

AMERICAN CANADIAN GRAND LODGE

Masonic Etiquette, Decorum and Protocol



This edition of the ACGL Masonic Etiquette, Decorum and Protocol was the result of Grand Lodge action taken to amend the previously existing work. Approved by the Grand Master and Committee on Works. The ACGL Masonic Etiquette, Decorum and Protocol are the only authorized work for use by constituent Lodges.

Any discrepancy between this reference manual and The ACGL Code, The ACGL Code takes precedence.

Attest: 11 June 2022

Paul M. Curran, PGM
Grand Secretary

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The success of Freemasonry in the ACGL is rooted in the success of the constituent Lodges. While this publication published by the Grand Lodge, Committee on Works and intended to be a compilation of educational ideas from many sources to include our Code, its overall purpose is to serve as an educational material which can be used, in whole or in part, for educating our Lodge officers and members.

The American Canadian Grand Lodge has celebrated **60** years, and in our young history as a Masonic fraternity whose members continually sought further education. This document represents our commitment in providing our Craft with Masonic education.

Meaning of Masonic Etiquette

An act of Masonic etiquette is some movement, action, courteous gesture, or speech performed at a given time and place, in a gentle, dignified manner, and according to a fixed rule, decided by the Fraternity itself.

An organization, as such, can carry out good work in peace and harmony, and should not be empty and meaningless. These precepts have been time-tested, and they work!

Information on Masonic Etiquette

If a Lodge Officer is in doubt about the correct form of etiquette for some particular occasion, he has several authoritative sources of information upon which to draw. He should consult with the Committee on Works via the Lodge Secretary or District Deputy Grand Master.

Aged and Infirm

Every effort should be made to keep in contact with the aged and infirmed Brother. If a member is infirmed he should be assisted to enter the Lodge on the arm of the Junior Deacon; and if he requires it, a special chair or special seat should be provided for him. However, it is not proper to attract undue attention to his infirmity or pay him special heed.

If an older member cannot attend Lodge, mention of him should be made at a Communication and the Master should see to it that he is visited and otherwise reminded that he is present in the minds of his brethren. A Brother should occasionally visit as a Lodge emissary speaking officially on its behalf and for that reason should act as he would act in Lodge, with Masonic decorum.

Altar

In American Canadian Grand Lodge jurisdiction, the Altar stands at the center of the Lodge room. It is a place of prayer, a pedestal upon which the Great Lights rest. The three Lesser Lights stand beside it; the obligations are taken in its presence; the Worshipful Master greets Candidates across it; and it is an emblem of the G.A.O.T.U. Members and visitors stand before it and salute the East when entering or leaving the Lodge. Masons, when near it, stand with dignity and act with reverence. It should not be covered with flags, bunting, and banners of any kind which carry the insignia of any association other than the Lodge or Grand Lodge.

The Altar should be kept clean, its paint or varnish unmarred, cracked or scratched. The top and kneeling pad should never be allowed to become ragged or shabby. The area between it and the East are sacred, which is not crossed by officers or members during Lodge Communications, except for the Deacons and Chaplain during certain ceremonies.

The Three Monolithic Religions are the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Faiths. The Koran and Torah may be added, at the discretion of the Worshipful Master in any tiled Lodge, or upon request of any Brother, belonging in any one of the Three Monolithic Religions, for the purpose of taking obligations during the conferral of degrees. The Altar must be square or rectangular in form.

Anteroom

The anteroom is a part of the Temple. It is not separate; therefore, the decorum and etiquette of the Lodge room governs it too.

The Tiler is responsible to the Master for the anteroom and to see that etiquette is observed. It should be clean and neat, the furniture in place, aprons correctly placed and stored, and nothing piled in it that does not belong there. Loud talking, joking, noise and needless moving about are inappropriate. The Tiler should introduce himself to a visiting Brother as he enters the Anteroom. Should the visitor have to wait before entering the Lodge or while waiting the examining committee, see to it that he has a seat.

Lodge Entrance Door

The door to the Lodge room is in the Junior Deacon's custody. The Tiler should never open it or talk through it until after knocking. When a member enters Lodge through the Anteroom after the Lodge is open, he is to observe a Ceremony of Entrance, and this ceremony is initiated by the Tiler according to a fixed process, and the method is never altered for any member or officer. The Brother advances to the Altar, takes note of the position of the compasses, salutes the WM with the appropriate due guard and sign, and then wait's to be seated or escorted as directed by the WM to his rightful place in the lodge.

