



**GRAND LODGE
FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS
OF WASHINGTON**

Chris J. Coffman
Grand Master
4970 Bridgeport Way W
University Place, WA 98467
(253) 820-1776
ccoff4269@comcast.net

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**DIRECTIVE: Concerning Lodge Stated and Special Communications
And Other Meetings**

To all Lodges,

My Directive of June 13, 2020 cancelling all Lodge meetings is hereby supplemented by this directive for those Lodges that elect to hold Stated and Special Communications as specified below.

Currently, all counties in the State of Washington have been moved to either Phase 2 or Phase 3, thus allowing very limited in person meetings. Therefore, pursuant to WMC Section 3.01(K) Const., I authorize Lodges that are in Phase 2, 3 or 4 counties who elect to do so, to hold Stated and Special Communications beginning **December 1, 2020** over virtual platforms subject to the conditions specified in the attached document.

All the requirements outlined in the attached "Requirements for Limited Reopening of Lodges" MUST BE STRICTLY FOLLOWED. ANY LODGE THAT HOLDS A COMMUNICATION CONTRARY TO THE REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIED BY THIS DIRECTIVE IS SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINE INCLUDING THE IMMEDIATE ARREST OF ITS CHARTER.

No Lodge will be penalized for not holding a Stated Communication over virtual platforms. All Lodges, including those who elect not to hold Stated or Special Communications, are encouraged to continue to hold virtual meetings as previously allowed.

Please be aware that this continues to be a fluid situation. If a Lodge meets in a County that is returned to a Phase 1 or modified Phase 1 status, then that Lodge will not be allowed to hold Stated or Special Communications until such time as the county returns to Phase 2 or higher status.

This Directive authorizing Lodge Communications on virtual platforms expires on June 13, 2021 or earlier if this Directive is withdrawn or amended.

Remember the Past, Visualize the Future,



Chris J. Coffman

Grand Master

Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Washington

cc: Clinton M. Brown, Jr., Grand Secretary
Jurisprudence Committee



Requirements for Limited Reopening of Lodges

Please read these requirements carefully. Failure to comply with the requirements set forth below will be considered a Masonic Offense and may subject both the officers and the Lodge to Masonic Discipline.

Which Lodges may hold Stated Communications?

Any Lodge that:

- a. Meets in a county that is in Phase 2, Phase 3 or Phase 4 of Safe Start Washington; **and**
- b. The Lodge's Executive Committee determines that it is safe and prudent for the Lodge to open under the conditions laid out below.
- c. If the Lodge's Executive Committee determines that it is **not safe or prudent** for the Lodge to open, the Secretary shall note the date of that decision and report it to the Lodge at its next Stated Communication.

Who may attend a Lodge Stated or Special Communication In-Person?

- a. **NO MORE THAN FIVE (5) Master Masons may meet in-person at the location (including dining areas, anterooms, etc.) specified in the Lodge's By-laws.** Prior to the meeting date, the Worshipful Master shall identify who will attend the meeting in person and communicate that information to the other members of the Lodge. BROTHERS WHO ARE AT HIGH RISK FOR COMPLICATIONS FROM COVID-19 SHOULD BE ADVISED THAT STATE GUIDANCE STRONGLY RECOMMENDS STAYING HOME BECAUSE OF THE RISKS RELATED TO COVID-19 AND ATTENDING GATHERINGS.
- b. At least one of the three (3) principal officers must be in attendance. If none of the Principal Officers can attend, a Special Deputy may be appointed by the Grand Master to open the Lodge at the request of the Worshipful Master or Lodge Secretary.
- c. Only members of the Lodge (and Special Deputy, if appointed) will be allowed to attend in-person. **No visitors will be allowed to attend.**

What must be done to ensure the building is safe?

The Lodge meeting place shall comply with all the requirements specified in Safe Start Washington (SafeStartWashington). Each Lodge shall identify a Member who will be the Safe Start Chairman to ensure that the Lodge is in compliance with the following requirements:

- a. Assess the Lodge meeting location including contacting the building management to determine and evaluate the buildings cleaning protocols.
- b. Establish protocols to ensure that the Lodge is disinfected both before and after the meeting and ensure that cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer are readily available in all areas of the building.
- c. All touch points including, but not limited to, all chairs, podiums, desks, sign-in desk and pen, Lodge Regalia, Bible, Square and Compasses, candles, gavels, flagpoles, door handles and knockers, bathrooms and other commonly touched areas shall be disinfected **both prior to and after the meeting.**

What must Lodges do to hold in person meetings?

