

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

LODGE RESOURCES COMMITTEE



I am a new Mason!

Now what?

Practical Guide for the new Mason

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Produced by the Lodge Resources Committee of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of
Ontario for the benefit of all new members and Lodge Mentors



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A FEW WORDS TO THE NEW MASON...

Congratulations! You have joined the largest fraternal organization in the world, the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (A.F. & A.M.).

You persevered through the ceremony of your initiation and now are no longer a Mister but a “Brother”!

I am sure you have many questions. This short document aims to answer some of them and offers a helping hand as you take your first steps in Masonry.

GET FAMILIAR WITH YOUR SURROUNDINGS

What is a Lodge?

A Lodge is the basic organization unit of Freemasonry. It has its own members, its own leadership (Worshipful Master, officers, and committees) and its own rules (called **By-Laws**).

Some Masons belong to several Lodges, but all Masons have to belong to at least one Lodge. The Lodge you were initiated in is referred to as your **Mother Lodge**.

Lodges operate under a **Grand Lodge**, ruled by the Grand Master. The Grand Lodge is responsible for providing guidance to all lodges. The Grand Lodge sets the general rules of operation and conduct for all Lodges. The Grand Lodge also defines the text and format of our ceremonies.

The Grand Lodge “book of rules” is called **the Book of Constitution**. You may think of an individual Lodge as a “municipal” level of government, with rules to governing itself (like what is the annual fee) where Grand Lodge is like the federal level of government that sets up the law of the land.

At your initiation you received both the Grand Lodge Book of Constitution and your Lodge’s By-Laws.



Between the Grand Lodge and the individual Lodge there is an intermediate organizational entity, called the District. The District groups multiple Lodges under one jurisdiction of one District Deputy Grand Master (**DDGM**).

Members of your own Lodge are considered the closest to you, and most Masons spend a lot of time contributing to the activities of their own Lodge.

After the members of your Lodge, you are also related to members of your district. Most of your Lodge visitors are probably members of your own district. The District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM) visits each Lodge in the district at least once a year. This is called **the Official Visit**, and members of other Lodges in the district will visit your Lodge on that occasion. Members of your Lodge will visit other Lodges in the district on the occasion of their Official Visit.

What do all these aprons and titles mean?

A Masonic apron is an honourable badge.

As you progress in Masonry so will your apron.

The full description of the different apron types is specified in the Book of Constitution, but here is a brief description of the Masonic aprons:

- The apron of a first degree **Entered Apprentice (EA)** is completely white.
- The apron of a second degree **Fellow Craft (FC)** adds two blue rosettes.
- The apron of the third degree **Master Mason (MM)** has a light sky blue border, three rosettes and two sets of chain tassels.
- A Mason who is holding, or has held, the position of **Worshipful Master (WM)**, or head, of a Lodge has the title of **Worshipful Brother (W. Bro.)** and the rosettes on his apron are replaced with \perp .
- In lodges that are over one hundred years old, the silver parts are replaced with gold, and a gold border is added



- Masons who are serving, or have served, as Grand Lodge officers have Dark Blue regalia and much more elaborate aprons.
 - Appointed Grand Lodge officers have the title **Very Worshipful Brother (V. W. Bro.)**.
 - Elected Grand Lodge officers such as the District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM) have the title **Right Worshipful Brother (R. W. Bro.)**.
 - Masons who are serving, or have served, as the Grand Master have the title **Most Worshipful Brother (M. W. Bro.)**.

What are Lodge officers?

Several members of the Lodge take upon themselves some of the formal duties of running the Lodge. They are known as officers.

Once a year an election is held (usually in a special Lodge meeting) for the Lodge officers. Some Lodges vote on all officers. Other Lodges may vote only on the top positions (Worshipful Master, the Wardens, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.), while the more junior officers (Stewards, Deacons, etc.) are appointed (usually by the newly-elected Worshipful Master).

Once a year the newly-elected and appointed officers are officially put into office in a special lodge meeting called **Installation**.

Officers sit in special places (known as the “Chairs”) in Lodge (see chart 1 below). Each officer has a **collar** (light blue V-shaped for officers other than the Worshipful Master, who has an elaborate circular one) with a **jewel** (a pendant at the bottom of the collar) symbolizing his office.