Ballot

The ballot is secret and inviolate. When a ballot is taken, the act is momentous for the Candidate and significant for the Lodge. It is an official act by each member in turn and by the Lodge itself as a body.

The ballot has sanction and must be conducted according to solemn rules. The Lodge Room should be silent, without whispering, or discussion, of the candidate while balloting, nor should any information about how a member has voted be divulged. The officers should remain at their stations and places in silence and dignity. Such of them as participate in inspecting and declaring the ballot, should maintain strict decorum.

The period of decorum doesn't end when you've cast your vote. It includes the declaration of the results by the Master, the restoration of the Ballot Box, and the return of the participating officers to their places.

Decorum

It is difficult to establish a hard and fast line between etiquette and decorum. Both deal with propriety and appropriate behavior. However, there is a sharp contrast between the focus and principles of the two.

In observing etiquette, a Mason is guided by specific rules of manner and behavior proscribed for certain times and places in the Lodge, in whose delineation he has no voice. It is governed by the intent of Masonic Law and usage.

The principle of decorum stands at the opposite pole, as it includes proper manners and behavior in the Lodge room, and in our personal lives, and it is for each of us to discern and decide. The essence of it lies within a Mason when in Lodge, to avoid attracting undue attention to himself, or creating a disturbance.

Thus, it is etiquette to speak kindly to and about each other; and while it is also an act of good manners, it is only specifically required by the rules of the Fraternity. It is decorum not to whisper or in any way, disturb your neighbor during the conduct of business. That is good manners and requires

a man's own sense of good taste and dignity. If he talks out loudly and disturbs the Lodge, he does it of his own volition, and it is therefore for him to control and not to do. He must guide his own decorum or deportment in the same way that the Craft delineates his etiquette.

There are points at which the two converge, such as when the Master must act to restore order and dignified behavior. He should reprove all disturbances quietly, promptly, without personal bias, and attracting as little attention to the matter as possible. A glance of the eye or a soft tap of the gavel is most often sufficient for the purpose.

When a Lodge is in session, degree work or business, Brethren should avoid private conversation and refrain from whispering. This is discourteous, distracting, and disrupts proceedings.

A Brother, who has something to say, should stand, give the sign of fidelity, and wait until recognized by the Master. Except to call for point of order, only the Master may interrupt a Brother speaking. Simply remain standing and await recognition from the Master. The Brother should confine his remarks to the subject under discussion, using as few words as possible. He should not abuse his privilege of the floor to deliver a speech merely for its own sake. In some Grand Lodge jurisdictions, the sign of the degree is given instead of the sign of fidelity. We should respect our visiting Brethren and their customs.

When speaking on any matter, a Brother should always avoid making any inflammatory or impassioned speeches or commentaries. The Master would be justified in gavelling such a Brother into silence. In extreme instances, the Master may admonish him and require him to leave the Lodge. We should always maintain respect for others' opinions and views. It is the Worshipful Masters duty to maintain the peace and harmony in his Lodge. This is one of the hallmarks of Masonic conducts.

No Brother should leave the Lodge while it is in session without obtaining permission from the Master. Closing the Lodge at a reasonable hour ensures Brethren remain until closing. Organize your time and work carefully. Keep breaks at a minimum. Long Breaks and last-minute organization results in Brothers leaving before the work is completed. Brothers departing early give candidates wrong impressions and ruin the good effect of the work. It may appear that members do not care for the important lessons and instructions which follow in the lectures.

Drinking alcohol before Lodge can leave a negative impression on a candidate. Officers of the Lodge come in close contact with the candidate during degree work. The Lodge room, sacred to all Masons, is not the proper place for the smell of intoxicating beverages.

The following are *forbidden* in Lodge: a) all discussion of politics; b) all discussion of a particular religion or creed; c) all discussion of race or color; d) all discussion of private business; e) all subjects that could incite arguments or feuds.

The following are *condemned by the* principles of common courtesy and the disciplinary laws of the Craft: a) all uses of personalities; b) all expressions of bitterness or ill will; c) all or any slurs upon the Lodge or its officers and the Fraternity itself; d) all flippant, unseemly, or discourteous remarks addressed to the Lodge or its officers.

