

CRAFT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. What does a Lodge do if the current Master does not want to remain in the Chair for another year and a special dispensation under the Temporary Emergency Measures is not available?

A1. The Master Elect, in his obligation, undertakes to fulfil his duties as Master “until the next regular period of election within this Lodge AND until a successor shall have been duly elected and installed in my stead”. The only way that a Master can vacate the chair, before his Mastership ends, is by resigning from the Lodge. In the present circumstances it is highly undesirable that he should take such a drastic step, and it is to be hoped that the Past Masters will take most of the burden of Mastership off his shoulders. The Master may invite any duly qualified Brother to occupy the Chair and carry out the work of the Lodge.

Q2. What does a Lodge do if, in the above circumstances, the current Master, is adamant and does resign from the Lodge?

A2. The Lodge cannot elect another Brother as Master. The Lodge will be summoned by the authority of the Senior Warden until the next Installation. Rule 119 lays down who is to preside in the Lodge.

Q3. The current Master is completing his second consecutive year in the chair, does the Lodge require a dispensation for him to serve for a third year?

A3. Yes, **unless** it has been impossible to hold a meeting to install a successor and the Lodge has chosen not to seek a dispensation under the Temporary Emergency Measures to elect and install a new Master.

Q4. The Lodge wishes to re-elect the current Master, but he is currently also the Master of another Lodge; is a dispensation required to enable him to serve for a second year?

A4. A dispensation, from the Grand Master, is required in order to install a Brother to serve simultaneously as Master of a second Lodge. Such a dispensation will usually have been granted previously, in which case no further dispensation will be required.

Q5. It has not been possible to elect the Lodge’s next Master in accordance with the Lodge’s by-laws, but the Installation has still to take place; what procedure must be followed?

A5. Now that the suspension has ended, Rule 106 allows a Master to be elected either (a) on the regular date of Installation, in which case the Master then elected must be installed at a further meeting held within five weeks of that date, or (b) at an emergency meeting held not less than three weeks before the date for the Installation. However, in the event that the Lodge re-elects its outgoing Master, no installation is required as he is already in the Chair, so he can **immediately** be proclaimed and proceed to invest his Officers. To put it a different way: if the Lodge intends to re-elect the current Master, there will be no need to hold an emergency meeting.

Q6. What is the quorum for a valid Lodge meeting?

A6. Five (excluding the Tyler and any candidate), of whom one must be an Installed Master, and two must be members of the Lodge concerned; it is not a requirement that the Installed Master be a member of the Lodge. If on the day of the meeting a quorum cannot be achieved, the meeting must be abandoned, and a note entered in the Minute Book. “The regular meeting of the Lodge on [day] [date] [month], [year] was duly called in accordance with the attached summons. Owing to the

continued effect of the Coronavirus pandemic the required number of Brethren to open the Lodge could not be assembled and the meeting was abandoned” is the wording suggested.

Q7. What is the quorum required to constitute a Board of Installed Masters?

A7. Three Installed Masters, of whom the Tyler may be one (but if so, a Master Mason must act temporarily as Tyler).

Q8. What if a Lodge wishes to meet but the Masonic Hall named in its by-laws cannot provide Covid-secure accommodation?

A8. The Lodge should make reasonable efforts to find a suitable alternative Masonic Hall for its meeting. If it proves impracticable, the meeting will have to be abandoned because it will obviously be impossible to achieve a quorum. A summons should, however, be issued – for a meeting at the regular Hall – against the possibility that it may be operational by the time of the meeting. If, once that has been done, it becomes clear to the Secretary that the number of apologies is such that a quorum will be unattainable, the meeting should be abandoned.

Q9. What happens if a Lodge’s Warrant is inaccessible because its regular place of meeting is closed?

A9. A temporary Warrant of Confirmation, in the form of a letter of authority, should **immediately** be sought via the Provincial Grand Secretary.

Q10. What happens if a Hall could not reopen immediately and so meetings that should have been held had to be abandoned; is there a duty to hold the meeting that could not proceed at some other time?

A10. An abandoned meeting cannot be rescheduled. Some items of business can be transacted at an emergency meeting (provided it is not business that may only be done at a regular meeting), or at the next regular meeting. If it was an Installation meeting that had to be abandoned, and the Master could not be installed within five weeks, the outgoing Master will continue in office.

Q11. A candidate for initiation was proposed and seconded at the last regular meeting before the suspension of meetings took effect; does the Lodge need to start the process all over again when meetings are resumed?

A11. No. Rule 159 requires a candidate to be balloted for at the **next** regular meeting. The natural meaning of “next regular meeting” is the next regular meeting to be held, not the next regular meeting due to be summoned.

Q12. The Lodge reaches its Centenary in three months’ time, but many of the members are showing a reluctance to attend in the present circumstances; can the celebration be postponed?

A12. There is no rule that requires a Centenary to be celebrated on or near to the anniversary itself, and therefore the celebration can be postponed until the situation improves.

Q13. If the Lodge is unable to meet for a significant period, how will that affect its entitlement to celebrate its Centenary in due course?

A13. The suspensions between 17 March and 17 July and during the month of November 2020, together with any de facto local suspension(s) resulting from Government restrictions, will be automatically be discounted, as constituting force majeure. Otherwise, a Lodge is only liable to lose its entitlement to a Centenary Warrant if it fails to meet for a whole year. Provided that the Lodge

has made all reasonable efforts to hold meetings, a longer period than a year may be disregarded by the Grand Master.

Q14. May Lodges revert to the traditional ritual for an Initiation and resume Raisings as soon as the Government approves the removal of the final restrictions associated with the pandemic?

A14. Not only may they; they must, since the modified ceremonies were introduced only to cope with social distancing. At this stage, however, it is too soon to say when social distancing will no longer be required.

Q15. During social distancing how should a Lodge be closed in full in the third degree if the Lodge wants to close in full?

A15. A full closing must be avoided so long as social distancing is in force.

Q16. If a Lodge considers that the proposed alterations to the ritual for a First Degree detract from the whole Masonic experience of an Initiation may it make its own amendments?

A16. Any alteration to the usual procedure is bound to detract from the ceremony. What has been circulated has been approved by the Pro Grand Master, the Deputy Grand Master, the Grand Director of Ceremonies and the Grand Secretary.