



GRAND LODGE OF
A.F. AND A.M. OF CANADA
IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

GRAND SECRETARY

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COVID-19 Update August 27, 2020 Social Gatherings

August 26, 2020

Brethren,

You will by now have read the Grand Master's message regarding the continued cancellation of all Masonic meetings and events until at least October 31, 2020.

As the COVID-19 situation continues to keep us in lockdown mode, many requests are being received about the hosting of Lodge/District/Temple Corporation social and fundraising events and about the use of Lodge/Temple Corporation facilities.

Use of Lodge or Temple Corporation Facilities during the lockdown period:

We recognize that many Lodges and Districts host social gatherings in the summer months for the purpose of raising funds for the Lodge or District. However, all Lodge meetings and events, including Masonic social events have been cancelled until at least October 31, 2020. Therefore, in effect, all Masonic buildings will remain closed to any activities. **With one or two exceptions, the usage of the premises or any part thereof is not permitted.**

The only activity involving the use of Lodge premises that would be permitted would be if the Lodge or Temple Corporation had a pre-existing contract with a for-profit business (e.g. bank) or certain not-for-profit corporations operating an essential service (e.g. Day Care) provided the business was permitted to reopen in stage 3 of the provincial guidelines.

Several examples follow to illustrate the above policy.

- Example 1: a Lodge owns a two story building – Lodge room above, bank premises below. The bank had previously operated in the premises prior to the lockdown under a lease or rental contract. The bank would be permitted to reopen for business – provided all provincial and local health guidelines were observed.
- Example 2: a daycare previously operated in the premises under a lease or rental contract. The daycare would be permitted to reopen for business provided provincial and local health guidelines were followed.
- Example 3: a Lodge permitted the use of its facilities to a local Alcoholics Anonymous group for their regular meetings prior to the lockdown under a prior lease or rental agreement. As Alcoholics Anonymous has been declared an essential service, this agreement could continue.

Permitting the use of or renting the Lodge premises for any other activities is NOT permitted.

Examples of usage **NOT permitted** include but are not limited to:

- Temple Corporation, Lodge committee or other Masonic related usage of Lodge premises

- Club rentals or usage (Lions club, Kiwanis Club, etc.) for regular or special meetings;
- Appendant bodies (e.g. Shrine Club, Scottish Rite, York Rite) or other bodies with a masonic connection (e.g. Eastern Star, Daughters of the Nile) wishing to meet or to conduct a fundraiser using Lodge premises (Banquet Hall);
- Any outside group wishing to rent the Lodge premises to host an event or fundraiser where food is prepared and/or served on site;
- The Lodge or Temple Corporation operation of a 'breakfast club' or 'coffee club' or any other activity where food and beverages are prepared/served on site;
- The usage or rental of Lodge/Temple Corporation premises by community groups for purposes such as Yoga classes, fitness classes, coffee clubs;

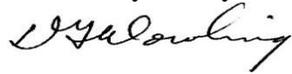
Any usage of Lodge or Temple Corporation premises must be conditional upon the enforcement of all provincial and local health guidelines. The Lodge/Temple Corporation is subject to the many regulations involving that use (e.g. proper cleaning and disinfecting after each use).

Referencing the Ontario government document regarding guidance in the safe re-opening of workplaces is recommended for those in charge of any Lodge or Temple Corporation facility. The document can be found at:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/develop-your-covid-19-workplace-safety-plan>

I hope the above helps clarify the situation in general terms. If there are specific events that you are unsure about, please contact us in advance for guidance. Please note that this policy is under constant review as the pandemic situation evolves.

Fraternally, Garry



D. Garry Dowling,
Grand Secretary