The proper location of the Letter "G" in a Masonic Lodge is in the East over the station of the Master. No symbol or emblem of appendant bodies or organizations, which meet in the Lodge room, is permitted in the East. The letter "G" is the central and dominant symbol in the East, lighted or unlighted, whether the Lodge is opened or not.

Titles (Forms and Address) and Reception of the Grand Master

A few of the niceties of Masonic Protocol deal with due respect and the reception of the Grand Master. The Brother chosen to lead us in the ACGL has the distinction of being in a position peculiar

to our fraternity. In no other organization is there such an authoritarian figure. In the broadest of terms, the Grand Master is the representative of King Solomon. As such, there devolves upon him the rights, privileges, respect, and power usually reserved for royalty.

The Grand Master has the title of "Most Worshipful". This is written or printed in full or may be abbreviated in the form "M W". The Grand Master is addressed as The Grand Master of the American Canadian Grand Lodge.

Upon his election to the office of Grand Master by his Brethren, he is no longer a private person. The private man with his partialities and prejudices must disappear so that only the Grand Master may remain. The office of Grand Master is the most humbling and exacting of all duties within our fraternity. If his closest friend deserves a reprimand, he must reprimand him. If he must give instructions to those far wiser than himself, he must nevertheless instruct them. Whatever limitations or shortcomings he may be conscious of, the Grand Master must sacrifice to the demands of his office.

The responsibility of every Freemason is to maintain a respectful attitude toward the Craft and the Grand Master. This respect is for the office he holds and its supreme importance. Our fraternity holds the office of Grand Master in high regard. The honor bestowed upon the Grand Master on his visit to a lodge is a sign of respect for the office. The office of Grand Master, the highest position which Freemasonry confers upon any of its members, also carries the heaviest of responsibilities.

A visit from the Grand Master should be one of the highlights of the year for any Lodge. This is the case whether the Lodge invites the Grand Master for a special occasion, or he attends for other reasons. The Grand Master's visit to Lodge is always official, as there is no such thing as an unofficial visit by the Grand Master.

If a Lodge wishes to invite the Grand Master for a special occasion, it should write to him well in advance. His time is in great demand. The greater the lead time, the more likelihood of his attendance. If possible, give him a first and second choice date. Be specific in your invitation. Give him the exact time the meeting starts and whether there is a Table Lodge or collation. Specify the meeting place and the street address. If the meeting place is not on the main street, include the directions. Give him information on the kind of program. If the Lodge wishes him to speak, give him suggested topics. Let him know if you want him to present awards. Let him know if it is an open or tiled meeting, and his expected time of arrival.

When inviting the Grand Master, always offer to reimburse him and his Lady, if accompanying him, for any expenses incurred, in our jurisdiction, particularly, the Grand Master must travel great distances to attend lodge functions. If the meeting ends at a late hour, offer to provide overnight accommodations. If required, the Grand Master will be appreciative. Advise him who will meet him and where. Provide for special entertainment for the Grand Master's Lady, and those of his accompanying party, if the meeting is to be tiled. Arrange to have at least one member of the Lodge present at the hotel or motel when the Grand Master arrives to welcome him and his party. When he is the guest of the Lodge, it should offer to pay the bills, in whole or in part.

No Lodge should ever feel they cannot invite the Grand Master or that the Grand Master would not visit them. No Lodge is too small or too far away for the Grand Master. He is pleased to accept the invitation if a convenient date is arranged. He feels that each Lodge is equal, regardless of size, distance, or what is tradition. He is the Grand Master of all Masons in his jurisdiction.

Appoint a committee for the Grand Master's comfort. When he arrives, the Master should be available to greet him along with the committee. Advise the Grand Master, in as much time as possible, if plans change. He can thus rearrange his schedule and attend another function if he desires.

A head table, arranged in proper seating order, should be set up for the Grand Master by the Master and his committee. This is done whether for a formal dinner, Table Lodge, collation, formal or picnic style. Afford the Grand Master and his party every courtesy. Escort him to his place at the head table or if buffet style, to the head of the line. Introduce the Brethren to him and make the Grand Master feel welcome. The Master should insure there is appropriate seating, even for unexpected guests. Additionally, providing flowers for the ladies is a fine touch.

