



GRAND LODGE OF  
A.F. AND A.M. OF CANADA  
IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

GRAND SECRETARY

363 KING STREET WEST  
HAMILTON, ONTARIO  
L8P 1B4

Fax: 905-528-6979  
Tel: 905-528-8644  
Email: office@grandlodge.on.ca

## Covid-19 Update October 26 2021

October 26 2021

Brethren,

As directed by the Grand Master, lodges **may** resume labours on November 01, 2021 subject to the conditions specified below.

**Lodges not wishing to open yet:** We acknowledge that some lodges, due to their membership or their building may not wish to open yet. They may continue to operate under the current pandemic rules. Also, lodges do not have to do degrees or installations at this time if they choose not to.

**Brethren – this document contains advice and limitations on many Masonic activities. Please ensure that the lodge officers read the entire document.**

### **Summarizing the key points:**

Regular and emergent meetings, rehearsals, Committee of General Purposes meetings, committee meetings, etc. **may recommence starting November 01 2021** under the following restrictions:

- Proof of Vaccination is required
- Masks must be worn
- Contact tracing must be implemented
- Masonic Memorial Services can now be conducted in the funeral home or in Lodge
- Balloting on candidates – see COVID-19 procedures below
- Adaptations for presentations

In addition, as of November 01 2021

- All degree work may be performed – see conditions below
- Elections and Installations are permitted following the Constitution – see conditions below

## **Guidelines for the Resumption of Meetings:**

**The following meeting guidelines MUST be observed:**

These guidelines apply to **ALL** regular and emergent meetings, rehearsals, Committee of General Purposes meetings, committee meetings, *etc.*

## **1. Identification and Proof of Vaccination**

**Identification and Proof of Vaccination MUST be provided (as required by the Ontario government) to attend any lodge meeting, rehearsal, Committee of General Purposes meetings, Committee meetings, etc..**

**The QR reader can be downloaded from <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/verify>**

It is the responsibility of the 'owners' of the building to ensure that proof of vaccination and active screening are implemented at the entranceway but this may be delegated to a member of the lodge which is meeting.

**2. Masks or face coverings MUST be worn at all times** when entering or within the building.

## **3. Active Screening must be implemented.**

Government approved signs **MUST** be posted at the entrance **AND** the questions actively asked on entry. A template can be found at

[https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/COVID\\_19\\_bus\\_orgs\\_question\\_signage.pdf](https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/COVID_19_bus_orgs_question_signage.pdf)

If any of the screening questions are answered in the positive (YES), then the member must be denied admittance.

## **4. Contact tracing must be implemented.**

A second sheet of paper must be provided at the Tyler's desk and everyone attending must legibly print his name and telephone number on it. This is in addition to signing the Tyler's register. This sheet of paper will be taken home by the Lodge Secretary after each meeting and must be available for health authorities if requested. This list must be kept by the Lodge Secretary for 30 days and then destroyed.

## **5. Festive Board/Fourth degree:**

The multi-page government document related to the serving of food and beverages must be followed: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/restaurant-and-food-services-health-and-safety-during-covid-19>. As the government restrictions on the serving of food and beverages are strict, please review them carefully.

## **6. Masonic Memorial Services:**

- Masonic Memorial services can be conducted in the lodge or at the funeral home as long as local and provincial health guidelines are observed. **Graveside services are not allowed in this jurisdiction.**
- It is also hoped that lodges will consider holding a Memorial Service in the lodge to honour all those that have passed since the Masonic lockdown came into effect.

## **7. A Safety plan must be posted in the building.**

We shall soon put a sample template on the Grand Lodge website.

## **8. Cleaning and disinfecting must be done according to government guidelines.**

Hand sanitizer must be readily available around the lodge room, ante room, at the entrance and in any other place people gather.

Gloves cannot be sanitized with hand sanitizer, so they should not be worn. Grand Lodge officers will not wear gloves.

Sanitization of Lodge regalia and furniture – wands, gavels, etc. – which can be sanitized, should have that done before and after use. Once sanitized they should only be touched by the brother who will be using them. Those that cannot be sanitized - officers' collars, VOSL – should be put out and put away by the brother who will be using them.

#### **9. Ventilation.**

Windows and doors may be left open where practical. HVAC systems should be set so as to limit recirculation and have as much fresh air as possible. Other ventilation solutions may be considered.

#### **10. Singing is not permitted.**

#### **11. Visitation**

Visitation is permitted at the discretion of the receiving lodge. It would be wise to call ahead.

#### **12. Balloting on Applicants**

Balloting on applicants is permitted according to the following procedure:

- Ballot balls should be disinfected before each use unless 24 hours have passed since last use
- The Worshipful Master will make the usual and proper announcements regarding the applicant
- The balls will be put in two containers on a table near the altar and the ballot boxes will be placed on the altar
- Hand sanitizer with a pump shall be on the table near the altar
- Each member in turn will approach the table **alone**, sanitize his hands, pick up a white and a black ball, deposit them in the appropriate boxes on the altar, and sanitize again
- The ballot box will be shown to the Wardens and the Worshipful Master as usual. The Worshipful Master will announce the results, make the declaration and declare the ballot closed.

