



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

GRAND SECRETARY

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Covid-19 Update April 08 2020

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Brethren,

As we all continue to observe our isolation and social distancing practices we trust that you and your families remain healthy.

Your Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, COO and Grand Secretary are meeting regularly to discuss issues and concerns that arise as the situation unfolds.

We know that many questions arise, especially the longer the absence from labour continues and we are doing our best to stay ahead of the situation. Many issues that arise relate to the Constitution and to existing policies and procedures. Making changes is not always an easy task. Many circumstances may point to a simple solution but under the covers there are hidden ramifications, short and long term.

We hope that you will be patient as we try and find the best possible solutions in the shortest time and then communicate these solutions to you.

Temporary Policies new this week (Apr 08)

This week, there are several items to draw your attention to.

Requests for Grand Lodge Appointments:

Effective immediately all requests for Grand Lodge Appointments have been put on hold. You are asked NOT to submit any further requests until directed to do so. Once we return to our labours requests can be submitted in due form and will be processed once received.

Semi-Annual Returns January – June 2020:

The semi-annual returns and payment for the period January 01- June 30 2020 shall be delivered to Grand Lodge as usual on or before July 08 2020 as per the Constitution.

Requests for Dispensation:

You are asked to NOT submit any requests for dispensation until directed to do so. Requests may be submitted in due form once we return to our labours.

Invitations to attend:

Invitations for the Grand Master / Deputy Grand Master to attend have been put on hold. You are asked NOT to submit any further requests until directed to do so. Requests may be submitted in due form once we return to our labours.

Lodge Insurance Coverage:

If our Lodge premises are vacant for several months, what are the insurance implications?

We have checked with our Grand Lodge Insurance Broker (FCA Insurance Brokers) and he has informed us that all insurance policies have a clause about checking on a building during the regular heating season – failure to do so generally results in no coverage for the damage done as a result of a burst frozen pipe (unless some proper precautions were taken). As we are past the “regular” heating season this does not apply.

For the temple corporations around the province, that are insured under the FCA Cornerstone Program, there is no occupancy requirement – other than the one noted above about frozen pipes in the winter. ‘Vacant’ has a very specific meaning with respect to insurance – it is when a building has been vacated by the occupant or owner and there is no intention to return. Based on the current situation none of the buildings would be considered to be vacant.

If you are NOT insured under the Grand Lodge FCA Cornerstone program, we suggest that you check with your insurer as each policy may be different.

Virtual Meetings:

Additional questions are being received related to holding virtual ‘meetings’. The issue of virtual ‘get togethers’ was discussed in the April 02 message. No changes have been made in that policy. Please ensure that any virtual ‘get togethers’ you plan conform to those directives.

College of Freemasonry Courses:

Have you ever wanted to take the College of Freemasonry courses and now finally you have the time? Due to the present circumstances of isolation and social distancing, the College of Freemasonry is offering the College Courses free of charge until we resume our labours. The enrollment form is on the Grand Lodge website. Why not spend at least part of your day making your daily advancement in masonic knowledge?

Masonic Community related efforts:

Brethren, we have had a number of requests related to getting our members involved in community type activities. Examples include setting up a food bank drop off at a lodge hall, helping out a Blood Donor clinic, offering rides to those still working and in need of transportation.

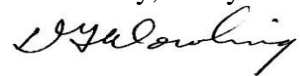
Regrettably these activities in one way or the other do not follow the Provincial health guidelines. For example instead of hosting a Food Bank drop off it would be much better to encourage your brethren to go directly to the food bank – the food bank employees have already taken the precautions and have the training needed to deal with the circumstances. This same logic applies to offering rides to others. There is as much risk riding in our cars as there would be in taking an Uber or taxi ride. We could however offer to pick up and deliver individually to someone shut in who does not have transportation.

Thus, while we support the sentiments behind these suggestions we really cannot support them. We can however, as we already have done, encouraged all our brethren to contribute individually where and how they can.

The overriding, all important factor is that our provincial health organizations and our government says we need to STAY HOME.

Note that the updating of the above changes as well as the need for additional changes may be required and will be communicated as needed.

Fraternally, Garry

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. Garry Dowling".

D. Garry Dowling,
Grand Secretary