During the meeting (open, closed or family) the Master should have an outlined program. He should do his homework and know who introduces the guests and who presents the Grand Master at the Holy Altar, etc. If it is a closed meeting, he carries out the order of business according to the ACGL Code. Lodge starts on time. Punctuality in opening and closing is a courtesy also. This promotes harmony and is essential to good leadership.

The Grand Master's Entrance

The Grand Master arrives before the time set for opening and will be inside the Lodge hall. The Master opens the Lodge according to ACGL Standard Work at the appointed hour. He welcomes all visitors and accords them honors befitting their rank. The Master arranges for a Brother to inform the Grand Master when the Lodge is opened.

At this time, the Grand Master either makes or causes the alarm at the outer door.

The Junior Deacon responds to the alarm, and is advised:

Grand Master or escort: The Grand Master is about to enter this Lodge and demands to be received at this time.

(At this time the door to the Lodge remains open – no door is closed until after he has entered the Lodge)

Junior Deacon: The Grand Master is about to enter this Lodge and demands to be received at this time!

The Master causes two arches to be formed.

The Stewards (or MCs) form arches just inside the door of the Lodge.

The Deacons form arches two-three feet West of the Altar.

WM: Brother Marshal (or PM of the Lodge or both) retire(s) to escort the Grand Master and his officers into the Lodge.

WM *** (The Master calls up the Lodge with three raps, all Brethren rise-giving the sign of fidelity. At this time, the Master removes his hat and remains uncovered. A general silence prevails.

Before entering the lodge, the Grand Master's party is arranged in the correct manner, according to rank. The place of highest honor in a Masonic procession is at the rear. So, the Grand Master will be the last in line. Immediately in front of him are Past Grand Masters, present, ranked according to seniority. Thus, the most senior is immediately in front of the Grand Master, and the most junior at the front of the procession. In front of the Past Grand Masters come the elected officers of the ACGL. In front of these officers, the District Deputy Grand Masters. In front of these officers, those officers bearing the title of Worshipful all brothers are arranged two by two.

As the procession approaches the Holy Altar, they stop before the second set of arches and step to each side forming parallels perpendicular lines to the altar. The escort for the Grand Master immediately precedes him, approaches the Holy Altar, and steps to the left side without saluting. The Grand Master approaches the Holy Altar through the double file of Grand Lodge officers, steps

through the arch formed by the Deacons informs the Brothers in his procession “with me my Brothers” and salutes the Master with the degree and sign of the degree display at the Altar.

MC or SD: Worshipful Master, I am honored to present to you and through you to the Brethren here assembled, Most Worshipful Brother (Full Name), Grand Master of the American Canadian Grand Lodge and I leave him in your fraternal care.

Never attempt to shorten this. Always announce the Grand Master's full name and title, and name of the Grand Lodge. The announcement is always formal even if the Grand Master is a member of that Lodge, and no matter how personal the relationship to him. Even if the Grand Master's father introduced him, the protocol demands a formal introduction. No one will criticize a Brother from varying slightly from above, as long as it is formal. *The time for informality or familiarity is not during the introduction!*

WM (welcomes the Grand Master in his own words). Brethren assist me in receiving the M W (Full Name) with **Private Grand Honors 7 times, taking your time from the East.**

WM: M W Sir, please continue under present escort to the East. The Master may descend to the Altar to personally escort the Grand Master to the East. (The escort always takes the GM by his Left hand and proceeds north of the Altar to the East).

Deacon’s arch moves to the left of the Altar and proceeds to the East, halting at the bottom of the Dais or Rostrum, until the Grand Master ascends through it. (The Deacons break the arch, return to their places, and place the staff in their receptacles).

The WM stands in front of his chair with the GM to his right. He removes his hat and leaves his hat removed, unless performing degree work, until lodge is closed, places the gavel over his right wrist: **“Most Worshipful Grand Master, in token of our obedience to the American Canadian Grand Lodge and to your office, I tender the gavel of authority for you to rule and govern this Lodge at your will and pleasure.”**

The Grand Master always accepts the gavel.

If he wishes to speak to the lodge at the present time, the Grand Master presides in the Lodge. If accompanied by other Grand Lodge officers, he will normally introduce them. He may tell them to be seated, escorted to specific seats, or whatever he chooses based on the circumstances. The Grand Master normally addresses the Brethren on a specific topic or theme.

GM: I now return the gavel WM and request that you proceed with the work of the Lodge.

The Grand Master seats himself to the right of the Master.