## **Guidelines for the Resumption of Degree Work:**

#### **13. Degree Work:**

**It is imperative that every applicant PRIOR to the night of his initiation be asked the following questions:**

- **Do you have proof of vaccination?**
- **Are you okay with some physical contact during the degree?**

**The answers to both questions MUST be 'yes' prior to scheduling the initiation.**

It is imperative that all candidate uniforms must (as always) be cleaned after every use.

The candidate will simulate the kissing of the VOSL in all degrees (until further notice).

If the blindfold cannot be cleaned after each use, consider the use of a disposable blindfold.

## 14. Elections:

Elections are permitted according to the following procedure:

- A table will be appropriately placed on which the empty ballots and pencils/pens will be located along with hand sanitizer
- A table will be appropriately placed for the scrutineers with hand sanitizer available
- The Worshipful Master will make the usual and proper announcements regarding the office being voted on
- Each member in turn will approach the altar alone, sanitize his hands, pick up a ballot, record the name on the ballot, deposit them in the ballot box, and sanitize again
- The ballot box will be placed at the scrutineers table by the Deacon.
- The Worshipful Master shall then ascertain from the scrutineers the result of the ballot, announce the findings and then make the proper declarations. He will request that the ballots be destroyed by the scrutineers
- The ballot box will be retrieved by the Deacon who will return the ballot box to the table for another ballot or place it aside at the end of balloting.

## 15. Ceremony of Installation of the Worshipful Master and Investiture of Officers:

Lodges wishing to conduct an Installation ceremony

- Masks must be worn at all times during the ceremony
- Minimum contact among participants must be maintained
- Collars, jewels, wands, etc. are to be set out on a table and officers will put their collar on themselves (except for the W. Master)
- There is to be NO Circle of Friendship – brethren are to remain in their seats
- There is to be no personal congratulations of the new Worshipful Master (hand shaking)

## Election and Installation Options:

Because of the timing of individual lodge elections and installations, it is not possible to make a blanket statement about lodge Elections and Installations. Each lodge must evaluate its own situation and ascertain the wishes of the current Lodge officers. There are three options available.

Under all three options listed below, the Book of Constitution must be followed with respect to the proper notification of elections and Installation in the Lodge Summons

### **Option 1: Current Lodge officers remain in their positions until the next election as specified in the Lodge bylaws.**

We must protect the right of every member to have a say in who serves in the elected offices of the lodge. Just because the elected officers agree to stay on, the brethren may not be of the same opinion. Regardless of who decides that the elected officers remain in their positions for another year, the lodge members **must ratify that decision** by a resolution of confidence at the first regular or emergent meeting after our labours resume.

That resolution must take the following format: If all elected officers agree to remain in their positions a single slate of names will be presented in the resolution. If the vote is unanimous, the elected officers remain in their positions and no Installation and Investiture of Officers is required (until the next regularly scheduled election and Installation as per the lodge bylaws). If the vote is not unanimous, then an election for ALL elected officer positions must take place, followed by an Installation and Investiture

at the next regular meeting. (That election and Installation would be for a shortened year or an extended year as per the second and third options stated below).

If ANY of the elected officers do not wish to continue on in their position, then a full election must be conducted (as per the Book of Constitution), followed by an Installation and Investiture.

Should an appointed lodge officer not wish to continue in his position, the Worshipful Master will appoint another qualified brother to fill the position until the next election.

**Option 2: Conduct an Election and Installation for a shortened year**

Under this option an Election and Installation would place a new set of officers in the chairs until the next regularly scheduled Election/Installation as defined in the Lodge by-laws.

Under this option, Elections may be held at an emergent meeting, followed by the Installation at the next regular meeting (provided proper notice is given in the summons).

**Option 3: Conduct an Election and Installation for an extended year**

Under this option an Election and Installation would place a new set of officers in the chairs for a partial year (until the next regularly scheduled Election/Installation as defined in the Lodge by-laws) and then those officers would continue to serve for an additional year.

Under this option, Elections may be held at an emergent meeting, followed by the Installation at the next regular meeting (provided proper notice is given in the summons).

## **Additional Items;**

**Presenting long service pins, certificates, etc.**

People can make tributes or read the appropriate ceremony from where they are sitting or a podium. A table may be placed on the level in front of the W. Master where the item to be presented can be placed. The brother receiving the honour will put the pin on himself and pick up the certificate.

**Presentation of Grand Lodge regalia:**

For newly appointed V.W. brethren - the Grand Lodge officer's new regalia may be placed on a table and he will don the regalia by himself. A generic template for these investitures may be found on the Grand Lodge website.

For newly elected and appointed R.W. brethren - the procedure for the Installation of the new DDGMs and other Grand Lodge officers will be communicated in the near future.

**Scheduling Events:**

A revised policy regarding the scheduling of events to include the Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master will be communicated later.

**Finally:**

**Finally**, all other local, provincial and federal regulations must be followed.

Brethren who are at high risk or with household members at high risk may wish to observe more intense precautions or may even not wish to partake yet. That is perfectly reasonable and we would ask you to keep their circumstances in mind. Should a brother wish to maintain a 2 m distance, we will accommodate him. (Note: if you see a brother sitting or standing at a distance, ask before moving closer to him.)

**Disclaimer:**

Further details of government restrictions are available at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario>. If clarifications published later differ from our interpretation or if, when the local, provincial or federal government regulations change, these guidelines will be amended and communicated as needed.

Fraternally,



D. Garry Dowling,  
Grand Secretary



David J. Cameron,  
Grand Master