge is in the middle of a merger. What do we do?

You will need to work behind the scenes, online or via email with all members. No vote to merge will be taken prior to a regular communication in person. If you have special circumstances, you should contact the Grand Master for guidance.



THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE OF ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

We have applications. What should we do?

For now, stay in constant touch with all candidates. Contact them on multiple occasions with motivational videos, information about the craft, as well as letting them know what's happening and going to happen (future events) in Massachusetts Masonry.

Demonstrating your care and concern for the candidate and his family before he has become a member in good standing is a real-life example of the Brotherly Love and affection we proclaim. This simple gesture - staying in contact and asking about their wellbeing - could have a profound effect on their feeling for your Lodge and the Craft.

When will the Grand Master issue a DIRECTIVE for all the above issues that are in violation of our by-laws etc.?

When we have a better idea of how long the Governor's Orders will be in effect.

Do not interpret anything listed here to circumvent your By-Laws. Rather, this is a means and method to fulfill your obligations now and until we can meet and have regular communications.

A formal directive with more details and instructions shall be issued when we are able to meet. In the meantime, follow the guidance above. **These guidelines are subject to revision at any time during the crisis.**

Follow Reason, use common sense, stay safe!

Fraternally,

Richard Maggus