WM: The Master expresses appreciation of the Grand Master’s address and continues the work upon the Trestleboard.

It is important for the Master to remember to be relaxed, natural and easy in greeting the Grand Master. Remember that the Grand Master comes as a friend with a strong desire to be helpful. Meet him as you would a guest in your own home. Make him feel that you are truly glad that he has come to see you.

Prior to closing, it is normal and proper for the Master to present the gavel once again to the Grand Master. He may desire a final comment prior to closing the Lodge, or he may want to close the Lodge. Regardless of the type of meeting (open, closed or family), nothing follows except the closing. After his address, he may close the Lodge in ample form, or allow the Master to close the Lodge. When the Grand Master remains in the lodge for closing the three great lights are never extinguished.

The Grand Master Departs the Lodge

If the Grand Master elects to depart the Lodge prior to closing, the following applies. The Deacons assemble at the bottom of the dais/rostrum and form an arch. The Stewards (or MCs) form an arch at the outer door.

The Grand Master departs first under escort. He is followed by the next most senior officers, in double file, **in reverse order** as entering the Lodge.

All will proceed West of the Altar. Taking their time from the Grand Master, they give the d-g and sign. They follow the Grand Master, in double file, in order of seniority.

If the foregoing instructions are observed, no Lodge will ever commit a serious breach of protocol. Some minor points may vary because of the Lodge's physical layout. The Grand Master may be alone without any other Grand Lodge officer present. He may have all of his officer's present and a half-dozen Past Grand Masters in tow. **The procedure is the same!**

Receiving a representative of the Grand Master

When the Grand Master is unable to visit a Lodge and sends his personal representative, the representative should be given every courtesy. He should be accorded respect and should never be addressed informally during any part of a closed Lodge ceremony.

Grand Master present at the opening of the Lodge

Should the Grand Master desire to be present at the opening of the Lodge, the Master will proceed to open the Lodge according to the Standard Work. After the Lodge has been opened, he will gavel the Lodge to its feet. (Exemplify the same procedure receiving of MW GM at the Altar)

A Past Grand Master has the same title. Care should be given to the form used during introductions. He can be introduced as Past Grand Master of the ACGL. But, if there are other Past Grand Master present, he should be addressed as "Most Worshipful (full name), Grand Master in the year (19xx or 20xx). Why? Because that was the year, he was our Grand Master. He didn't earn the status of Past Grand Master until his successor was duly elected and installed.

The same principles apply when referring to or addressing Worshipful Masters or appointed DDGMs. The Master's official title is "Worshipful Master". The whole, correct title is always used to address him (or refer to him, when speaking to others). It is a recognized, official title, and wherever he goes (even in another Jurisdiction) he is entitled to this recognition. His title gains him unchallenged admittance to the floor when his Grand Lodge is in Annual Communication. If he visits another Lodge, he receives the deference due his rank.

Every Mason carries the title "Brother". This title is employed in Lodge whenever a Mason is addressed or referred to. It is considered a major breach of good manners and propriety to address or refer to him as "Mr. Joe" or "Doe".

If the Master of a Lodge is a member of a concordant body (the AMSRB, etc.), then his Masonic title has no precedence. However, accepted ceremonial forms established as correct in official dealings among Masonic organizations (i.e., protocol) indicate that the courtesy should be extended.

The converse is also true, when the Presiding Officer of a body in another Rite visits a Craft Lodge or when he sits in it as a member. Although his title has no official standing, the application of warm Masonic protocol requires his "proper" title should be used, as a practice of good manners, when introductions are made.

Under the ACGL within the United Grand Lodge of Germany (VGLvD) the following titles and forms of address applies:

- a) The Grand Master of the VGLvD, the ACGL, or any other Grand Master from Grand Lodges which comprise the VGLvD or of recognized Grand Lodge of equivalent rank, or past holders of the respective office *MOST WORSHIPFUL*.
- b) The Deputy Grand Master of the VGLvD, the ACGL, or any other Deputy Grand Master from Grand Lodges which comprise the VGLvD or of any recognized Grand Lodge of equivalent rank, or past holders of the respective office *RIGHT WORSHIPFUL*.
- c) Each of the other elected Grand Lodge officers, (SGW, JGW, GT and GS) along with the Honorary or appointed, shall be addressed as "Right Worshipful", except when a Brother by virtue of being installed at a higher officer, such as Most Worshipful, he shall be addressed as Most Worshipful. Each District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM) or Honorary DDGM shall be addressed as "Very Worshipful" by virtue of prior service as a PDDGM. With the same stipulation (entitlement by virtue of prior service as an elected and installed Master) shall be "Worshipful" all other appointed Grand Lodge officers shall be "Brother."

