

THE GRAND LODGE

of Ancient, Free and
Accepted Masons
of North Carolina



P. SHAUN BRADSHAW
GRAND MASTER 2020

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Brethren,

I hope this correspondence finds you and your loved ones safe and well. During recent months our meetings, along with those of all appendant, concordant, and adjunct bodies under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina have remained suspended by my order. The first restrictions were ordered in conjunction with our governor's Executive Order in mid-March which closed schools and non-essential businesses. Since that time, I have permitted some limited in-person and outdoor Masonic activities as the Governor has issued updated guidance for the state.

As most of you may be aware, on September 1, 2020, Governor Cooper issued Executive Order No. 163, which eases restrictions on the number of people permitted in a mass gathering. I have reviewed the Executive Order and associated guidance from the NC DHHS. I find that section 7.A. of the Executive Order defines a mass gathering as convening "more than twenty-five (25) people indoors or more than fifty (50) people outdoors at the same time in a single confined indoor or outdoor space, such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, or meeting hall."

In lieu of the Governor's most recent Executive Order and given that the vast majority of our lodges have fewer than 25 members in regular attendance, I believe it is suitable to permit subordinate lodges, appendant, concordant, and adjunct Masonic organizations to resume holding stated and emergent communications in lodge buildings with certain restrictions applied.

As such, it is my Order that effective Monday, September 7, 2020, at 5:00pm, at the Master's discretion and with due consideration for the health and well-being of his members, up to twenty-five (25) members of a Lodge (or 50% of the maximum capacity of the lodge, if less than 25) may utilize the lodge facility for stated and/or emergent communications. Further, at the Master's discretion and upon the review and approval of the District Deputy Grand Master, a lodge may request dispensation for an outdoor degree with up to fifty (50) members present.

Although this Order permits lodges and other affiliated Masonic organizations to conduct regular business meetings, the following guidelines, requirements, and restrictions shall be strictly adhered to:

1. No member may be required to attend any Lodge or Masonic-related function if that person believes it is unsafe to do so; notwithstanding an official Summons from the Grand Master, Master, or presiding officer, in which case due precautions shall be taken to protect the health and safety of the member when such summons is executed.
2. If the Master of the lodge determines it is in the best interest of his Lodge to remain closed during the COVID-19 pandemic it will be allowed to remain closed until such time as the Grand Master has determined that restrictions have eased sufficiently for the lodge to reopen.

3. The Grand Presiding Officer(s) of Masonic affiliated organizations shall require their particular organizations to adhere to this order, as well as their own appendant body's rules and regulations.
4. The Master shall ensure his lodge has adequate disinfectant, cleaning supplies, and hand sanitizer available in the lodge prior to reopening.
5. Prior to entry into the lodge building, all members must submit to and sign a health questionnaire (see *Attachment A*). Entry shall be denied if any questionnaires are answered in the affirmative. Temperature checks with a "no touch" thermometer are encouraged.
6. Proper signage (see *Attachment B*) must be in place outside the lodge building to inform members not to enter if they are sick, do not feel well, are under quarantine restrictions, or have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
7. **Wearing a face covering (cloth face masks, surgical masks, and N95 respirators are acceptable) in the proper manner (i.e. over the nose and mouth at all times) is required at all Masonic functions.** While the following exceptions are permitted, it is highly recommended that any person with a health condition which does not allow them to wear a face mask should consider refraining from all large gatherings at this time.
 - Any member with a documented respiratory medical condition whereby wearing a face covering would prevent the member from properly breathing, may be exempted from wearing a face mask.
 - Any member, during the performance of a ritualistic speaking part may remove his face mask while he is speaking as long as he maintains proper social distancing from his brethren.
8. During meetings, all members present shall ensure adequate social distancing is maintained. Per CDC guidelines, proper social distancing requires at least six (6) feet between individuals.
9. To prevent cross-contamination of the lodge registry, the Secretary shall record all members present for the meeting in the registry book.
10. Members are encouraged to bring their own aprons to the meetings. Should a member require the use of a lodge apron, the Master will ensure all used aprons are properly cleaned prior to the next meeting.
11. Shaking hands is discouraged.
12. Hand sanitizer shall be provided by the lodge and shall be readily available both inside and outside the lodge room. Running water, soap, and disposable paper towels are required in all rest rooms.
13. Prior to the meeting the Tyler will attend the door to the lodge room and take up the pass as each brother enters. The pass may be given in a regular voice and from a moderate distance from the Tyler. All members shall maintain proper social distancing while they await entry into the lodge room. Upon opening the lodge, the Deacons will receive the pass from the Tyler who received it from the brethren as they entered the lodge.
14. Visitation of members from other lodges is permitted; however, all members of the lodge shall be seated before visitors are granted entry.

