

UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND

TEMPORARY EMERGENCY MEASURES for COVID-19

These provisions shall come into effect in England on 7 October 2020 at 12.01 a.m. (save in the case of Regulations 7 to 10, which shall come into effect on 15 February 2021 at 12.01 a.m.) and in Wales when circumstances so require, and shall cease to apply after 31 December 2021 or such earlier date as the Grand Master, or the Pro Grand Master on his behalf, shall direct.

Temporary Suspension by a Lodge of its Meetings

1. The Master of a Lodge (or, in the case of a Lodge to which Rule 110 applies, the Deputy Master) may, with the written agreement of not less than two-thirds of the subscribing members of the Lodge, give notice to the Metropolitan or Provincial Grand Master having jurisdiction over the Lodge (or, in the case of an unattached Lodge in London subject to the direct jurisdiction of the Grand Master, the Grand Secretary) stating that it is the wish of a majority of the members that the Lodge suspend its meetings voluntarily for a period of not more than three months as specified in the notice.

2. The Metropolitan or Provincial Grand Master or the Grand Secretary as the case may be shall as soon as practicable acknowledge receipt of the notice. On receipt of such acknowledgement the voluntary suspension shall take effect and the Lodge shall not meet again until the end of the period specified in the notice, unless the Metropolitan or Provincial Grand Master or the Grand Secretary as the case may be, on receipt of a further notice sent by the Master (or Deputy Master) with the written agreement of not less than two-thirds of the subscribing members of the Lodge, permits otherwise.

3. For the purposes of paragraphs 1 and 2:

(a) The Master (or Deputy Master) of his own motion may, and on the written request of not fewer than five subscribing members of the Lodge shall, write to all the subscribing members of the Lodge with a view to ascertaining whether a majority of not less than two-thirds agree to his giving notice to the Metropolitan or Provincial Grand Master or the Grand Secretary as the case may be notifying him of the wish of a majority of the members to suspend meetings of the Lodge or seeking permission to resume such meetings before the end of the specified period.

(b) The written agreement of a member may be given either in a letter, sent by post or delivered by hand, bearing his signature, or by an e-mail communication. Such a letter may be signed by more than one member, but any e-mail communication shall be treated as the agreement only of the member from whose e-mail address it is sent.

(c) The notice to the Metropolitan or Provincial Grand Master or the Grand Secretary (as the case may be and whether notifying him of the wish of a majority of the members to suspend meetings or seeking permission to resume meetings before the end of the specified period) may be given either in a letter, sent by post or delivered by hand, dated and bearing the Master's signature, or by an e-mail communication, and shall include the statement that

it is given “with the written agreement of not less than two-thirds of the subscribing members of Lodge, No.”.

(d) The provisions of Rule 119(a) shall apply in the situations therein described.

4. There shall be no limit on the number of occasions on which notices may be given under paragraphs 1 and 2.

Conduct of administrative business by video-conferencing facilities

5. Whenever the agenda on the summons for a meeting of a Lodge shall include one or more items of administrative business, any subscribing member of the Lodge may, by written notice given to the Secretary of the Lodge not less than 72 hours before the time for which the meeting has been summoned, require that such business be first considered out of Lodge in an audio/video-conferencing facility, and upon such notice having been received the provisions of this paragraph shall apply.

(a) Adequate notice shall be given to all subscribing members of the Lodge that, after the meeting has been opened, it will be Called-Off so that they can participate in an audio/video conference out of Lodge, together with full details (including telephone as an alternative method of participation for those without access to a computer) to enable them to do so.

(b) The audio/video conferencing facility shall be password protected.

(c) Those members participating from a remote location shall use their best endeavours to ensure that no other person (not being a member of the Lodge) has access to the audio/video conference.

(d) Immediately after the Lodge has been opened and any dispensations and minutes dealt with in the normal manner, it shall be Called-Off and those members not physically present in person shall be admitted to the audio/video conference. The administrative business set out on the summons and, if the meeting is a regular meeting, any business that would normally be dealt with on the Risings (other than business that is not permitted by paragraph 6 to be transacted at a meeting to which the provisions of this paragraph 5 apply) shall then be discussed and dealt with and (where applicable) the collective will in relation thereto of those participating shall be ascertained (if necessary by a vote) by the Master (or Deputy Master) and recorded. The audio/video conferencing facility shall then be discontinued. The Lodge shall be Called-On. The Master (or Deputy Master) shall declare the collective will of the Lodge in relation to the administrative business set out on the summons and the business that would normally have been dealt with on the Risings (other than business that is not permitted to be transacted at the meeting) to be in accordance with that ascertained and recorded in the course of the audio/video conference; there shall be no further discussion of that business; and the Master's (or Deputy Master's) declaration shall stand as the decision of the Lodge in relation to it. Any ceremony for which the summons provides shall then be carried out. The Lodge shall be closed in the normal manner.

(e) No ritual or ceremonial shall be carried out during the audio/video conference; and no administrative business shall be transacted after the audio/video conference has been discontinued and the Lodge Called-On.

(f) The provisions of this paragraph shall override, but only to the extent necessary for their effective application, the Edict of the Grand Lodge relating to Photography, Mobile Telephones and Social Media.

6. (a) No item of business which is required by any Rule in the Book of Constitutions or any by-law of the Lodge to be decided by a ballot shall be transacted at a meeting to which the provisions of paragraph 5 apply.

(b) In any event (and whether or not the provisions of paragraph 5 would otherwise apply), unless the summons and any supplement thereto has been sent in time to reach all subscribing members resident in England and Wales, the Channel Isles and/or the Isle of Man not later than five clear days before the meeting no item of administrative business of which notice is required by any Rule in the Book of Constitutions, any Edict of the Grand Lodge; or any by-law of the Lodge to be given on the summons for the meeting shall be transacted at the meeting.

Election and Installation of Master

7. The following Regulations shall apply in respect of any Lodge for which the next regular date of Installation prescribed in the by-laws falls on or after 1 March 2021.

8. If by reason of the Lodge's inability to meet to elect and install a Master for the ensuing year the normal operation of the Rules in the Book of Constitutions would require the current Master to continue in office for a third or subsequent year in succession, the Grand Master, or in a Metropolitan Area, Province or District the Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master, may, if so requested, grant the Lodge a dispensation, which shall be free of charge, to elect and install a new Master at the same regular or emergency meeting.

9. The Grand Master or the Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master may grant a similar dispensation if the Lodge for any reason is without a Master so that the Senior Warden would otherwise have been required to continue to summon the Lodge for the whole of the ensuing year.

10. The Master so elected and installed and the Wardens invested by him at that meeting shall at the date of the next regular installation meeting be deemed to have filled the offices of Master and Wardens respectively for one year, in compliance with the provisions of Rules 9 and 105.