



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

**SUGGESTED SAFETY STANDARDS FOR MASONIC LODGES TO ADDRESS
COVID-19**

Purpose

These suggested COVID-19 safety standards for Masonic Lodges are issued to provide instructions to help protect against the spread of COVID-19 as in-person Lodge meetings resume. These standards are minimum requirements only and are not exclusive or exhaustive. The public health data and matrix for disease prevention upon which these guidelines are based can and does change frequently, and the operator of a Masonic Lodge is responsible for adhering to all local, state, and federal requirements.

General Standards

These standards apply to all Masonic Lodges, and all Masonic meetings and activities.

Masonic Lodges shall communicate to members and workers that if they are feeling sick, are exhibiting any of the following symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell), or have potentially been exposed to someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, then they should not attend Lodge meetings or activities in-person. A potential exposure means having household contact or having close contact (within 6 feet) with an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time (over 10 minutes) while the person is symptomatic or 48 hours before symptoms developed.

Persons who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the Centers for Disease Control (e.g., due to age 65 or greater, or underlying medical conditions) are encouraged to stay home.

Masonic Lodges are encouraged, to the extent feasible, to hold meetings virtually or outdoors and to ensure that attendees who are not from the same immediate household are spaced at least 6 feet apart. If outdoor services are not possible, Lodges must abide by the following requirements.

I. Occupancy Limitations

- All Lodges shall limit occupancy to 40 percent of the building's maximum permitted occupancy level as documented in its occupancy permit on record with the municipal building department or other municipal record holder. The occupant count shall include all persons inside the Lodge building, including attendees and staff.
- The Worshipful Master shall designate a Lodge Officer to monitor the number of attendees entering the Lodge building to ensure compliance with the maximum occupancy level.

- Lodges are encouraged to arrange online sign-up or other rsvp methods for Lodge meetings or activities in advance to monitor and limit the number of attendees.

II. Social Distancing

Seating

- Attendees who are not part of the same immediate household must be seated at least 6 feet apart. Members of the same immediate household are permitted to sit together and less than 6 feet apart.
- If there is fixed seating, rows should be blocked off and kept empty to allow for sufficient distancing between rows.
- Lodges are encouraged to place tape or other visual distancing markings on seating to delineate 6 feet separations and to post signage indicating the maximum number of persons permitted per row.
- Promote ventilation for enclosed spaces where possible. For example, consider opening windows and doors to allow airflow.

Entering and Exiting

- Lodges are encouraged to take steps to encourage orderly entering and exiting in a manner that encourages social distancing. For example:
 - o Signage or floor markings should be posted to have one-way aisles or otherwise direct attendees to follow certain pathways for entering and exiting.
 - o If a line forms outside of the Lodge room, those waiting should be directed to maintain social distancing. Tape or other markings on the ground outside of the Lodge room should be placed to encourage attendees to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet.
 - o Lodge officers should direct people in high traffic areas to help maintain social distancing.

III. Face Coverings

- All attendees and members must wear face coverings or masks in accordance with COVID-19 Order No. 31 and the Department of Public Health's Guidance while inside and while entering and exiting Lodge buildings or otherwise participating in in-person meetings, except where a person is unable to wear a face covering or mask because of a medical or disabling condition.
- A person who declines to wear a face covering or mask because of a medical or disabling condition shall not be required to produce documentation verifying the condition.
- Masonic Lodges may refuse entry to a person who refuses to wear a face covering or mask for non-medical reasons.

IV. Communal Food and Drink Prohibited

- Lodge meetings shall not have a communal gathering pre or post service (e.g., dinner or collation.) except as permitted by state and local laws and guidelines.
- No food or drink shall be served before, during or after a Lodge meeting or activity except as permitted by state and local laws and guidelines.

V. Cleaning and Disinfecting and Hygiene Protocols

- Lodge buildings shall be cleaned and disinfected between each meeting or activity, including disinfection of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, bathrooms, microphones, shared instruments).
- If a Lodge learns that an individual with COVID-19 attended a meeting or activity or otherwise entered the Lodge building, it shall conduct a deep cleaning and disinfecting consistent with the Centers for Disease Control guidance:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- Lodges shall ensure that attendees and workers have access to handwashing facilities, including soap and running water, and allow workers sufficient break time to wash hands, as necessary. They are also encouraged to make alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol available, if possible.

VI. Notification of Positive Case

- If a Masonic Lodge that an attendee or worker has tested positive for COVID-19, it shall notify the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts via the COVID-19 REGISTER on MassMasons.org and follow all state and local laws to assist in contact tracing, isolation and self-quarantine.