

# Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Wisconsin



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Grand Master 2020 - 2021  
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## TO BE READ AT YOUR NEXT STATED COMMUNICATION AMENDED EDICT

Revised September 15, 2020

My Brothers,

It has been more ten 10 weeks since our lodges closed to protect our brethren from this infectious disease. Dr. Michael Osterholm, an infectious disease epidemiologist states, "We're going to have to learn how to live with this virus." He explains in the ELCA Greater Milwaukee Synod paper, how language of "controlling" or "defeating" this virus is misleading, as the virus will continue to impact our lives in significant ways until approximately 60-70% of the population has been infected or a vaccine is readily available. This is likely 9-18 months from now

From data shown in the news media, it appears that the growth of new cases has slowed, and it appears that with being very cautious, we can resume meeting in our lodges on July 1, 2020. It is important to recognize that we are not returning to what would be considered a meeting prior to the first of this year.

Having this understanding we need take actions that will allow us to operate our lodges in a safe and responsible manner. It should be obvious that even with the most stringent restrictions and attention to detail we cannot and will not eliminate all risk of spreading the virus. We hope that the actions we take as of now will reduce the risk of being infected.

In order to lay down guidelines for meeting, it is important to understand a little bit about the virus to help prevent transmission. There are many questions, but these four points below can help confirm the reasoning behind the needed preventative measures.

- COVID-19 is spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Virus-carrying airborne droplets can remain in the air or on surfaces even after the ill person is no longer near.
- People might have the virus as carriers and never did reveal symptoms. This is called being asymptomatic. Asymptomatic transmission may occur and has contributed to a limited amount of transmission of COVID-19 infections. People can shed the virus before they have symptoms, but this is generally less than individuals with symptoms.
- Current evidence suggests that novel coronavirus may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials. Cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces followed by

disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in households and community settings.

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other areas where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

Any questions and feedback about the following information below are highly solicited and should be emailed to the Grand Secretary to be sent to the Grand Master for clarification.

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### **What are the primary regulations for our lodge?**

Federal, state and local counties or communities may have specific laws pertaining to group meetings. These are to be followed to the letter.

Edicts from the Grand Master of Wisconsin are to be adhered to until rescinded, amended or expired.

Wisconsin Masonic Code governs in all Masonic matters.

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### **What are the rules for meeting?**

As for now, using on-line services as before is highly recommended. There is no way to eliminate the risk of catching or passing on the virus when meeting in person. Anytime a meeting can take place without being tiled, then meeting virtually should be the communication means.

Wearing of masks before entering the lodge building is highly recommended. Sometimes people forget and this would help prevent any spread of the virus if accidentally the loss of six feet separation might occur.

Taking the temperature of all who enter the building is highly recommended. A “No Touch” forehead thermometer can be acquired for about \$70.

Have hand sanitizer available at the door and encourage the brothers to use it.

Anyone showing signs of infection should be asked to leave and not allowed to enter the meeting. Recommend to the individual that he should be tested. A follow-up phone call would be appropriate the next day to check up on him.

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### **Amended Portion of the Edict**

~~At this time, meals are not to be served at regular meetings.~~

*The meal restriction is no longer in effect providing the guidelines listed are followed:*

- *All counter tops in the kitchen and dining area will be sanitized using a Clorox Wipe bleach based similar product or with a bleach and water mixture.*
- *Catering of food is preferred but not required.*
- *Hand washing will be done on a frequent basis.*
- *All food preparation will be done with kitchen staff wearing face masks and gloves.*
- *All food not catered in must be cooked and prepared on the lodge property. No food shall be brought in from outside the lodge facility unless it is supplied by a licensed caterer.*
- *No potluck suppers are to be planned or served.*

- *No serve yourself buffets. The dinners must be plated by staff wearing gloves and face masks with the assembled plates given to the diner. All diners must be wearing face masks while receiving their dinner. The face mask can be removed while eating. Anyone not eating or drinking will wear a face mask; this includes the serving line.*
- *For fundraising event, if possible, use a drive up outside the lodge for take-out meals.*
- *For meals inside the lodge, table seating should be set with social distancing in mind.*

Drinking fountains must be shut off. Have bottled water available.

As Masons greeting each other with a hug or handshake is common and automatic. During this time, eliminate these forms of contact which includes fist bumps or elbow bumps. If social distancing of 6 feet is adhered to, these forms of greeting will be difficult and help us to remember the no-contact rule.

Sanitizing is a must. All surfaces should be sanitized before being used and before leaving; some items would include officer rods, square and compasses, the Sacred Book of Laws, Altar, doorknobs, etc. Take Aprons used at the meeting home to be washed.

When Lodges are allowed to convene for regular meetings, they will be opened in the first degree. This would also include business meetings.

Consent agendas will not be distributed or made available. All minutes, communications, and reports will be read. No roster book will be used for signing in. Attendance will be taken by roll call and recorded by the Lodge Secretary. This is important in case a brother contracts the virus and a list of who he came in contact with is needed.

Minutes and reports can also be sent ahead of time by email.

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### **Degree Work**

No degree work will be performed at this time other than candidates taking their in-lodge examination.

No Masonic Day of Light classes will be scheduled at this time.

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### **Building Use**

Two days of non-use is recommended between Masonic building activities.

It is recommended that Lodges permitting non-Masonic use or rent of their buildings engage with renters or lessees about the safe use of the facility. It may be helpful to request an amendment to an existing lease that requires cleaning and sanitizing after an event, or to add the ability to charge for the work.

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### **Personal Protective Equipment**

Lodges should first seek to source personal protective equipment (PPE), in the form of items like masks and hand sanitizer, in their communities. Consult with your local hospital, medical clinic, pharmacy, or a church to find a PPE vendor in your area.

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**Amendments**

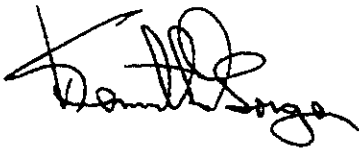
Finally, this is intended to be a living document as conditions and requirements seems to change with little notice. If members of our Craft discover resources and recommendations that would both improve this policy and increase the safety of the members of this Fraternity, they are strongly encouraged to submit those resources to the Grand Lodge Secretary for immediate consideration.

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Given under my Hand and Seal of the Grand Lodge

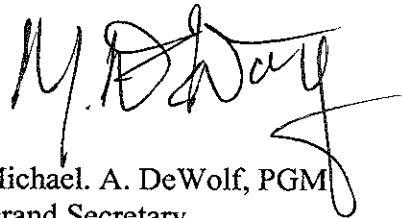
This 6<sup>th</sup> Day of June 2020 AD, 6020 AL, Dousman, Wisconsin

*Revised this 15<sup>th</sup> Day of September 2020 AD, 6020 AL, Dousman, Wisconsin*



Kenneth C. Gorgen  
Grand Master

Attest:



Michael A. DeWolf, PGM  
Grand Secretary