Public or Private Grand Honors, as written in 1.27 of the *ACGL Code* consist of the following:

Public Grand Honours, as the name imparts, do not partake of this secret character. Give these Honors in the German fashion of *three-times-three*, by striking the palms of the hands together. First, the right hand upon the left three times. Second, the left hand upon the right three times. Third, the right hand upon the left three times.

Private Grand Honours consist of the signs of the Degree upon which a Lodge is open at the time of reception. Give these honors only for the following officers, in the frequency specified:

- Grand Master of the VGLvD - seven times
- Deputy Grand Master of the VGLvD – five times
- Grand Master of the ACGL – seven times
- Deputy Grand Master of the ACGL - five times
- District Deputy Grand Master (When on Official Visit)- 3 times

Current and past Grand Lodge officers of the ACGL or any recognized Grand Lodge of equivalent rank are entitled honors. Additionally, those awarded ACGL honorary titles of these offices will receive the same honors.

District Deputy Grand Master

A District Deputy Grand Master on an official visit is received with three time's private grand honors which reflect the fact that he is the personal representative of the Grand Master. When he is present in the Lodge room, it is as if the Grand Master were there in person.

The Master of the Lodge will not descend to the Altar to personally conduct the DDGM to the East. He has this option when the Grand Master is received. The DDGM is conducted to the East. The Master does **not** remove his hat. The Master presents the gavel in the same manner as when receiving the Grand Master. The DDGM, during his tenure, always represents the Grand Master directly to the Lodges and Brethren in his district. Although he may be a frequent visitor, these are not always considered official inspections. An official visit is coordinated well in advance. Many DDGMs are able to visit Lodges frequently and are encouraged to do so. This enables them to better evaluate a Lodge's progress and address specific problem areas during official inspections. During such visits to Lodges in his own district, the DDGM is recognized appropriately. He is entitled to a place of honor in the East, but in the normal order of precedence. On such occasions, the Master may offer him the gavel as a courtesy. There is no requirement that he must. Neither is he required to receive the DDGM officially, unless specifically requested.

While he may assume the gavel when deemed necessary, he should **not** expect the '**works**' each time he attends Lodge. Protocol on official inspections requires his being received as shown above.

Overdoing anything so important makes such ceremonies **virtually** meaningless. He should be sure that each Lodge officer follows the guidelines outlined in the *District Deputy Grand Master's Inspection Guide*.

GRAND LODGE OFFICERS

Grand Lodge Officers elected and appointed are considered to be representatives of the Grand Master and should be given every courtesy. He should be accorded respect and should never be addressed informally during any part of a closed Lodge ceremony. Grand Lodge Officers are expected to wear their Grand Lodge Regalia of their respective station at all times. In the event the Grand Lodge Officer is also an Officer of the Lodge, Grand Lodge Officers who also have offices in the Blue Lodge will wear the apron of their Grand Lodge Office and the Collar of their Lodge Office. (At no time can he be forced NOT to wear his Grand Lodge Regalia)

RECEPTION of OTHER DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Viewed in proper perspective, every visiting Brother is received and welcomed by a Lodge with appropriate ceremony. Even regular visitors are reminded constantly of the Lodge's appreciation. There are certain protocol requirements to consider when receiving Grand Lodge officers and Masters of Lodges, past or present.

If the Deputy Grand Master is visiting (and the Grand Master is not), the Master should **always** receive him separately. After all others have entered the Lodge, and after giving Private Grand Honors, offer him the gavel. All PGMs and elected Grand Lodge officers are **always** received officially and accorded appropriate honors. At the discretion of the Master, he may offer the gavel. Masonic protocol **requires that he give the gavel to the Grand Master, and to no one else.**

It is normal to receive appointed Grand Lodge officers with Public Grand Honors when they are visiting with the Grand Master. It is also permissible for the Master of a Lodge to give Public Grand Honors to selected Brethren. Such occasions include services rendered to the Lodge, or in recognizing a birthday, anniversary, etc. Public Grand Honors are regarded as a sign of respect peculiar to Masonry, when limited to such special occasions. When not overdone, this is a way of showing special recognition that is always appreciated.