Here is a brief description of the officers and their duties:

Worshipful Master (WM) – The general manager of the Lodge during the year. Sits in the east; his chair is referred to as “The Chair of King Solomon”. His jewel is a square.

Senior Warden (SW) – The second-in-command and usually will be the next year’s Worshipful Master. He may be chair the Committee of General Purposes (see p. 11). He sits in the west and his jewel is a level.

Junior Warden (JW) – The third in command and usually next year’s Senior Warden. He is usually responsible for the social events and refreshments. He sits in the south and his jewel is a plumb rule.

Immediate Past Master (IPM) – Sits to the right of the Worshipful Master. He was the Worshipful Master the year before the current Worshipful Master. He may open and close the V.O.S.L. during Lodge opening/closing. His jewel is the 47th problem of Euclid: 

Grand Lodge Officer (GLO) – when a current Grand Lodge officer (e.g. the District Deputy Grand Maser) visits the Lodge he takes the seat on the left of the Worshipful Master.

Secretary (SC) – Sits at a desk near the East. He is the chief administrator of the Lodge. His jewel is crossed quill pens.

Treasurer (TR) – He is responsible for the Lodge financial matters. His jewel is crossed keys.

Director of Ceremonies (DOC) – Presents and introduces visitors to the Lodge and orchestrates the formal banquets. His jewel is crossed rods.

Senior Deacon (SD) – Often sits at the north east angle, to the right of the Worshipful Master. He carries a long staff, called a **Wand**, which is used during the ceremonies. His jewel is a dove bearing an olive branch in her beak which is also found on the top of his wand.



Junior Deacon (JD) – Sits to the right of the Senior Warden. He carries a long staff, called a **Wand**, used during the ceremonies. His jewel is a dove bearing an olive branch in her beak which is also found on the top of his wand.

Senior Steward (SS) – Often sits at the South-East Angle, but in some Lodges sits to the right of the Junior Warden. He carries a long staff, called a **Wand**, used during the ceremonies, prepares the candidates and Lodge for degrees and helps with social events. His jewel is a cornucopia (horn of plenty) which is also found on the top of his wand.

Junior Steward (JS) – Often sits to the left of the Senior Warden, sometimes to the left of the Junior Warden. He carries a long staff, called a **Wand**, used during the ceremonies, prepares the candidates and Lodge for degrees and helps with social events. His jewel is a cornucopia (horn of plenty) which is also found on the top of his wand.

Inner Guard (IG) – Sits beside the main entrance to the Lodge. His duty is to open the door of the Lodge and to allow or deny entry to it. His jewel is crossed swords.

Tyler (TY) – Sits outside the Lodge and is responsible for knocking on the door to announce visitors and ensure that everyone entering Lodge has signed the Register. His jewel is a sword.

