



Covid-19 Protocols for Physical Meetings

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The requirements in this guide apply to physical meetings until further notice. The over-riding intent is to ensure the safety of all present by maintaining proper social distancing and avoiding points of contact. Chapters must also abide by other civic and Masonic regulations, in particular any limitations on the allowable number of attendees.

Per the latest edict issued by MW Robert Monacelli, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New Jersey, the permitted attendance in our Masonic Temples as of March 19, 2021 is 25 persons per room, regardless of the maximum capacity of the room. The serving of food before or after meetings or functions is also permitted.

The ritualistic changes noted in this guide are discussed in the context of our secret work: opening and closing chapter meetings and conducting degree work. The requirements and ritual changes also apply to all public ceremonies where appropriate.

It is critical to coordinate with your sponsoring body and your Lodge building management. Most of our hosts have multiple organizations meeting in their buildings. There will likely be best practices established for building occupancy and the use of sanitizers and cleaners and so on to prevent damage. Just one example, many of our buildings are furnished with antique or vintage items that might be damaged by the use of sanitizers or disinfectants not appropriate for those pieces. If we can't use sanitizer to clean Secretary's desk, our Scribe can sit somewhere else

1. Perform temperature checks on all people entering the building.
2. Provide hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes, etc.
3. Before each meeting, apply disinfectant spray or wipes to all seats and stations (podiums, Scribe's desk, etc) that will be used. It is critical to coordinate this with your building management.
4. Require all those entering the building to wear masks, unless there is a medical condition that prohibits a person from wearing a mask.
5. Require all who enter the building and Chapter room to apply hand sanitizer. To be clear, hand sanitizer should be used before entering the Chapter room, even though the person used hand sanitizer upon entering the building.

6. Maintain social distancing in all areas of the building, including the Chapter rooms. Members should sit at least 3-4 seats apart from one another.
7. If a visitor needs to verify his DeMolay membership, do so without physical contact. For example, have the young man describe the grip, rather than give the grip.
8. An advisor shall maintain an attendance register for each meeting to include the names of all youth and adult attendees, and a mobile phone number and/or email address for each person. This is in case the chapter needs to facilitate contact tracing.
9. If you keep an attendance book that members and visitors personally sign, everyone signing the book must use hand sanitizer before and after doing so.
10. Opening and Closing - Eliminate forming the triangle.
11. The Marshall shall conduct by leading. He should not physically escort any person.
12. Opening Ceremony
 - a. Eliminate all contact points, including handshakes
 - b. Eliminate collection of the Word of the Day and Word of Emulation
 - c. Officers involved with opening & closing the Bible, placing and removing the schoolbooks, lighting and extinguishing the candles and presenting the Flag shall use hand sanitizer before and after touching these items.
13. Degree work - "Short Form" or traditional:
 - a. If there are multiple candidates, choose one to represent the group throughout the Degree. The remaining candidates will be seated.
 - b. The Senior Deacon will not physically escort the candidate/brother. The candidate/brother should be instructed to follow the Senior Deacon.
 - c. For the obligations only, lead the remaining candidates west of the altar, maintaining proper social distancing. Eliminate the placing of hands on other's shoulder.
 - d. Eliminate kissing the holy book.
 - e. Eliminate the handshake after the obligations.
 - f. Deacons will not demonstrate the grips.
 - g. The Senior Deacon and candidate should maintain proper social distance from the Preceptors and Councilors. This may be accomplished two ways.
 - i. If the lodge room is large enough for the Senior Deacon and candidate to maintain a six foot distance from the preceptors, the Senior Deacon should place the Crown of Youth on the preceptor stand and step back. The Preceptor may then proceed to place the jewel on the Crown of Youth.
 - ii. If the lodge room does not allow for the above, place a pedestal inside the circle formed by the seven candles as allowed by the Ritual of Secret Work. The Senior Deacon should place the Crown of Youth on the pedestal and lead the candidate West of the Altar. In turn, the Preceptors advance to the pedestal to place the jewel and deliver their work.
 - h. For the DeMolay Degree drama:
 - i. Guards should escort the prisoners by leading the. Guards should not physically escort the prisoners.
 - ii. When reentering the room and when departing at the end of the drama, DeMolay should use a crutch, badly limp and stumble, to demonstrate that he has been severely injured. The guards should not carry or support DeMolay. Chapters may craft a vintage looking crutch with two pieces of 1x1 square doweling, a screw, and maybe some scrap fabric. Or a modern crutch may be used.
14. When the gathering has concluded, all areas used by the Chapter's members, advisors and guests should be sprayed or wiped down with disinfectant.