



Barry V. Cundiff  
Grand Master 2020-21

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## EDICT -2/18/2021 – Return to Work

WHEREAS, The infection levels in the State of Missouri have started to decline to levels that many health professionals consider to decrease risk of infection in an environment that is using accepted safety guidelines and using safe protocols

WHEREAS, While resuming activities, one must keep in mind that the situation is still unknown and volatile, and could worsen at any time.

WHEREAS, The members of the Masonic Fraternity have been limiting their risks of exposure for over a year, and are anxious about resuming activities in their lodges

NOW THEREFORE, under the authority of Section 2.010(k) of the By-Laws of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Missouri as Grand Master, I hereby issue the following Edict:

The following EDICTS are rescinded as of the effective date of this edict:

- EDICT 01.27.2021 from MWB Barry V. Cundiff Grand Master
- EDICT 11.18.2020 from MWB Barry V. Cundiff Grand Master
- EDICT 8.27.2020 from MWB Stanton T. Brown, II Grand Master (Indefinite Extension of Closure)
- EDICT 6.26.2020 from MWB Stanton T. Brown, II Grand Master \*UPDATED\*
- EDICT 4.24.2020 from MWB Stanton T. Brown, II Grand Master
- EDICT 3.25.2020 from MWB Stanton T. Brown, II Grand Master \*EXPIRED 4.24.2020\*
- EDICT 3.11.2020 from MWB Stanton T. Brown, II Grand Master

The conditions, restrictions and permissions of this Edict are effective as of **March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021** and will remain in full force and effect indefinitely, unless canceled or modified by future order, and all dispensations issued pursuant to this Edict remain in full force and effect.

Lodges or groups of members have permission immediately to practice ritual outside of a tiled meeting of a lodge with or without the presence of the Grand Lecturer, a Regional Grand Lecturer, or any District Deputy Grand Lecturer.

A Lodge Masters still has the ability to reschedule or cancel lodge meetings if he feels that there is a risk of infection to the members of the lodge and/or to comply with any federal, state, county, and/or local municipality restrictions that could affect the ability of lodges to meet, by using the Blanket Dispensation issued on 1/27/2021.

Meetings may now be held in all three degrees as governed by Section 7.060 of the Grand Lodge Constitution & Bylaws.

Lodges may now confer all three degrees of Freemasonry, with the following mandatory revisions and following the enclosed recommended protocols.

The time for the completion of any step of the degree process pursuant to Sections 15.150 and 15.160 for any petitioner, candidate, Entered Apprentice, or Fellowcraft will now automatically be extended by one (1) year.

Requests to hold Chance to Advance events will not be considered at this time.

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## Conditions for Degree Conferral

- 1) The lodge MUST comply with all Federal, State, County, and Municipal/City laws, directives, ordinances, and mandates. This includes any restrictions on meeting attendance size, meeting length, meeting location, or any other particulars that may be specified for gathering by any of these governmental entities including the wearing of masks and safely social distancing from each other.
- 2) The candidate and those participating in the degree must be aware of the possible risk of exposure to COVID-19 during the conferral of the degree and consent to participate, and the conferral of the degree implicitly acknowledges consent by all parties. No coercion is to be used on the candidate to appear or for participation in conferring a degree. If the candidate or any brother is concerned about exposure, the degree is to be rescheduled and no ill will is to be demonstrated towards any candidate or brother that declines to participate.
- 3) Each candidate must be presented in freshly laundered candidate apparel. Under no condition can candidate apparel be re-used without first being laundered.
- 4) A disposal blindfold or sleeping mask will be provided by the lodge to each candidate for each degree. A blindfold may only be used once, for a single candidate, for a single degree; and then the blindfold is to be disposed.
- 5) A personal copy of a Volume of Sacred Law must be given to the candidate by the Lodge to use for his degree work, or a candidate may provide his own Volume of Sacred Law. Under no condition can a Volume of Sacred Law be used by more than one candidate.
- 6) If there is a resurgence of the virus, stricter conditions could be enacted or a “Suspend Work” order could be issued, which will have the same authority as an Edict, and lodges will suspend degree work immediately. These orders will be sent to lodge secretaries via the lodge e-mail and posted on the membership portal. It is the responsibility of the lodge secretary to ensure that they monitor the issuance of any orders.
- 7) Failure to follow any of the afore mentioned conditions for degree conferral will be considered a direct violation of the orders of the Grand Master and may subject the lodge to disciplinary action, up to and including arrest of the lodge charter.

This Edict shall remain in full force and effect until otherwise modified by further Order of the Grand Master.



Barry V. Cundiff  
Grand Master



## **Return to Work – Recommended Protocols**

These recommended protocols are provided to assist a lodge in making decisions to reduce the risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus and protect the health and safety of the lodge membership as well as the new candidate during the conferral of degrees. While these procedures require greater attention to detail for conferring degrees, you, your brothers, and the candidate and soon to be new brother are worth the extra precaution.