INTRODUCTION of VISITORS

Immediately after a Lodge is opened, it is customary for Masters to recognize and welcome visiting Brethren. The Master may welcome Brethren individually or as a group. Preferably, first-time visitors are welcomed individually. The visitor is requested to rise and stay in place. The visitor is introduced to the Brethren with his name, lodge, and location. The Master may request the visitor to introduce himself or have him escorted west of the Altar for appropriate introduction. The Secretary must (*ACGL Code 2.48*) record this information in the minutes.

PROPER MASONIC CLOTHING

The officers of a Lodge should make every attempt to be uniform in their dress. While tuxedos and ties are nice and quite normal in most Lodges, a dark, conservative suit is satisfactory. When degree work is on the trestle board, appropriate dress is desirable. It is a sign of respect for the *Three Great Lights*, and Masonic tradition and custom to dress appropriately. Every effort should be made to avoid the embarrassment of a Brother who appears in Lodge in casual clothes, or without coat and tie. If the Master sets the proper examples, others will follow. Most Brethren will make the effort to conform. However, there are occasions when a Brother comes to Lodge directly from work and has no opportunity to change. It is more by example than demand that desired results are achieved.

APRON

In respect of wearing the apron, we in the ACGL, wear our aprons on the outside of our coat or jacket. If you observe a Brother not in compliance, politely request he wear the apron on the outside.

Exception: We should be respectful to visiting Brethren and their customs. The only exception is when a visitor from another jurisdiction or country is present, and it is the custom of their Jurisdiction to wear their regalia under the coat (the apron must be visible).

Within a Lodge, officers will wear the apron and jewel appropriate to their rank and station. Plain white aprons, usually provided by the Lodge, are worn by all other Brothers.

Whenever a Grand Lodge officer is present at any Masonic assembly, he should wear the apron appropriate for his office. This identifies the office he holds and pays proper respect to the Lodge and Grand Lodge.

The colors of purple and gold identify all Grand Lodge officers and Past Grand Lodge officers. Past Masters and other Brothers not entitled are prohibited from using these colors on any apron, collar, insignia, or jewel.

Flag and Etiquette

The guidelines associated with the care of “Flags” are established by the government. The rules, as far as an ACGL Lodge is concerned, are established by the ACGL Grand Lodge. Three flags are posted, the Flag of the United States of America, the Flag of Canada, and the Flag of the Germany, on staffs and on the platform in the East, it will be at the Master’s right side. The Flag must never be used as a drape, a decoration, or an Altar covering. The flag is never dipped in salute to anyone. When rendering honors all brethren and Guests face the flag, stand erect at the sign of fidelity.

As applicable and under the approval the ACGL the French or Turkish Flags may be displayed in their districts along with the aforementioned flags.

Rebuke

If it ever becomes necessary for a Master to rebuke a member who has been unruly, he may do so after Lodge is closed, in person, and in private. It is required that a rebuke be administered while the Lodge is in session, the method to be used is at the Master’s discretion, but the etiquette required of him is that he shall deliver it in a friendly, even-handed manner. Decorum dictates that it shall be dispensed in a way that will attract undue attention to the matter or create an additional disturbance.

Visiting the Sick

Expression of good Masonic etiquette is not limited to assemblies of the Craft. Certain etiquette belongs to the individual Mason. For example; when a Mason visits a Brother who is ill, infirmed or for other reasons confined to his home.

He will ask for permission in advance, in order to make sure of not arriving at an inconvenient time.

He will present himself as being a member of the Lodge.

He will begin by bringing greetings of the Lodge.

He will adapt the length of his visit and nature of his talk to information received from the family.

There need be no report made of the visit to the Lodge, unless the Brother visited requests there be, or the visitor believes the Lodge is entitled to news or may wish to tender some official act of courtesy.

Examination of Visitors

The substance of an examination is fixed by the Constitutions of Masonry and our Methodical Digest. The manner in which it is to be conducted is the focus of etiquette and protocol.

The examining Committee withdraws with the visitor to a private place. They are in an official relationship with him and therefore their manners are formal.

They must keep in mind that their only purpose is to satisfy themselves that the visitor is, or is not, a Master Mason in good standing from a Regular Lodge under a Grand Jurisdiction with whom we are in amity. They are NOT called upon to test his proficiency in the ritual or to be personally inquisitive.