- a. NO MORE THAN 5 MASTER MASONS MAY MEET IN PERSON.
- b. All requirements for social gatherings imposed by Safe Start Washington must be strictly complied with including, but not limited to:
 - i. Maintain social distancing (six feet of separation) and no physical contact;
 - ii. Everyone who enters the building must immediately either wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer shall be readily available to all participants attending in-person.
 - iii. Wearing facial coverings over your nose and mouth **at all times**, including while speaking (**facial coverings must be made available by the Lodge**). If there is a medical condition that prohibits a person from wearing a mask, then they may attend the meeting virtually.
 - iv. Cover your coughs and sneezes; and
 - v. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- c. A Brother will not be allowed to attend in-person if, within the last twenty-one (21) days:
 - i. He has been diagnosed with COVID-19, is suspected to have COVID-19 or has had or is currently experiencing any known symptom of COVID-19; or
 - ii. He has been in physical contact with any other person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, is suspected to have COVID-19 or has had or is currently experiencing any known symptom of COVID-19.
- d. The known symptoms of COVID-19 are:
 - i. Fever of 100.4° F or above;
 - ii. Fatigue;
 - iii. Cough;
 - iv. Muscle or body aches;
 - v. Shortness of breath;
 - vi. New or unexplained loss of taste or smell;
 - vii. Sore throat;
 - viii. Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea;
 - ix. Headache; or
 - x. Congestion or runny nose.
- e. If a Brother or any member of his household has traveled outside of the United States in the last twenty-one (21) days, then he may not attend in-person.
- f. Each Brother attending in-person shall certify in writing that he meets all of the requirements outlined in this section. This writing must include his phone number and email address. These records will be maintained by the Lodge Secretary for at least thirty (30) days after the meeting.
- g. The Tyler's register shall identify each Brother present in-person and separately identify each Brother attending virtually.
- h. The Lodge should supply enough pens that each person will have their own pen to use when signing in. These pens should be sanitized before and after every meeting.
- i. It shall be noted in the Lodge minutes for each meeting that each of the above requirements was performed.

When and Where May Communications to be Held?

- a. Each Lodge will meet at the place and time specified in its By-laws. If the location specified in the Lodge By-laws is unavailable, the Worshipful Master may request permission from the Grand Master to move the Charter. Such request must specify the reasons the regular location is unavailable. *See* WMC 13.07 B (1) B.L.
- b. Prior to the first Stated Communication, the members of the Lodge must be notified that the Stated Communication will be held over the virtual platform and include all necessary instructions for joining the meeting. **The notice will be issued at least twenty (20) days prior to the first Stated Communication**, Additionally, the notice shall state how instructions will be communicated for future Stated or Special Communications.

What will be allowed during the meeting?

- a. The Lodge will open only on the Third Degree.
- b. Ritualistic opening will be completed prior to opening the virtual platform and allowing other members of the Lodge to join the virtual meeting. **No ritual is allowed to be conducted on any virtual platform.**
- c. Modifications to the ritual that are necessary to comply with Safe Start Washington are required. This includes no collection of the pass, no escorting Brothers, no shaking hands, and requiring all Brothers maintain separation of at least six feet from each other at all times.
- d. **No food or beverages will be served either before or after the meeting.**

What Business May Be Conducted During a Virtual Communication after Lodge is opened?

- a. Reading of the minutes of previous meeting for information only;
- b. Reading of communications;
- c. Payment of bills;
- d. Creation of Lodge committees including, but not limited to interview of members who have not paid dues (Sec. 17.15 B.L.) and audit;
- e. Granting dimits;
- f. Education;
- g. Charity;
- h. Other business that is not specifically disallowed; and
- i. Reading and approval of the minutes.

What Business May NOT be conducted?

- a. Balloting on Petitions for the Degrees;
- b. Balloting on Petitions for Affiliation;
- c. Conferring of Degrees;
- d. Installation of Officers (unless approved in writing by the Grand Master);
- e. Proof of proficiency (however, if the Lodge allows the appointment of a committee for this purpose, then the committee may report its findings and they may be accepted by the Lodge); and
- f. Any other esoteric work.

What About Lodge Election and Installation of Officers for this Masonic Year?

- a. On September 16, 2020 Lodge Elections and Installations for the 2020-2021 Masonic year were cancelled. That directive remains in effect.
- b. If, due to an emergent need, the Lodge needs to hold an election (e.g. death of one or more of the Elected Officers) the Secretary or the Worshipful Master will submit a written explanation of the reasons for the request to the Grand Master. If the Grand Master approves the request, he will specify how the election will be conducted and installation performed.

What about Masonic Funerals?

- a. Masonic Funerals may be conducted at the request of the family.
- b. The limitations on the number of attendees, specified above is waived if allowed by Safe Start Washington. However, all guidelines issued by Safe Start Washington and Local health authorities must be satisfied.
- c. Brothers who are considered at high-risk should not attend.

Where can I find additional information concerning COVID-19?

The following links are to official sites with further information about Safe Start Washington and COVID-19:

Coronavirus State of Washington, <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/>

Washington Department of Health, <https://doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>

Centers for Disease Control, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Guidance for Businesses Reopening, https://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/covid-19-resources/covid-19-reopening-guidance-businesses-and-workers?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

National Institute for Health, <https://www.nih.gov/>