

GUIDANCE FOR THE RESUMPTION OF MEETINGS – ROYAL ARCH

General

1. As Chapters emerge from suspension or lockdown, the Scribe E of any Chapter that was due to meet during the period of the suspension or lockdown, but was unable to do so, must enter into the Chapter Minute Book a statement substantially in the following form: “As a result of [the suspension of Masonic meetings][and/or][Government restrictions], owing to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Chapter was unable to meet during the period from to””

2. Royal Arch Regulation 58 provides that there is no power to cancel a regular convocation of a Chapter. Unless a Chapter has placed itself into voluntary suspension under paragraphs 1 to 4 of the Temporary Emergency Measures for Covid-19, from 17 May 2021, a summons must be issued in accordance with the Chapter’s by-laws for every regular convocation that falls to be held after that date.

NOTE: If, when the summons has been issued, it becomes clear to the Scribe E that the number of apologies is such that a quorum will be unattainable, there will be no point in Companions making an unnecessary journey. He should therefore tell the members so, and then at the moment when the Chapter is due to be opened he may presume a lack of a quorum and treat the meeting as abandoned. However, the Scribe E must not merely assume that the members of the Chapter do not wish to meet.

3. Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Temporary Emergency Measures allow administrative business to be transacted by an audio/video conferencing facility during the time that a validly opened physical meeting has been called off. The provisions of those paragraphs must be followed strictly.

Missed Installations and Elections

4. Because of successive suspensions or lockdowns, and periods during which at least some Chapters were able to meet, the position may be complicated, and therefore in cases of doubt specific guidance should be sought from Province. The following paragraphs, however, should cover most situations. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that the Officers of a Chapter are appointed or elected to hold office for the period of one year only, from one Installation meeting until the next.

Election held – no Installation

5. The Royal Arch Regulations allow much more flexibility than the Rules in the Book of Constitutions, so that a Principal’s election does not lapse if he cannot be installed immediately. If the Principals elect could not be installed on the day for which the Chapter was or should have been summoned each of them must be installed at the first convocation he attends during the year for which he was elected, which may be an emergency convocation. If an emergency convocation is called for this (or any other) purpose, no dispensation is required as the Principals alone have the authority to call it. BUT if the convocation is held at a different venue from that named in the by-laws a dispensation will be required for that purpose.

6. Unless, therefore, the period for which the Principals were elected has expired, any Principal elect present must be installed, Officers must be invested, and an Installation Return for that year must then be submitted for both Province and Supreme Grand Chapter.

Missed Election – Installation Convocation able to take place

7. If the election convocation could not be held because of the suspension, a the election should take place next **regular** convocation to be held. Notice of the election must be given on the summons. The Principals so elected can be installed forthwith and, if so, will be deemed to fulfil the qualification for election to a higher Chair at the next regular election convocation. A Treasurer and a Janitor must be elected and invested with the other Officers, and Installation Returns must be submitted for both Province and Supreme Grand Chapter.

Both Election and Installation Meetings missed

8. At the next **regular** convocation to be held, elections must take place, Principals elect installed, Officers invested and Installation Returns submitted (all as in paragraph 7 above).

NOTE: Although a Principal elect may be installed at an emergency convocation, a Principal may only be elected at a REGULAR convocation. This does not mean that one or more emergency convocations cannot be held in the meantime in order to carry out exaltations; but in that event the Companions who previously held office as Principals must continue to act in those offices.

9. Because the Royal Arch Regulations make adequate provision for Principals to be elected and installed even though the regular days of election and installation have been missed, paragraphs 7 to 10 of the Temporary Emergency Measures do not apply in the Royal Arch.