The Examining Committee has the duty to satisfy itself that a visitor is a Master Mason in good standing in a Regular Lodge, the visitor also has a right to make sure that the Lodge he comes to visit is itself a Regular Lodge.

If the visitor satisfies the committee, and if the visitor himself is satisfied, the visitor as yet possesses no right to enter until after the Worshipful Master has consented. The Committee should conduct the visitor to the Anteroom and introduce him to the Tiler who in turn ceremoniously hands him over to the Junior Deacon.

Visiting is a privilege, not a right (to seek to visit a Lodge is every Master Mason's Right) and a Master may for good reasons of his own, refuse admittance to any visitor (except the DDGM and Grand Lodge Officers). If the Master does refuse, Decorum requires that he call the Senior Deacon to his side and privately instruct him to go to the Anteroom to instruct the Tiler not to admit the visitor.

A visitor may be refuse admittance for reasons that do not reflect on him personally. Such an occasion might be when a particular sensitive piece of Lodge business is about to be conducted or if a reprimand is to be administered.

Ritual Etiquette

The etiquette governing the conferral of degrees is strict. There shall be no talking, whispering, or laughing, or any disturbances during the Degree work. It is not an occasion for mirth. There should be no needless moving about. The officers participating shall never step out of their roles, to hold conversations, to make private remarks, to indulge in pantomime, or to make comments about the candidate.

Nothing outside the Standard Work and Lectures shall be substituted or any portion of it. Detailed arrangements are always completed before the Degree begins, and not improvised while the Degree is in progress.

All applicable lectures will be exemplified and may not be deferred until a later date or to another communication. A Master does not have the authority to deviate from the established Ritual.

Master's Hat

A hat is presented to the Worshipful Master during his investiture as a reminder to the Lodge that he has province, alone, to remain covered, while the rest of the Brethren remain uncovered during Lodge sessions and other ceremonial occasions. The origin of this beautiful tradition is said to have been founded upon the wearing of a crown by King Solomon as a visible mark of refined dignity and authority.

He should always remove his hat during prayer, in the presence of death (including announcements), and it should not be worn during the presence of the Grand Master in lodge, except during degree work.

Frivolous caps should never be worn in Lodge or for Masonic activities.

Etiquette Regarding Officers

An officer has a station or place of his own in the Lodge, with duties, responsibilities, and dignities inherent in it. The etiquette and protocol accorded to an officer represent the properties of the office and is not directed to the officer personally.

A sloppy manner of saluting or approaching the East (or any other station), of standing, and of speaking to an officer, is a reflection on the Lodge for a failure to give to the office the respect which belongs to it. If a Master exacts of every member, and of every officer, a faithful rendering of the form of etiquette that is to be accorded to his own office, it will create a more faithful observance of the proper form at every other station or place.

Worshipful Master and Etiquette

The Worshipful Master is the officer whose first duty it is to see that nothing is ever allowed to harm the Lodge that is entrusted to his care. For that reason, he cannot tolerate a careless practice of etiquette. If, upon coming to the East, a Master finds that indifference, or a casual practice of etiquette has crept into the Lodge, he should find an early opportunity to address the subject with his officers and members.

The Worshipful Master has full responsibility for lodge etiquette, as he has total charge of all things in the Lodge. And, like all leaders, the WM may delegate authority, but the responsibility resides with him alone.

The Worshipful Master is the Master of the Lodge's etiquette in the same sense that he is Master of the Lodge. It is as much his duty to govern the Lodge in etiquette as in its business, its balloting, its debate, its conferring of Degrees.

Summary

It is hoped that the Brethren using this ACGL Etiquette, Decorum and Protocol guide will find it of value and gain much insight in the effective and proper operation of the Craft Lodge, and the management of themselves as Masons. We know that we have not included everything but what is included has been carefully selected as representative of the minimum body of knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective Lodge Officer and Craft. We strongly believe that if a Brother applies himself to the practice with the same dedication, enthusiasm, and love for our Craft that Light and Knowledge.

We would request that you send your comments and recommendations to the Grand Lodge, ATTN: Committee on Works. Please include your full name, mailing address, Lodge name and number so that we can respond to your comments and recommendations.

This manual has been reviewed and approved by the Committee on Works on 11 June 2022.