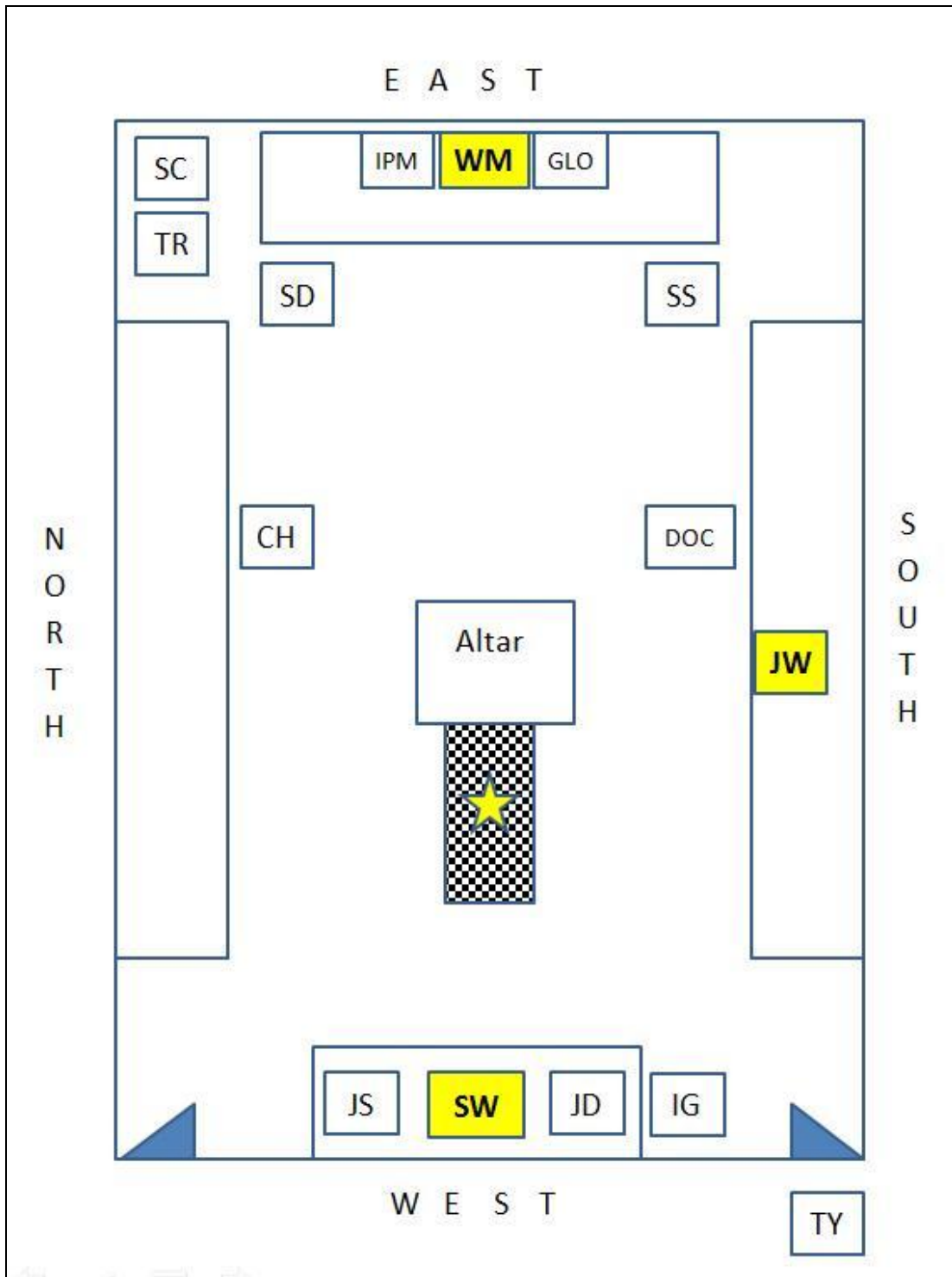
Chaplain (CH) – Sits in the North and leads the invocations and prayers. His jewel is a Book on a Triangle. In some lodges the Chaplain opens and closes the V.O.S.L. during Lodge opening/closing.

In addition to the above there are also the Assistant Secretary, Historian, Lodge Auditors and Organist.

***Note:** The following diagrams of Lodge layouts, while typical, are not universal, so you should become familiar with the specific layout of your own Lodge or those that you visit in future.*



Chart 1 – Sample Lodge Room Schema and officers' chairs (layout may vary)





ATTENDING LODGE MEETINGS

When is the Lodge meeting?

A few weeks before your Lodge meeting your Lodge secretary will mail (or e-mail) you a brochure, which is called a **Summons**.

The Summons includes a lot of information, and it is recommended you read it thoroughly. Some of the information you will find in the Summons includes:

- Date, time and venue for your lodge meetings
- Announcements of social events and community services
- District activities
- Ballots, Applications and By-Laws votes
- Message from your Worshipful Master
- General announcements
- Listing of Lodge Officers and Committees

Which meetings can I attend?

You will be able to attend all our Lodge meetings conducted in your degree level.

As an Entered Apprentice you will be able to:

- Attend your Lodge Committee of General Purposes
- Attend the business part of the meeting (including votes)
- Attend a First Degree
- Attend the general and First Degree parts of a Lodge Installation

You will have to wait outside the Lodge when a second or third degree is taking place, and for part of the Installation ceremony. You may avail yourself of this



time by asking questions of the Tyler or an educational officer who goes out with you. Your summons or your secretary will be able to inform you of the type of degree planned for the Lodge Meeting.

As a Fellow Craft you may also attend Lodge during a second degree. Master Masons may attend all meetings (they are asked to exit the Lodge only for a short period during installation when only Past Masters are allowed).

