

Part #3

Briefing Guide for Investigators

The First and Second Line Signers (at least one of which must be from your lodge) have the initial responsibility to consider the character of the potential candidate. After that step, unless circumstances warrant the Master waiving the investigation (with the consent of the lodge), each potential candidate must be investigated by three Brothers (with a minimum of two reports to allow a ballot).

We have a responsibility to ensure that each candidate is right for Masonry and that Masonry is right for each candidate. The interview process should never be a formality; it is a critical step in assessing the appropriateness of the candidate to our fraternity. It is important that the candidate be a man that is “worthy to be taken by the right hand” as a brother.

The individual’s petition and contact information is normally filled out by the Secretary on the Investigating Committee Report Form (developed by Grand Lodge,) and distributed to the 3 Brothers. This form has been modified by some lodges. There are suggested Interview Forms available on the Grand Lodge website that provides guidance on conducting a successful investigation.

Masonic code is very clear about the Masters responsibilities when it comes to investigating a potential candidate. The purpose of the secrecy of the investigation members is so that they can feel free to give an honest evaluation. Regardless of what “form” is used and how the investigation occurs, each member on the investigating committee has the principle responsibility to gain enough information to recommend the potential candidate for membership or not.

The investigation also offers a strong opportunity to continue the process of making a connection with the prospective candidate.

A thorough and well-conducted investigation is critical to a successful Masonic experience:

1. Masonry seeks men that are “moral and upright before God and of good repute in the world”; the candidate and Masonry must be a good fit.
2. Masonry has expectations regarding a brother’s conduct. It would be better identify problems before a man becomes a mason, then have to conduct a Masonic inquiry and have to suspend or expel him later.

3. Candid and personal questions will be asked and both the investigator and the prospective candidate need to understand why, and that the information is only used to determine if he is “worthy” to be taken by the hand as a “Brother”.
4. Honest answers are important
 - a. No given answer will necessarily preclude a candidate from joining.
 - b. Enough detail of previous problems or concerns is needed to inform the Brothers so that all can properly assess the suitability of the candidate becoming a brother.
5. While you should not ask how the prospective candidate worships God, try to find out if the Holy Bible is an acceptable “Volume of Sacred Law” for him. If not, you should ask if the candidate can provide his “Volume of Sacred Law.” Ensure your lodge is prepared.