May 20, 2020

Brethren:

The Grand Lodge of Minnesota joins organizations around the world in attempting to ascertain how best to phase a safe return to operations in this COVID-19 environment. We have been especially blessed to have a committee of volunteers considering recommendations for that safe return. Their work follows, and its basis comes from varied sources like the Centers for Disease Control, the Minnesota Department of Health, other governmental bodies, and also from organizations that, operationally, bear a distinct resemblance to ours. I put my hand to this list, and give its requirements the power of edict in this Jurisdiction to take effect on June 1st.

**GRAND LODGE OF MINNESOTA**

**Beginning June 1st – A Return to In-Person Masonry**

**General Information:** The COVID virus is contagious in an infected person for as many as three days before a person feels any symptoms. Current tests results are not 100% reliable. Therefore, these recommendations for a return to Lodge activity are meant for the safety of the members of the Craft.

**I. General Regulations**

(1) Orders from the federal, state and local governments are to be followed.

(2) Edicts from the Grand Master of Minnesota are to be adhered to.

(3) The Minnesota Masonic Code governs all Masonic matters.

Questions regarding anything not covered by these three General Regulations are to be submitted through the Grand Secretary to the Grand Master for his consideration.

**II. Meetings**

(1) Electronic meetings not involving any part of the Ritual, or not needing a tyler, are recommended and encouraged for social interaction, education (webinars), officer planning meetings, and committee meetings, etc. Examples of electronic platforms to use for this purpose are: Zoom, Group Meet, Facebook Messenger Rooms, Google Hangouts, Skype, and Webex. Regular tyled lodge meetings cannot be held electronically, and business that must be conducted by lodge vote is covered case-by-case under Grand Master dispensation.

(2) In-person meetings must comply with all criteria on the Lodge Meeting checklist, including the current MN Department of Health’s recommended group size limits.

(3) Until further notice, masks must be worn before entering a Lodge building.
(4) If a person shows any symptoms of infection, they should not come to any meeting. A temperature check is highly recommended on entering a facility.

(5) Meals are not to be served at regular meetings until further notice.

(6) Surfaces to be touched should be sanitized before using, and then again before leaving the building. Meetings should be able to be held every third day safely without additional efforts.

(7) Have hand sanitizer at the door, and encourage its use.

(8) A social distance of six feet is to be maintained. Handshakes, elbow-bumps, or other forms of physical contact are prohibited.

(9) When Lodges are allowed to convene for regular meetings, they will be opened on the First Degree. Attendance will be taken by roll call, and not by the use of a communal sign-in sheet or shared writing material. As it becomes available, consideration should be given to using Grand View scanning to take attendance. Minutes can be sent through Grand View, or by email, or by posting, or be read and approved at the meeting. Do not hand-distribute copies.

III. Degree Work

NO DEGREE WORK SHALL BE PERFORMED BY A LOCAL LODGE.

Regional One-Day-to-Masonry conferrals are being considered with actors as principal candidates, participants screened to minimize risk, and held in venues that allow space for social distancing. Other considerations are being given to Area-wide, single presentation Degrees that would eliminate day-long events and thereby the need for eating.

IV. Building Use

(1) Two days of non-use is required between Masonic building activities.

(2) It is recommended that Lodges permitting the 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.

V. 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, OES chapter, or church to find a PPE vendor in your area.

If supplies cannot be found in your community, it is possible to obtain PPE through the Grand Lodge office, though significant lead times may be required so please plan accordingly.
VII. 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 office for immediate consideration.

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There is one more member of the COVID committee I would like to thank. You. Your cheerful compliance with these regulations is our best hope to safeguard the Fraternity, our Minnesota Masonry, over this tempestuous sea of trouble.

Fraternal regards,

Ethan A. Seaberg
Grand Master