What is the Committee of General Purposes meeting?

The Committee of General Purposes is where the general Lodge discussions take place.

It sometimes takes place before a Lodge meeting. It is not run like a Lodge meeting (i.e. no opening/closing of Lodge, no aprons are worn, and no Masonic salutations or signs are given). The meeting is run by the Committee Chair (often the Senior Warden).

In the Committee of General Purposes meeting the general Lodge events are planned (e.g. social events), items of interest to the brethren are raised and financial expenses are approved.

Entering the Lodge

If you arrive at your own Lodge on time, prior to Lodge being opened, all that is required from you is that you sign the Register book, put on your apron and take a seat.

You may sit in any available general seat (not an officer's chair) in the North or South sides of the Lodge. The seats in the east section (where the Worshipful Master sits) are reserved, and you may sit there only when invited by the Worshipful Master to do so. Again, you should become familiar with the available seating in your own Lodge.



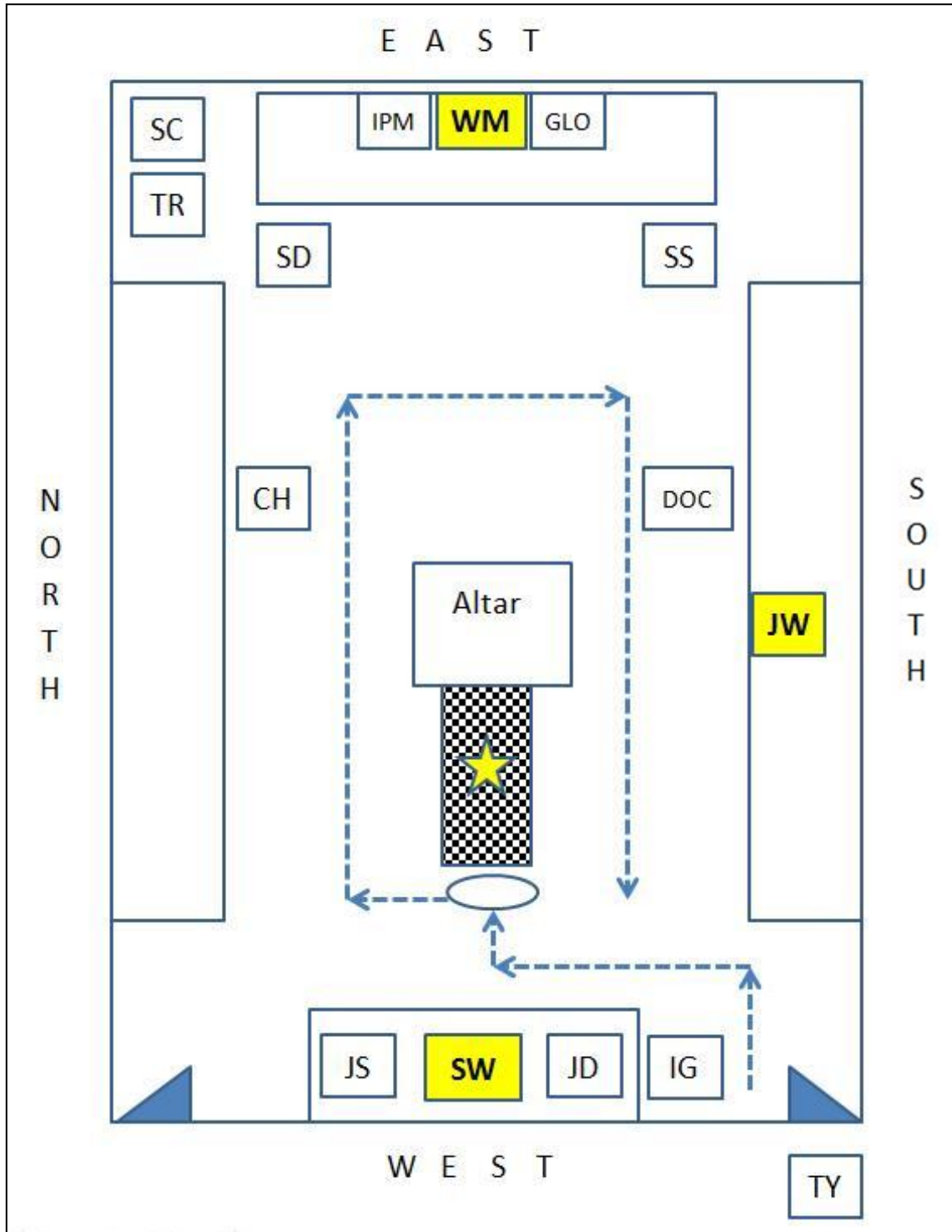
If you arrive at the Lodge after it has opened, or you are attending another Lodge as a visitor, your mode of entry is generally as follows:

