



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following is a selection of questions and answers issued by Grand Lodge that relate to specific scenarios which may have arisen in your Lodge or Chapter as a result of the general suspension ordered by the Grand Master. Certain answers may not be ideal or what people wanted to hear; while the possibility cannot be ruled out that the Grand Lodge may enact some special measure to address the situation in which many Lodges will find themselves, it is too early to tell.

- 1) As Secretary of a Lodge, do I have to send a summons for every meeting that the bylaws require to be held during the time that all Lodge and Chapter meetings are suspended?**

Answer: No. The suspension, so long as it continues in effect, overrides the dates prescribed in the by-laws. When the general suspension comes to an end, as Secretary you should enter in the Minute Book words to the effect of "As a result of the suspension, owing to the Coronavirus pandemic, by the MW The Grand Master of all meetings from 17 March 2020 to [the date when the suspension is lifted] the Lodge was unable to meet."

- 2) As Secretary of a Lodge, what do I have to do once the suspension comes to an end?**

Answer: Having entered the words in the preceding answer in the Minute Book, you should start to send out summonses – but be prepared for such meetings to be abandoned if a quorum cannot be achieved.

- 3) As it has not been possible to hold the Installation meeting, do I need to submit an Installation Return?**

Answer: Rule 151 requires the Secretary to make the Return to the Grand Secretary immediately after the Installation of the Master. If it has not been possible for an Installation to take place, no Return is necessary.

- 4) My Lodge has elected a Master for the ensuing year, but was not able to install him before the Grand Master suspended all meetings; can he be installed once the suspension is lifted?**

Answer: As the Rules stand, No. The provisions of Rule 108 mean that the current Master continues in office until the end of the period for which the Master Elect was elected (i.e. next year).

- 5) It has not been, nor will not be possible to elect my Lodge's next Master in accordance with the Lodge's by-laws, and the Installation is due to take place before the suspension ends. Can a Master be elected and installed after the suspension is over?**

Answer: Subject to the possibility mentioned in the preamble, the provision in Rule 106 for the election of a Master in the case of a missed election cannot be implemented, and accordingly the current Master will continue in office.



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- 6) It has not been, nor will not be possible to elect my Lodge's next Master in accordance with the Lodge's by-laws. Can a Master be elected after the suspension and before our Installation Meeting in the new season?**

Answer: Yes. The provisions of Rule 106 apply. In most cases this will require the Lodge to hold an emergency meeting at least 3 weeks prior to the Installation Meeting.

- 7) Our 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?**

Answer: No. The opening words of Rule 115 "Except when required to by Rule 107 or Rule 108" make it plain that events over which the Lodge has no control save the need for a dispensation.

- 8) The Master Elect had invited me to be a Warden (for the first time), but if he is not installed, will I be eligible for election as Master if I am invested as a Warden later in the year?**

Answer: It is probably unlikely that the current Master Elect will wish to stand aside in your favour, but if you should be invested as a Warden during the year, a Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master can grant a dispensation under Rule 109 to render you eligible for election. (Note: Such a dispensation can only be issued to qualify a Brother with short service as a Warden, not one with no service as a Warden.)

- 9) My Lodge's by-laws permit the exclusion under Rule 181 of a Brother who is more than six months in arrears with his subscription, but it will not be possible to hold the necessary ballot because the subscription year ends before meetings can be resumed. Can we ballot when meetings resume and backdate the exclusion to the end of the subscription year, so that the Lodge does not become liable for a further year's dues and MCF contribution in respect of him?**

Answer: Subject to the possibility mentioned in the preamble, No. But the Treasurer does have time to persuade him to meet his obligations and resign in good standing. (And Rule 127 deals with the consequences to the Brother of being excluded.)

- 10) A candidate for initiation was proposed and seconded at the last regular meeting before the suspension of meetings took effect. Do we need to start the process all over again when meetings are resumed?**

Answer: 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.



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12) Can a Lodge make a donation to a charity, when it is unable to meet and vote on the matter in open Lodge?

Answer: It is probably better that it does not do so, but if the matter is a case of emergency and the Lodge has a by-law in the form of that in the standard model, the Master has power to authorise a payment and report it to the Lodge at its next regular meeting. (Even so a Master would be wise to consult fairly widely with the members before exercising his power.)

13) My Chapter elected its Principals for the ensuing year, but was not able to install them before the First Grand Principal, in his capacity as Grand Master, suspended all meetings; can they be installed once the suspension is lifted?

Answer: Yes. The Royal Arch Regulations are much more flexible in this respect, and Regulation 48 provides that any Principal not installed on the regular date shall be installed at the next Convocation of the Chapter at which he may be present. The next Convocation could be an emergency convocation (for which no dispensation is required provided that it is held at the Chapter's regular place of meeting – Regulation 59).

14) I am currently Third Principal Elect of my Chapter (for the first time). If I cannot be installed on the regular date will I be eligible in a year's time to progress to Second Principal?

Answer: Yes, provided that a year will have elapsed since you were elected as Third Principal and have been installed before the next election is held. Even if you cannot satisfy the latter condition, the Grand Superintendent has power under Regulation 50 to grant a dispensation.

15) It has not been, nor will not be possible to elect my Chapter's Principals for next year in accordance with its by-laws, and the Installation is due to take place before the suspension ends. Can Principals be elected and installed after the suspension is over?

Answer: Yes. The Royal Arch Regulations make no provision for failure to elect Principals and therefore under Regulation 73 the Book of Constitutions applies. Rule 106 provides that the situation is dealt with in the same way as if the Master Elect had died etc., which in turn refers you back to Regulation 54, which allows Principals to be elected (of which notice must be given on the summons); and they can be installed forthwith.

16) Will the suspension of meetings affect my Lodge or Chapter's entitlement to a Centenary or Bi-Centenary in due course?

Answer: No. There are many precedents for an enforced break in continuity of working being disregarded by the Grand Master or Grand Chapter when deciding whether to grant a Warrant or Charter.