The conferral of a degree is voluntary for all parties, and no one will be ordered to participate in a degree, or receive a degree, against their own will or judgment. The conferral of a degree implicitly acknowledges adherence to all aspects of the edict for returning to work.

### **Safer Members**

- a) DO NOT GUESS! If there is any question about any recommendation or restriction detailed by this procedure, do not proceed. Contact your DDGM for clarification well before the actual conferral date.
- b) Above all, if you suspect that you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or you are not feeling well or are exhibiting any possible illness symptoms, even if you have not been diagnosed or tested positive for COVID-19, PLEASE DO NOT COME TO A LODGE MEETING!
- c) Remember, if you ignore your condition, or do not recognize that you might be ill, you could be putting other brothers at-risk, or at least making them feel uncomfortable by not following standard isolation protocol. The Worshipful Master always has the prerogative to exclude any member from attending if he feels that their behavior disrupts the proper working or harmony of the lodge. (Section 25.040.)
- d) A copy of these protocols and the edict for returning to work will be available for reference at all lodge meetings.

### **Safer Lodge**

- a) The lodge MUST comply with all Federal, State, County, and Municipal/City laws, directives, ordinances, and mandates. This includes any restrictions on meeting attendance size, meeting length, meeting location, or any other particulars that may be specified for gathering by any of these governmental entities including the wearing of masks and safely social distancing from each other.
- b) Limit all pre- and post-meeting gatherings and minimize social gatherings to prevent unnecessary contact.
- c) Set an agenda and limit the time that the lodge is open. Consider that the meeting only includes the opening, closing and the amount of time it takes to confer the degree. All extraneous business is discouraged.

### **Safer Degree**

- a) The candidate and those participating in the degree must be aware of the possible risk of exposure to COVID-19 during the conferral of the degree and consent to participate, and participation implies consent. No coercion is to be used on the candidate to appear or for participation in conferring a degree. If the candidate or any brother is

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concerned about exposure, the degree is to be rescheduled and no ill will is to be demonstrated towards any candidate or brother that declines to participate.

- b) If available, a DDGM or DDGL, or other Grand Lodge Officer is recommended to be present.
- c) One degree conferral per meeting is recommended, two maximum.
- d) If government authorities require attendance records for contact tracing, the Worshipful Master, or his appointee, will ensure that ALL members are required to provide contact information on a dated register form (sample provided- Example: Print Legibility Member Name, member phone #, member email) to facilitate contact tracing if someone in attendance is determined to be infectious. The lodge secretary will be responsible for keeping these completed forms in his possession in case contact tracing needs to be done. Any reported infection and activation of contact tracing must be communicated to the Grand Lodge office and noted in the next meeting minutes.
- e) All attendees are obligated to contact the secretary of a lodge they attended if they start to exhibit any symptoms or are diagnosed with any significant illness including COVID-19 within 14 days of that meeting date.

### **Safer Sanitation**

- a) The Lodge should provide face masks for all members and candidates present if they do not have their own. If required by government entities, masks MUST be worn by all officers on the lodge floor during a degree conferral.
- b) The Lodge should provide disinfectant dispensers located throughout the lodge.
- c) The Lodge should disinfect all hard surfaces that will be touched by any officer or candidate during a degree conferral ceremony (including but not limited to inner-door knocker, gavels, columns, rods, SW Tool, working tools, altar top)
- d) The Lodge should disinfect or replace any soft surfaces that can be safely cleaned (including but not limited to aprons, altar top, cable tow, sandals, kneeling pillow)
- e) The Lodge MUST provide an unused freshly laundered or dry cleaned candidate's uniform for each candidate. At no time shall a candidate uniform be used more than once without the uniform being laundered. (See edict)
- f) The Lodge MUST provide a disposable blindfold (Sometimes called a sleeping mask, available at many Dollar Stores and Amazon). Following the degree conferral, the blindfold will be properly disposed of in a separate, tied, waste bag. No blindfold is to be used more than once.

### **Safer Conferral**

- a) The clothing worn by the candidate should only be handled by the candidate himself with instructions on how it is to be worn.
- b) All officers that will physically touch the candidate will apply disinfectant to their hands at least immediately before the start and immediately after the completion of the degree conferral. Wearing disposable gloves does NOT eliminate the need to disinfect as putting on and taking off gloves not using proper sanitary procedure is as hazardous for spreading infection as not using gloves at all.
- c) The candidate MUST use his own Volume of Sacred Law when kissing it during the degree work. This can be provided by the Lodge or one that is brought by the candidate. The officers overseeing this act need to consult ahead of time on how to handle the logistics so that the candidate kisses the proper item. Remember, he is blindfolded at this point. (see edict)