1. You introduce yourself to the Tyler, telling him your lodge and rank, and show him your dues card. If nobody at that lodge has sat with you in lodge, they will ask you some questions to ensure you really are a Mason. This is called a **Board of Trial**. The questions will be easy for you to answer (if you really are a Mason!).
2. You put your apron on and sign the Register.
3. The Tyler knocks on the door.
4. The Inner Guard indicates when you may enter.
5. You give the pass grip and password of the degree to the Inner Guard (for second and third degrees).
6. You enter the Lodge in straight lines turning in 90° angles and stop in front of the Altar, generally at the beginning of the square pavement (see chart 2 – squaring the Lodge)
7. You step and salute the Worshipful Master in the proper step and salutation (Penal Sign) of the degree.
8. After the Worshipful Master acknowledges you, you walk clockwise in straight lines, turning in 90° angles, until you seat yourself in one of the available seats.



Chart 2 – Squaring the Lodge (Specific layout may vary)

You always walk in a clockwise direction.





How to behave in Lodge

A Lodge meeting is a formal proceeding and is conducted in a solemn manner.

You are expected to:

- Dress according to your Lodge dress code (see your Lodge Summons).
- Not engage in side discussion (unless given permission by the Worshipful Master).
- Only clap during the appropriate times (take your cue from the senior Brethren).
- Follow the directions of the Worshipful Master.
- Work in harmony with your Brethren. Even if you have disagreements with another Brother, keep positive, be respectful and engage in constructive discussion (see the Entered Apprentice apron charge).
- Not raise issues of controversy in Lodge before clearing it with the Worshipful Master before the Lodge meeting begins. In general, partisan politics and religious dogma are not to be discussed in Lodge.

Raising an issue in Lodge

If you wish to raise an issue in Lodge, please make sure you do it at the appropriate time. Usually the Worshipful Master will ask if anyone has anything to say, which should be your cue.



To request permission to speak you should:

1. Stand up
2. Step in the step of the degree
3. Salute with the penal sign of the degree
4. Say “Worshipful Master”
5. Wait to be acknowledged by the Worshipful Master to continue
6. State your issue
7. Thank the Worshipful Master. Do NOT salute again
8. Sit down

Exiting the Lodge before Closing

Sometimes you will need to leave the Lodge before closing. You may be asked to leave if the Lodge is presenting a degree higher than what you already have, or you may need to excuse yourself for personal reasons.

1. If you wish to excuse yourself, wait for an appropriate time (e.g. not during degree work). Ask permission to speak (see “raising an issue in lodge” above). Ask permission to retire.
2. Once you receive the Worshipful Master’s permission to retire, square the Lodge (see “Entering the Lodge” above) and stop at the Altar.
3. Wait.
4. After the Tyler replies to the knocks of the Inner Guard, salute the Worshipful Master with the penal sign of the degree and square the Lodge to the exit door.



Voting on Candidates

When voting on prospective candidates in Lodge you will receive two balls, one white and one black.

Before voting you should not voice an opinion about the candidate; that part should be done at the Committee of General Purposes when the candidate was discussed.

The deacons will present the voting boxes to you. In some lodges you go to the altar to vote.

To vote “Yes” put the white ball in the white box and the black ball in the black box.

To vote “No” put the black ball in the white box and the white ball in the black box. BE VERY CAREFUL IN YOUR VOTING. Please vote “No” only when you have good grounds to assume the candidate is inappropriate to be a Mason.

Giving Grand Honours

Ask your Sponsor or Mentor to explain to you what Grand Honours mean, to whom they are given and how to give them.

Visiting other Lodges

Visiting other Lodges is part and parcel of the fraternity. It is recommended that as a new Mason you join other Lodge members in your traveling. When traveling to another Lodge, a Mason who has not yet attained the rank of a Master Mason (i.e. an EA or FC) must be accompanied by a Master Mason who can vouch for him in order to be granted entry to the visited Lodge.

The Lodge Summons states various opportunities to visit other Lodges in the district, and your Worshipful Master or Secretary may connect you with other members of your Lodge who will be traveling to visit other Lodges.



Banquet Hour

Lodges usually have a formal or informal Banquet Hour (refreshments and socializing) before or after Lodge. Your Lodge Summons will inform you of the type and time of the Banquet Hour or refreshments.

Formal Banquet Hour

This is a formal meal with head table, speeches etc. Please make sure to follow the direction of the Director of Ceremonies (DOC).

Informal Banquet Hour

Enjoy mingling with your Brethren. Socializing is part of being fraternal!



WHAT NEXT?

What is Masonry all about?

Masonry's aim is to support a Brother's personal and moral growth. We hope to help make a better society one person at a time. We try to help good men make themselves better.

Masonry is founded on three grand principles:

- *Brotherly Love* – This is the fraternal component of Masonry. This is performed through social events and visitation of other Lodges.
- *Relief* – this is the community service component of Masonry. We give back to our community, our society, our country and mankind in general. We do so by fundraising, donating blood, assisting our members and their widows and volunteering.
- *Truth* – This is the education component of Masonry. There is a lot to learn and to contemplate on. Careful reflection leads to growth and may be considered a life-long journey.

As a Mason you are invited to take part in all our activities.

We hope you enjoy your Masonic journey!

Who can answer my questions?

As a new Mason you may have a lot of questions. This document tries to answer the common ones, but there may be more that it does not cover.

If you have a question you may contact:



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- Your Sponsor – The person who helped you get into Masonry is your “Sponsor” and is probably the Mason you know best and with whom you feel most comfortable.
 - Your Mentor – Some Lodges assign a mentor to new members. The Mentors have a wealth of knowledge to share and are happy to do so.
 - Your Lodge Secretary – As the chief administrator he knows a lot about what is going on and can point you in the right direction to others who may help you.
 - Your Worshipful Master – As the highest officer, he is here to serve you too. The Worshipful Master, as expected from the role, is very busy, so do try to approach others first.
 - Your Lodge Officers – These dedicated members of your Lodge are committed to your Lodge and that means to you, too!
 - Any Brother – We are all here to support you as a Brother!

Advancing to the next degrees

If you have not completed your Master Mason degree, you should work on attaining it.

This requires memorizing some ancient texts and reciting them in Lodge. Memorizing parts of the ritual will help you learn more about Masonry and is a great way to get more involved with the Craft. If you feel that you are not able to do it, speak with your Sponsor and Worshipful Master; there may be some concessions made to help you get it done.



Opportunities to get involved and grow

There are many opportunities for a Mason to get involved and grow. You will find that the more you give to Masonry (your time, effort and involvement) the more you will get out of it (personal growth, networking and social enjoyment).

Following are some suggestions for ways to get more involved in Masonry. Ask how to get involved in things that interest you (see “Who can answer my questions?”)

Ritual Work

If you enjoy committing things to memory and acting them out, you are invited to take an active part in our rituals.

Become an Officer

If you enjoy taking part in the Rituals you may consider becoming an Officer, and one day becoming a Worshipful Master yourself!

Support our Community Services

Get involved in our volunteering and fundraising work.

Join a Committee

You may join your Lodge committees and help organize different events and activities

Visit other Lodges

The best way to know more about Masonry is to meet more Masons! Visiting other Lodges is a great way to meet wonderful, new people.



Learn More

If you want to learn more about Masonry, look at the Grand Lodge Website for a wealth of resources: www.grandlodge.on.ca

When you have completed your Master Mason's degree, you may enroll in the Grand Lodge College of Freemasonry: Also available at www.grandlodge.on.ca

There are also various books and publications by Grand Lodge that you may purchase through your Lodge secretary.

CONCLUSION

Masonry is a life-long journey. I hope this document helps you get started on this life-long adventure!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This manual was written by Bro. Eyal Edelman with the assistance of R. W. Bro. David Cameron and W. Bro. Bruce Palanik.



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