



**GRAND LODGE
FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS
OF WASHINGTON**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE TO ALL LODGES

Brethren,

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and based on the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Washington State Department of Health, on March 19, 2020, M.:W.: Brother Charles Wood ordered the postponement or cancellation of all in-person Masonic meetings, events and activities throughout the jurisdiction of Washington. His directives were effective through June 12, 2020.

While progress has been made in combating the spread of this disease, there is still no effective treatment or vaccine available. Further, the State of Washington is still under orders to practice social distancing, avoid large gatherings and avoid non-essential travel. I am aware that some counties have moved to Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Governor's Safe Start Washington four phase approach to recovery and reopening the State. However, several parts of the State are still not allowed to hold meetings of any size. We are all eager to meet again in-person.

Until further notice, all in-person meetings of Lodges in this Jurisdiction shall be cancelled. Further, this Directive encompasses all Masonic Bodies and groups in which a Mason must be in attendance. During this period, the following shall apply:

1. Payment of Lodge Expenses:

- All usual and customary bills for utilities, taxes, fees, and services that are normally acted upon by the Lodge can be approved with the consent of the Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- Approval of the payment of bills may be accomplished by telephone, email, video conferencing or other means.
- All decisions to pay these usual and customary bills shall be recorded by the Secretary and reported to the Lodge at the next Stated Communication.
- Expenditures for charitable purposes shall be considered usual and customary.

2. Temple Corporations: Temple corporations are encouraged to act in like manner as specified for the payment of Lodge expenses.

3. Masonic Funerals: Masonic Funerals may be conducted at the request of the family. However, all guidelines issued by Federal, State, and Local health authorities must be satisfied. Brothers who are considered at high-risk should not attend.

I, furthermore, direct:

1. **Washington Masonic Code, Section 14.07 B.L.:** Lodges will not be considered to have failed to meet due to neglect if the reason for not meeting was the directives issued by M.:W.: Brother Charles Wood, this Directive, or inclement weather.
2. **Use of Technology:** Lodges, Districts and other Masonic bodies are strongly encouraged to use video conferencing and other communication tools to stay in touch with their

members, conduct Masonic education and other non-esoteric matters. Many Lodges and Districts have been using these tools and it has been well-received.

3. **Esoteric Matters and the video conferencing:**

- One on One communications between a Mentor/Coach and a Brother preparing to advance to the next degree is allowed through video conferencing provided that both the Mentor/Coach and Brother have determined that platform is secure and the physical location of each is secure.
- One on One communications between Brothers to work on Opening, Closing or other Esoteric work is allowed through video conferencing provided that both Brothers have determined that platform is secure and the physical location of each is secure.
- No groups of three or more shall make use of the video conferencing to practice or conduct esoteric work.
- Recording of a video conference where esoteric matters are discussed is strictly prohibited.

The Executive Team continues to monitor the situation very closely and when it is safe to meet again, a further directive will be issued.

My Brothers, during this extraordinary time remember to reach out and contact your Brothers. Do what you are able to do assist those who need it. Remember our Gentle Craft has been in existence in its current form for over 300 years, long may it continue. We have survived hard times before and we will survive this.

Remember the Past, Visualize the Future.

Fraternally,



Chris Coffman
Grand Master
Free and Accepted Masons of Washington

cc: Grand Lodge Elected
Jurisprudence
Concordant and Appendant Bodies