15. Degree work is permitted in the lodge; however, it is preferred that lodges request dispensations for outdoor degrees as long as weather permits.
16. Candidates may be examined in lodge.
17. No meals shall be prepared or served in the lodge building. Members are encouraged to eat prior to attending the meeting.
18. Voting by a show of hands and written ballots are permitted. Prior to a written ballot, each member shall use hand sanitizer prior to handing out and turning in the paper ballot. In addition, the Master or Secretary shall have sufficient pens or pencils available for each member present during the vote.
19. Petitions for candidates may be received by the lodge and **secret ballots are permitted unless a member of the lodge is denied entry into the meeting** due to the lodge reaching its maximum capacity (the lesser of 25 members or 50% of the maximum capacity of the lodge room). Prior to taking a secret ballot, the Master shall ensure that the ballot box, all white balls, and black cubes have been properly sanitized. When voting begins, each member shall use hand sanitizer prior to voting.
20. Masters are encouraged to keep meetings to 1 hour or less.
21. The Master shall ensure all high-touch surfaces in the lodge building are properly disinfected before and after each meeting.
22. Any lodge or other Masonic affiliated organization that has a confirmed COVID-19 exposure or infection at a Masonic function shall:
 - Immediately contact the District Deputy Grand Master and Grand Lodge office with the date of the exposure and names of all members in attendance.
 - The Master shall contact all exposed members so they may take proper precautions by quarantining and/or getting tested for the virus.
 - Shut down the building until it has been properly sanitized by a commercial cleaner.

It is important to note that the **Master of the lodge shall be held strictly accountable for upholding each of the guidelines, requirements, and restrictions set out in this order**; any violation of which will require the Master to show just cause as to why he should not be removed from office and the lodge's charter arrested. Further, **any brother who willfully or maliciously refuses to follow the above guidelines, requirements, and restrictions shall be held accountable** by the Grand Master to show just cause as to why he should not be expelled for his willful violation of the order and for putting his brethren at risk.

While I understand some of my brethren may believe the above guidelines, requirements, and restrictions are onerous or unnecessary, I assure you that my only goal is to permit our lodges to operate in the safest manner possible during this pandemic. We must not lose sight that the COVID-19 pandemic has not yet fully run its course and there remains a risk that infections and deaths could increase at any time in the future.

I am asking each of you to have patience as we transition to this next step of reopening our lodges. It is of utmost importance for the health and safety of ourselves, our families, and our communities that we follow the proper precautions. It is my highest hope to be able to reopen our lodges to full capacity before I leave office, but in order to do so we must each do our part, abide by the requirements, and proceed with caution each time we meet. This will allow us to expand our ability to get our lodges up and running at full capacity in a shorter amount of time.

Finally, I want to continue to encourage each of you to maintain your outreach activities to your brethren and widows.

If you have any questions or concerns about any information presented here, please do not hesitate to contact me directly or contact our Grand Lodge office.

Given under my hand and seal, this the 4th day of September, 2020.

Sincerely & Fraternaly,



Grand Master



Attachment - A
LODGE MEMBER COVID-19 SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

The safety of our Lodge members is our priority. In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the potential risk of exposure, Lodge members must complete this questionnaire. Please do not enter the Lodge room until your responses have been reviewed and your entry has been approved. Please respond to each of the following questions truthfully and to the best of your ability.

Name / Phone Number: _____

1. Are you currently experiencing, or have you experienced in the past 14 days, any of the following symptoms? (Please take your temperature before you answer this question.)

- Yes No Fever (100.3° F or greater as measured by a thermometer)
Yes No Cough
Yes No Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
Yes No Sore throat
Yes No New loss of taste or smell
Yes No Chills
Yes No Head or muscle aches
Yes No Nausea, diarrhea, vomiting

2. In the past 14 days, have you been in close proximity to anyone who was experiencing any of the above symptoms or has experienced any of the above symptoms since your contact?

Yes No

3. In the past 14 days, have you been in close proximity to anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

Yes No

4. Have you been tested for COVID-19 and are waiting to receive test results?

Yes No

NOTE: If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been presumptively positive for COVID-19 based on your health care provider's assessment or your symptoms, please contact the Master of your Lodge when: (1) you have had no fever for at least 72 hours (3 full days), without the use of fever-reducing medications; (2) your other symptoms have improved; and at least 14 days have elapsed since your symptoms first appeared.

5. In the past 14 days, have you been on a commercial flight or traveled outside of the United States?

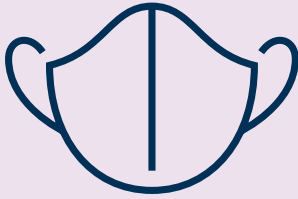
Yes No

Certification

I hereby certify that the responses provided above are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and will comply with all phases of the Lodge re-opening plan. I understand that I shall be denied entry if any of the above questions are answered in the affirmative. I understand that attending a Masonic function may potentially expose me to COVID-19 as in any public setting.

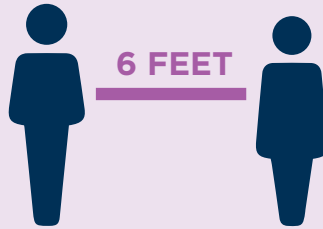
Signature: _____ Date: _____

Know Your 3 Ws!



WEAR

a cloth mask
over your nose
and mouth.



WAIT

6 feet apart.
Avoid
close contact.



WASH

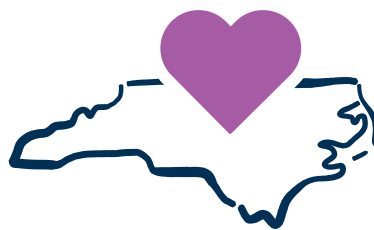
your hands
or use hand
sanitizer.

STOP!

Do not enter if you
have these symptoms
of COVID-19

- Congestion or runny nose
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Fever or chills
- Muscle pain
- Fatigue

Staying apart brings us together.
Protect your family and neighbors.



#StayStrongNC

Learn more at
nc.gov/covid19.



NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES