



DISTRICT GRAND LODGE OF BOMBAY

LODGE SECRETARY'S HANDBOOK

Compiled by

**W Bro Kersasp R. Dadachanji, PGStB
District Grand Secretary**

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PREFACE

This handbook is compiled for the information and guidance of the Secretaries of Lodges in the District Grand Lodge of Bombay.

Unless otherwise specified, or apparent from the context, the terms "District" and "District Grand Lodge" denote the District Grand Lodge of Bombay throughout this document. The term "Grand Lodge" denotes the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE).

The information contained herein is based on the following sources:

- The Book of Constitutions.
- The booklet "Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft" (IGMC).
- The book "Masonic Etiquette Today" by W Bro Graham Redman, Assistant Grand Secretary.
- By-Laws of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay.
- Inputs received from time to time from Grand Lodge.
- Inputs received from Secretaries and Scribes E in the District.

This handbook does not replace the Book of Constitutions, nor does it purport to be totally comprehensive. The Secretary is well advised to study the Book of Constitutions and refer to it as and when the need arises, for "there is scarcely a case of difficulty can occur in the Lodge in which that book will not set you right."

The Secretary's office is probably the most important office in the Lodge, for several reasons:

- Being the first point of contact, he is the interface between the Lodge and the outside world. All correspondence and communications to and from the Lodge is either originated by him or passes through his hands.
- Unlike other officers the Secretary usually holds his office for several years in succession, and with time becomes familiar with his various duties.
- Owing to his familiarity with the Rules and Regulations, other Officers, notably the Master, often consult him for advice, opinion, or interpretation to help resolve an unusual or problematic issue. His experience and maturity are probably his most important "working tools".
- In effect, it is the Secretary who is the Managing Executive of the Lodge, looking after its affairs to keep the Lodge healthy.

At every Lodge meeting, the Secretary must have on his table the following books.

- The Book of Constitutions
- The booklet "Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft"
- The District By-laws
- The Lodge By-laws

- The Lodge Book of Traditions, if it exists.
- The Lodge Secretary's handbook.

The Book of Constitutions is the ultimate source of information on Masonic matters and procedure. It is updated from time to time as and when the Grand Board of General Purposes sees it fit to introduce a suitable Notice of Motion for adoption at a Grand Lodge Communication. Updates to the Book of Constitutions are published in the proceedings of the Quarterly Communications. The current updated edition of the Book is available on the Grand Lodge website <http://www.ugle.org.uk/about/book-of-constitutions>.

The Secretary is well advised to read through the Proceedings of the Quarterly Communications of Grand Lodge which are forwarded to him by the District office from time to time, and which he is advised to file. He is advised to highlight those points which he may find as useful future references, and make a note of the relevant pages on the first page of the Communication. He will also find these Communications on the Grand Lodge website <http://www.ugle.org.uk/news-events>.

The booklet "Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft" is updated by Grand Lodge annually and sent along with the Masonic Year Book. This touches upon important do's and don'ts, and gives particularly good guidance related to incorporation of modern technology into Masonic matters. The latest edition is the one to be referred to, and it is available on the Grand Lodge website <http://www.ugle.org.uk/about/book-of-constitutions>.

The Book of Constitutions has evolved over three centuries along with the evolution of Grand Lodge. It is therefore understandable that a particular subject may be addressed by several Rules spread across the Book. An attempt has been made in this handbook to gather the scattered Rules to give the reader a more crystallized view of a subject.

An attempt has been made to distil the essence of a lengthy Rule, taking care not to miss important information. However, it may be possible that some information has been inadvertently omitted, and District Grand Secretary will be grateful to receive feedback in this matter from the Lodges.

The Book of Constitutions, though comprehensive, does not, and, indeed, cannot, address peculiar situations which may arise in a Lodge. The Master and Secretary may then need to take recourse to one of the following.

- The resolution of a similar precedent if it exists.
- Seeking assistance of the District Grand Secretary to find a viable solution. The District Grand Secretary's office is to provide whatever assistance is necessary to resolve genuine issues, seeking advice of Grand Lodge if found necessary.
- Use of a practical, "common sense" approach taking especial care that it does not violate the stipulations in the Book of Constitutions. District Grand Secretary invites dialogue with the Lodges particularly in such cases, and these may, in time and if found worthy, be incorporated into the Lodge Secretary's handbook.

As this is a Secretary's handbook, numerous topics addressed in the Book of Constitutions which lie outside the purview of the duties and responsibilities of a Secretary, are not addressed herein.

If the Secretaries find themselves better informed about their duties and procedures, this book would have adequately served its purpose.

It is proposed to issue annually an updated version of this handbook.

I acknowledge with thanks the encouragement and guidance received from RW Bro Percy J. Driver, District Grand Master, and the very valuable inputs received from W Bro P. Venkatraman, Past Assistant District Grand Master, W Bro Michael T. Holland, President District Board of General Purposes, W Bro Lister Park of Grand Lodge Registrations Department, and several Lodge Secretaries and Chapter Scribes E during the compilation of this handbook.

Kersasp R. Dadachanji, PGStB
District Grand Secretary/Scribe E

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1. **General Responsibilities and Duties**

- 1 To issue the Summons for each Meeting
- 2 To record the Minutes of the proceedings of every meeting.
- 3 To communicate with the District in the following matters
 - Admission of Members
 - Submission of Annual returns
 - Submission of Installation Returns
 - Invitations to District to Meetings
 - Requests for Dispensations
 - Applications for Grand Lodge Certificates
 - Any other relevant matter
- 4 To communicate to the Brethren the following
 - Communications from Grand Lodge received through the District
 - Circulars and other communications received from the District
 - Correspondence with individual members and/or other Lodges
 - Any other relevant matter.
- 5 All communication between the Lodge and Grand Lodge will be routed through the District Grand Secretary.
- 6 All communication between the Lodge and other Constitutions will be through the District Grand Secretary.

2. **Warrant of the Lodge (Rules 101, 102, 103, 190)**

- 1 The Warrant is the authority (by Grand Lodge) under which the Lodge meets. The Master shall produce it at every meeting of the Lodge.
- 2 It is, strictly speaking, the property of Grand Lodge, and the Lodge Master is merely its custodian during his term of office. It must be returned to Grand Lodge should the Lodge cease to operate either of its own volition or by a decision of the Grand Lodge to erase it, or if it amalgamates with another Lodge.
- 3 It is the duty and responsibility of the Master to ensure that while in his custody the Warrant is not effaced or disfigured.

- 4 Withholding a Warrant and preventing it from being displayed is a serious Masonic offence, calling for disciplinary action against the offending Brother(s).
- 5 If the Warrant is lost, the Lodge cannot meet until a temporary Warrant of Confirmation is obtained from Grand Lodge. This is in the form of a letter from Grand Lodge and bearing its seal, authorizing the Lodge to meet. The usual period that a Lodge may meet under the Warrant of Confirmation is 6 months, that time being allowed for the original Warrant to be recovered, at which time the Warrant of Confirmation is to be returned to Grand Lodge.
- 6 Since the cost of a replacement Warrant is considerable, a prudent Lodge will have its Warrant insured.
- 7 Upon dissolution the warrant and other books and papers relating to the affairs of the Lodge will be surrendered to the Grand Lodge.
- 8 The Warrant of a Lodge is not transferable to another Lodge and must not be improperly disposed of. These are serious Masonic offences, and the Lodge found guilty of them is liable to erasure.

3. By-laws (Rules 136 to 138)

- 1 A Lodge may frame its own By-laws, but these must not contravene the Rules laid out in the Book of Constitutions.
- 2 The draft By-laws must first be adopted in open Lodge [**in accordance with the procedure prescribed in the Model By-laws.**].
- 3 The By-Laws need Grand Lodge's approval for them to take effect.
 - Grand Lodge has empowered District Grand Master to approve on behalf of Grand Master those By-laws which are in line with the Model By-laws issued by Grand Lodge.(See Appendix 1)
 - In every other case the draft By-laws must be sent to Grand Lodge for approval.
- 4 If the entire set of By-laws has been re-written (e.g. to bring them in line with the Model By-laws), then the entire document must be sent to the District Grand Secretary for approval by District Grand Master.

If, however, only selected By-law(s) is/are amended, then these amendments as well as the original By-law(s) must be submitted for approval. These can shown in columnar form on the same page, the columns being headed "Original" and "Amended".
- 5 Seven copies must be submitted to the District office for approval. After District Grand Master's approval, two approved copies will be returned to the Lodge, two copies forwarded to Grand Lodge, and three retained in the District office by District Grand Secretary.
- 6 A printed copy of the approved By-laws must be sent to each member. Two additional printed copies must be sent to each of Grand Secretary and District Grand Secretary.

- 7 A copy of the By-laws must be presented to the Master at his Installation, and also to each Brother on his initiation.

4. Prohibited days and District Holidays (Rule 139)

- 1 The Book of Constitutions does not permit a meeting to be held on Sundays, Christmas day and Good Friday, these being termed "prohibited days".
- 2 Besides the above-mentioned prohibited days, the District observes certain public holidays when the office will remain closed. These are termed "District holidays". A Lodge is permitted to hold a meeting on a District holiday, but it is entitled to a free dispensation should a change of date within seven days on either side of a District holiday is desired.
- 3 A list of District Holidays is placed at Appendix 2.

5. Regular and Additional Officers (Rule 104)

- 1 The Officers of a Lodge may be classified as *regular*, or *additional*.
 - The regular officers are the Master and his two Wardens, a Treasurer, a Secretary, two Deacons, an Inner Guard and a Tyler.
 - The additional officers are the Almoner, Charity Steward (both mandatory appointments), and the Chaplain, Director of Ceremonies, Mentor, Assistant Director of Ceremonies, Organist, Assistant Secretary and Steward(s) (optional appointments).
- 2 No Brother can hold more than one regular office in the Lodge at the same time; but the Master may appoint a Brother who is holding a regular office to one additional office also. For example, a Treasurer (regular office) may also be appointed as the Lodge Mentor (additional office) if considered suitable.
- 3 The order of precedence of the officers is placed at Appendix 3.
- 4 Should a vacancy occur in a regular office other than that of Master, it shall be filled for the remainder of the year by election or appointment (as appropriate) of a Brother not serving in a regular office at the time the vacancy occurred. If an election is required, due notice thereof will need to be given on the Summons. (Rule 121).

6. Register of Members (Rule 146 (ii))

1. Each Lodge must maintain a Register of members wherein are entered all pertinent personal and Masonic details of each present and past member, viz.
 - Name in full
 - Residential and business addresses

- Date of Birth
- Profession
- Dates of Initiation, Passing, Raising, Joining or Rejoining
- Offices held with years appointed thereto.
- District Offices / Ranks, with years appointed thereto.
- Grand Ranks, with years appointed thereto.
- Date of cessation (last day of the Lodge year), exclusion, resignation or death.

7. Meetings

1 **Regular Meetings**

It is expected that the Lodge will meet on the days and time specified in its By-laws. Such meetings are called Regular meetings.

A Regular meeting may be postponed or pre-poned by upto 28 days by Dispensation from the District Grand Master (Rule 139(c)).

2 **Quorum**

Five members excluding the Tyler and the candidate for degree working, if any, will form the quorum. Two must be members of the Lodge, at least one of whom shall be an Installed Master. (IGMC).

3 **Emergency Meetings**

An Emergency meeting is one which is held on a day other than the day of its Regular meeting. It may only be called under extenuating circumstances for a specific purpose and no other and under Dispensation from the District Grand Master (Rule 140).

No work other than that specified in the agenda will be conducted at an Emergency meeting. Neither will the Minutes of the previous regular Meeting be confirmed at an Emergency meeting nor will the charity bag be circulated.

The Summons for an Emergency meeting must not have the item "Any other business" or equivalent in the Agenda.

See also "Election and Initiation at an Emergency meeting".

4 **Abandonment of Meeting**

A meeting may have to be abandoned altogether if the required quorum is not present. This should be recorded, giving the circumstances for abandonment (e.g. heavy rainfall, public rallies causing traffic blockage, etc.), the names of members present, and the apologies received along with reason, if known.

A meeting cannot be cancelled in advance of its regular day of Meeting. It may only be pre-poned, postponed, or abandoned in the light of circumstances prevailing at the

time for which it was summoned. In other words, it can at most fail to meet for lack of quorum.

The occasional abandonment of a meeting does not affect the Lodge's continuity of working. This can happen only if the Lodge fails to meet for a whole year.

Failure to meet for a whole year makes the Lodge liable for erasure (Rule 189).

8. **Summons**

- 1 The Summons of each meeting must be sent to each subscribing member and to the Tyler if he is not a subscribing member.
- 2 Being in arrears of subscription does not disentitle a member from receiving the Summons (Rule 145).
- 3 The Summons must be issued under the name of the Secretary, or, in his absence, the Assistant Secretary.
- 4 It is recommended that the Summons must reach the members at least 10 days in advance of the Meeting.
- 5 The Summons may be sent to the members in hard copy form or by email, as is agreed by the members of the Lodge.
- 6 Hard copy of the Summons must additionally be forwarded to each of the following:
 - District Grand Master,
 - Deputy District Grand Master
 - Assistant District Grand Master
 - District Grand Secretary (2 copies)
 - Visiting officer
 - District Grand Mentor.
- 7 The Summons must contain the following minimum information
 - Name and Number of the Lodge, and date of consecration
 - Names of WM, SW and JW
 - Name and contact details of Secretary and Treasurer
 - Agenda for the Meeting
 - Updated list of all subscribing members with appellation (Bro or W Bro), date of Initiation, office in the Lodge, District or Grand Rank and at least one contact particular, viz. residential address or email address or Mobile No.

- District Office address and telephone no.
 - Indication of days and months of meetings.
 - Any Notice or other information specified by the District for inclusion in the Summons.
- 8 Although the District recommends A4 as the paper size, the Lodge may choose to deviate in view of membership size, convenience, etc.

9. Invitation to Meetings

- 1 It is common practice among Lodges for members to invite non-member Masons to their meetings. The invitations may be formal or informal. Informal invitations between members and their Mason friends are outside the scope of this handbook.
- 2 A formal invitation to another Lodge must always be sent in writing from the Secretary. Although email is increasingly being used as a medium of communication, formal correspondence between the Lodge and the outside world is recommended to be done on the Lodge's letterhead. A common device to effect speedy communication is to write the invitation on the letterhead and email a scanned copy to the intended recipient, the hard copy being sent by regular post.
- 3 The particular case of interest is an invitation to the District Grand Master to a Lodge Installation Meeting. Note that the decision to invite the District to a Lodge Meeting must be taken in a Lodge Committee Meeting, and later ratified in principle in open Lodge.
- 4 Protocol demands that the Lodge Secretary conveys to District Grand Secretary an invitation from either the Ruling Master or the Master Elect to District Grand Master to attend an Installation Meeting. The invitation may initially be sent by email to check on District Grand Master's convenience, so that a change of date, if necessary, may be decided upon, if the Lodge so desires.
- 5 Once District Grand Master (or his representative's) attendance in informally confirmed, a formal letter to the District Grand Secretary would be in order. Nearer to the date of meeting, the following documents must be submitted for perusal by District Grand Master and his representative:
- a copy of the Summons,
 - the Stewardship Report of the outgoing Master,
 - a copy of the finalized, and preferably audited accounts.
- 6 It is also the Secretary's duty to inform the Lodge Organising Committee (if any) to arrange for reception of the District Grand Master and his District Officers, and extension of other Masonic and personal courtesies to them. This includes transportation and booking of accommodation in the case of outstation Lodges.

10. Minutes

- 1 The Minutes of a meeting is a true and faithful record of the Proceedings of the Meeting. They are the main source for future reference for any purpose.
- 2 It is the Secretary's duty to record the proceedings of every Lodge meeting as the Minutes of the Meeting. (Rule 144)
- 3 If a meeting is abandoned, the fact must also be recorded in the Minutes.
- 4 The Minutes must record the date and place of the Meeting, and must indicate the names of every Brother present, and the office he assumed during Meeting, as well as the names of Visiting brethren.
- 5 The Secretary should exercise his judgment and discretion when writing the Minutes. While avoiding trivial or undue detail, the Minutes must be succinct and include all the proceedings of the meeting.
- 6 If an issue has been the subject of prolonged discussion, the important points made and the decision arrived at must be recorded carefully and clearly. Each Brother's individual contribution or viewpoint need not be dilated on at undue length unless it is of particular import.
- 7 When recording a matter of disagreement or dispute, the Secretary must be particularly careful to keep the record objective and completely free of bias. Any profanity uttered in anger must be suitably toned down to preserve the dignity of the Lodge, unless expressly directed by the Worshipful Master to be recorded verbatim.
- 8 It is recommended that when sensitive issues are recorded, the Secretary reads aloud the words which would be entered into the Minutes, so that all members present are in agreement that the record is true and accurate.
- 9 All announcements of communications received, as well as other matters made at the three Risings must be noted in full, giving relevant particulars. Circulars and other correspondence received from the District office must be announced in open Lodge. Any communication specifically asked by the District office to be read in open Lodge must be read in full.
- 10 The Secretary is free to circulate any communication (circular, correspondence, etc.) from the District office to the members. He must, however, use his discretion when doing so.
- 11 The Minutes may be read by the Secretary or Assistant Secretary at the next meeting, or, as is now an increasing practice as a time-saving device, be circulated with the Summons of the next Meeting, and confirm them as having been previously circulated and assumed read.

There may however, be occasions for the Minutes to be read in open Lodge even though they may previously have been circulated. An example would be a Visiting District Dignitary at an Installation Meeting when the Minutes of the Election Meeting are read as a matter of courtesy to the Visitor.

- 12 The Minutes must be confirmed in open Lodge at the next Meeting by show of hands, and signed by the WM in the Chair on that date.
- 13 The Minutes book is a compilation of every Regular, Emergency and Lodge Committee Meeting held. It must also contain the record of meeting(s) abandoned under whatever circumstances.
- 14 The Minutes book must be made available for inspection to the District Grand Secretary or Assistant District Grand Secretary as when required.

11. Degree working

- 1 The minimum time interval between two successive degrees conferred on a candidate is 4 weeks in the normal course (Rule 172).
- 2 The Book of Constitutions permits the minimum time interval to one week under dispensation from District Grand Master for Lodges outside the U.K. (Rule 90). Such dispensation will be granted only rarely and under very special circumstances.
- 3 There is no restriction on the number of different degrees that may be worked on the same day. In such cases it is advisable to do the degree workings in reverse order, so that the candidate for the lower degree may time their arrival for the expected start of his ceremony, and would not need to be asked to retire during the working of a higher degree.
- 4 The same degree may not be conferred on at most two candidates except by dispensation granted by the District Grand Master (Rule 168). In such an event, the degree working up to and including the Obligation will be conducted on each candidate separately. Thereafter the candidates will be taken in pairs up to their retirement from the Lodge to restore themselves to their personal comforts. Thereafter all candidates may be taken together up to completion.

Notwithstanding the above, it is not an advisable practice to confer the same degree on more than two candidates on the same day as it dilutes the solemnity and seriousness of the ceremony.

12. Registration forms

- 1 The term "Registration form" as used in this document denotes Registration Form A issued by Grand Lodge to be filled by candidates seeking admission into a Lodge. The term "Proposal form" is also often used to denote the same.
- 2 A prospective member may be admitted into a Lodge by one of the following modes:
 - As an Initiate
 - As a Joining member from a Lodge under the United Grand Lodge of England
 - As a Foreign Joining member, i.e. from a Lodge not under the United Grand Lodge of England

- As a Rejoining member

3 Whatever the mode of admission, the candidate must apply for membership on the official Registration form provided to him by the Lodge Secretary. The Secretary must make special note of the following points

4 Each incoming member must be proposed and seconded by two subscribing members. There is no qualification laid down for a member to be eligible to propose or second a candidate. However, the proposed candidate must be sufficiently well-known to the proposer and seconder, for them to vouch for his character, that he would be a worthy asset to the Lodge.

Note: The proposer and seconder are responsible to the Lodge for all fees payable in respect of the candidate. (Rule 171)

5 The candidate must fill the Registration form in his own handwriting on pages 1 and 2. In a sense, this indicates that he is applying for membership freely and voluntarily, of his "own free will and accord".

Note: It is observed occasionally that the Secretary fills the Registration form on behalf of the candidate. This often results in errors, especially in spelling of the name (e.g. xxxwalla instead of xxxwala), address, email id, etc.

6 The information he gives must be complete and honest, especially the declaration on Page 2. A false declaration, if discovered later, can result in disciplinary action (including expulsion) not only against the candidate but against the proposer and seconder as well. Extra care must therefore be taken to verify the antecedents of every new candidate before proposing him for membership.

7 The address given must be the full residential address with PIN code.

8 The profession or occupation must give a clear indication of his line of work, preferably, though not mandatorily, including the name of the company / organization. Grand Lodge uses this information to construct a statistical profile of the members.
An entry like "Service" is too vague, whereas one like "Advocate specializing in Labour Law for small-scale rural industry" may be too verbose.

9 In the case of Initiates, the proposer and seconder must answer the questions on Page 3 and write their remarks reflecting their judgment of the candidate's suitability and their view of his future contribution to the Lodge.

10 The Joining / Rejoining candidate must declare on the Registration form the name of every Lodge of which he has ever been a member. This includes Lodges from which he has already resigned or been excluded (Rule 181) or cessed (Rule 148). In the case of a Rejoining member, he must include the admitting Lodge of which he was earlier a member and now wishes to rejoin.

11 The duly filled and ink-signed Registration form must be sent in duplicate by the Secretary to the District Grand Secretary, who will forward the original to London and retain the other for his record. The secretary should send the form immediately after the admission of the brother into the lodge by Initiation or Joining.

12 **IMPORTANT**

Negligence on the part of the Secretary in submitting the Registration form may prove detrimental to the Brother should his application for financial assistance be forwarded to one of the Central Charities operating under Grand Lodge.

13. **Subscriptions and fees (Rule 147)**

- 1 Although this topic is properly within the purview of responsibilities of the Treasurer, it is included here as the Secretary is more often the recipient of the fees and subscriptions.
- 2 Every Brother must pay an annual subscription if he is to remain a member of a Lodge in the District. This annual subscription is in three parts:
 - Grand Lodge subscription, as decided by the Grand Board of General Purposes,
 - District subscription, as decided by the District Board of General Purposes,
 - Lodge subscription, as decided by the Lodge.
- 3 The Grand Lodge and District subscriptions will be communicated to each Lodge annually by the District Grand Secretary well in advance to enable the Lodge to announce to its Brethren the subscriptions payable for the coming year.
- 4 A part of the District subscription is a mandatory contribution by each member of the District to the District Fund of Benevolence. The quantum of this contribution is indicated in the District By-laws and will remain in force until revised and the revision adopted at a District Communication.
- 5 According to the current By-laws of the District, a Brother pays the District subscription only through his Mother/Primary Lodge in the District.
- 6 All subscriptions are to be paid in advance for the ensuing year. A Brother who is a member of a Lodge at the start of the first day of the Lodge year is liable to pay his subscription for the year. His subscription having been paid, unless the Brother resigns or is excluded from the Lodge, his membership remains valid until midnight of the last day of the Lodge year.
- 7 Resignation at any time during the year, even on the first day itself, does not exempt the Brother from paying his subscription.
- 8 An Honorary member is exempt from paying the annual subscription.
- 9 Besides the Annual Subscription, certain fees are payable for certain privileges, e.g.
 - upon Initiation or joining from a Foreign Constitution, which covers the cost of the Grand Lodge Certificate (there is no fee for joining from a Lodge under UGLE),
 - upon being awarded a District rank, being either a first appointment or promotion,

- upon being awarded a Grand rank, being either a first appointment or promotion.
- 10 The various fees payable to the District are indicated in the District By-laws, and will remain in force until revised and the revision(s) adopted at a District Communication.
 - 11 The Lodge may also levy certain fees (e.g. Joining or Dining) and these are to be indicated in its By-laws, and will remain in force until revised and the revision(s) adopted at a Regular meeting, and the revisions are reflected in the By-laws and approved by the District Grand Master.
 - 12 If a revision in Lodge subscription is deemed necessary, the decision to revise the Lodge subscription must be taken in a Lodge Committee meeting and a Notice of Motion to be proposed and seconded by subscribing members must be included as an item in the Agenda on the summons of the next Regular meeting, for adoption by vote in open Lodge.
 - 13 All fees payable to Grand Lodge, District and Lodge will be reduced by 50% for a member under the age of 25. (Rule 270B).

14. **Initiation (Rule 157, 158, 162, 164, 166)**

- 1 In the ordinary course, the candidate for Initiation must be at least 21 years of age and of good repute. (Rule 157). A younger candidate may be initiated under special circumstances by Dispensation granted by the District Grand Master.
- 2 After receipt of the Registration form duly filled and signed by the candidate as well as his Proposer and Secunder, the candidate is interviewed by a committee of the Lodge to assess his suitability. The committee must satisfy itself that he is right for Freemasonry (and Freemasonry right for him) and that he will "fit into" the Lodge. If he is found unsuitable, the proposer and secunder should be informed in private.
- 3 After the candidate's suitability for admission is confirmed, he will be formally proposed for election to membership. The proposal for election of a candidate must be done in open Lodge.

It is the general practice to propose a candidate for election at the third Rising. It should be noted that candidates for Initiation must be proposed at the first Rising and not the third. This is because the candidate is applying for his first membership of a Grand Lodge, and his proposal must therefore be taken up at the first Rising after the announcement of Grand Lodge communications. Joining and foreign joining candidates are already members of Grand Lodge (either UGLE or another constitution), and their proposals for election to membership is properly done at the third Rising before the recording of apologies.

- 4 The candidate must be elected by ballot at the next meeting. If the ballot be not so taken, the proposal shall lapse.
- 5 The formal election by ballot must be shown as an item in the agenda on the next summons. This item must carry the candidate's full name, age, address, profession, and the proposer and secunder's names and the date of proposal.

- 6 At the meeting that the candidate is to be elected, the Secretary must read the candidate's form in full, and declare that the Master has appended his signature at the bottom of page 3.
- 7 A separate ballot must be held for each candidate to be elected. Balloting must be done on a day of Regular meeting only.
- 8 If the ballot is not clear, the candidate cannot be admitted. However, the Lodge by-laws may permit a minimum time interval before which the same candidate may be re-proposed and re-balloted for membership.
- 9 After the election, but before his Initiation, the candidate must sign an official declaration the wording which is given in Rule 162. A perusal of the wording will show that upon his first entrance into the Lodge, the Candidate, while still hoodwinked, reaffirms this same declaration. It is the common practice among Lodges to have a Book of Declarations (one declaration per page), into which the candidate appends his signature.
- 10 If the candidate is present on the date of the election, he may be initiated that very evening. However, if he is not, then all subsequent summonses must include initiation of the candidate as an item on the agenda, even if the candidate is not available for the ceremony until the initiation is done. If the initiation is not held within one year of his election, the proposal becomes invalid, and the candidate will need to be balloted again.
- 11 A candidate becomes a subscribing member of the Lodge upon his Initiation. (Rule 166).
The Secretary must send the duly filled and signed Registration form to the District office at the earliest after initiation, and not wait till he is raised as is the mistaken notion.

15. Election and Initiation at an Emergency meeting (Rule 160)

- 1 Proposals for election of a candidate for Initiation, and Degree workings are expected to be done in Regular Meetings only. An Emergency meeting may be called to elect a candidate for initiation only as a matter of urgency if waiting till the next Regular meeting will result in a serious hardship to the candidate. Hardship to the Lodge or one or more of its members is not a sufficient cause to hold an Emergency meeting for the purpose of such election.
- 2 The candidate must submit the Registration form at least 14 days prior to the day on which the Emergency meeting is scheduled.
- 3 The Summons for the Emergency Meeting must categorically state the reason of the urgency and the nature of the hardship to the candidate. If the ballot is clear, the candidate must be initiated at that same Emergency meeting. No delay is then permissible. The Minutes must reflect all of the above.
- 4 Emergency meetings cannot be called for Second or Third degree working. The practice in some Lodges to pass or raise a candidate so he may qualify to attend a District Communication is strongly disapproved.

16. Initiation of a Lewis

- 1 A Lewis is the uninitiated son of a Mason, and it does not matter whether the son was born before or after the father became a Mason.
- 2 It is misconception that a Lewis may be initiated under the age of 21 by virtue of his being a Lewis. The only "privilege" that a Lewis enjoys is that if there are two or more candidates for Initiation on a particular day, the Lewis will be the Senior for the purpose of the ceremony and will be initiated first.
- 3 A Lewis cannot claim precedence over candidates proposed or elected previous to himself, and he must take his place in the usual rotation on any waiting list.

17. Joining / Rejoining Member (Rule 163(a))

- 1 The general procedure for admitting a joining member is similar to that given above for the Initiate. The following points are particularly relevant for joining members.
- 2 Rule 163(c) requires the joining member to produce his Grand Lodge certificate for examination by the Secretary of the admitting Lodge. If this is not produced, the application for joining must be rejected.

A corollary to this requirement is that a Lodge may admit a Joining member only after he has been raised to the degree of Master Mason. For it is only after this stage in his Masonic career that a Grand Lodge certificate is issued. The Secretary must ensure that Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts are not admitted as Joining members.

- 3 The joining candidate must also submit to the Secretary of the admitting Lodge a clearance certificate from each of his current Lodge(s) stating that he is not in arrears of his dues to it. He must also give a certificate from each of his previous Lodges (where he has ceased to be a member) stating the circumstances in which he left the Lodge and whether at that time all dues were paid, or have since been paid. If a previous Lodge has, since his departure, ceased to exist, and he is not in possession of the necessary certificate, there shall be substituted a certificate from the Grand Secretary stating all relevant facts so far as they are known.
- 4 Rule 163(d) states clearly that the onus of ensuring that the proposed joining or re-joining member is not in arrears elsewhere lies squarely upon the admitting Lodge. Any default by the candidate in this respect will have to be made up by the admitting Lodge.
- 5 It is pertinent to note that the Grand Lodge system cannot register a joining member if he is shown to be in arrears by any of his present or past Lodges.
- 6 If a candidate has been balloted for membership towards the end of the year, he is often admitted formally at the start of the next year to save him a year's expense. This is acceptable practice, in view of the fact that the interval of a year is allowed between election and admittance.

However, in the case of a joining member so balloted, it is important that he does not attend any meeting of the admitting Lodge (even as an invitee of a subscribing member) before he is officially admitted in the next year. If he lapses in this regard

and attends a Lodge Meeting, he will be considered as having been admitted by default, and is liable to pay for all dues of the current year as well.

18. **Foreign Joining Members**

- 1 The general procedure for admitting a Foreign joining member (i.e. from a Lodge not under UGLE) is similar to that given above for the Joining member. The following points are particularly relevant for Foreign Joining members.
- 2 A Foreign Joining member must belong to a Lodge under a Grand Lodge recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England. A list of recognized Grand Lodges, with relevant particulars, is given in the Masonic year Book issued yearly by our Grand Lodge, and forwarded to each Lodge by the District office.
- 3 Even if a Foreign Joining member has resigned from every Lodge under a Grand Lodge not recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England, it may still not be permissible for him to be admitted into a Lodge under United Grand Lodge of England.
In case of doubt, the Secretary is advised to consult the District Grand Secretary.
- 4 After the election, but before his admittance, the foreign joining candidate must sign an official declaration the wording which is given in Rule 163(f), confirming his adherence to the Book of Constitutions of UGLE and to the Rules and regulations contained therein. The declaration validates the election retrospectively and must be recorded in the Lodge minutes.
- 5 The admitting Lodge of a foreign joining member is not liable for arrears to Lodges outside the English Constitution.

19. **Grand Lodge Certificate (Rule 174)**

- 1 Every member upon being raised to the degree of Master Mason is entitled to a certificate from Grand Lodge. Likewise, a Foreign Joining member is entitled to a similar certificate.
- 2 The Certificate marks the first registration of the member on Grand Lodge Rolls.
- 3 The cost of the certificate is covered in the fee for Initiates or Foreign joining members stipulated by Grand Lodge.
- 4 The Grand Lodge certificate is signed by the Grand Secretary, and countersigned by the District Grand Master and the District Grand Secretary.
- 5 It is the responsibility of the Secretary to apply to the District for the issuance a Grand Lodge certificate in favour of the raised Brother immediately after his Raising or joining from a foreign constitution. The application is to be made on a prescribed form available from the District Office. Each form can comfortably accommodate three candidates.

- 6 **The District will not issue a Grand Lodge certificate to a Brother whose Registration form has not been received by the District and forwarded to Grand Lodge.**
- 7 **No Brother should be exalted in a Chapter without first being in possession of a Grand Lodge Certificate.**
- 8 While the recipient Brother appends his signature on the Certificate, the Secretary might wish to remind him that the certificate is never to be framed and displayed even in his home; and also impress upon him to take particular care of the certificate, as the cost of a replacement certificate is considerable.

20. **Certificates issued by the Lodge (Rule 175)**

- 1 Every subscribing member who is not in arrears of payment of subscription is entitled to a Certificate of Good standing indicating his tenure of membership and stating that the Brother named thereon is a subscribing member of the Lodge and is not in arrears of payment.
- 2 Such a certificate is required when visiting a Lodge where he may not be known to the Brethren, or when joining another Lodge in any District or Province (in England) under Grand Lodge.
- 3 The certificate of good standing is also to be given to a Brother upon his resignation if he is not indebted to the Lodge.
- 4 A Brother who has been excluded under Rule 181 or ceased under Rule 148 will receive a certificate indicating his tenure of membership. Mention must also be made on the certificate of the fact of exclusion or cessation (as the case may be) and the circumstances which led thereto.

21. **Qualification for Election as Master**

- 1 To qualify for election as Master, a Brother must be either a Ruling or Past Master, or if neither, must have served the office of either Junior or Senior Warden for a full year by the time of his Installation in a regular Lodge under the United Grand Lodge of England.
- 2 A "full year" is taken to be the time from one Installation meeting to the next Installation meeting at the corresponding time in the following year. If the first Installation meeting was postponed by dispensation to a later date, the period from the postponed Installation meeting to the next Installation will be considered as a full year. A Brother who must have been invested as Warden at the postponed Installation Meeting and who has held the office throughout the whole period is qualified.
- 3 Likewise, if the Lodge has, during the course of the year changed its By-laws so that the date of the Installation meeting falls earlier than in the previous year. A Brother who must have been invested as Warden at the first Installation Meeting and who has held the office throughout the whole period is qualified.
- 4 If a Brother was absent at an Installation meeting and invested as a Warden at a subsequent meeting, he would not have held the office of Warden for a full year, and

therefore does not qualify for election to Mastership. In such a case, a Brother who has served only part of a year as Warden may be rendered eligible for election by dispensation granted by the District Grand Master provided the application for Dispensation clearly indicates the circumstances of the case.

22. Qualification for Election as Treasurer

- 1 The only qualification for election as Treasurer is competence to perform the duties of the office and safeguard the Lodge's finances. Seniority by virtue of age or longevity of membership is not a criterion for qualification.

23. Election of Master and Treasurer

- 1 In the normal course, the Master and Treasurer are elected by ballot. If there is more than one candidate for either or both offices, a separate ballot must be held for each. The candidate getting the most votes for each office is declared elected. Note that if the same person is elected to both offices, he will perforce need to give up one, as Master and Treasurer are both regular offices.
- 2 It is important to note that only those members physically present at the Election Meeting may vote. Voting by post or email is invalid.
- 3 There is, however, the possibility of having only one "nomination" for each of the offices of Master or Treasurer. In such an event, a ballot is not necessary, provided the following four conditions are all satisfied.
 - There is only one "nomination".
 - No other member qualified to be elected must have indicated to the Secretary that he wishes to be considered.
 - No member present calls for a ballot.
 - Notice must have been given on the Summons of the Election Meeting of the intention to declare the ballot in favour of the nominated Brother.
- 4 With reference to the last of the above conditions, the notice may take the following preferred form

"To elect a Master, Treasurer and Tyler for the ensuing year. (Note: the only nominations of which the Secretary is aware are of Bro x as Master and Bro y as Treasurer, and subject to the provisions of Rule 105(a) and 112(a) respectively it is proposed to declare the ballot in their favour. Any member may, however, demand a ballot.)"

Special case 1 (Rule 106)

- 5 Master-Elect dies, becomes incapacitated, or notifies his intention not to be installed seven days or more before the next scheduled Installation Meeting. The Secretary will issue a Summons notifying the circumstances, and on the date designated for the Installation Meeting, the members shall elect another Master. The elected Master will be installed within 5 weeks of his Election, either at the next

Regular meeting if held within that period or at an Emergency Meeting called especially for that purpose. The Master, as well as the Wardens and other officers invested on that day will be deemed to have completed a full year by the time of the next Regular and Installation meeting.

Special case 2 (Rule 107)

- 6 Master-Elect dies, becomes incapacitated, or notifies his intention not to be installed less than seven days before the next scheduled Installation Meeting. The outgoing Master will continue as Master for the second year in succession, and shall proceed to invest the Wardens and officers selected by the Master-Elect, or if not so selected appoint Wardens and Officers of his own choice.

Special case 3 (Rule 108)

- 7 Master-Elect unavoidably prevented from attending the Installation Meeting. The Installation may be postponed but must take place within 5 weeks, either at the next Regular meeting if held within that period or at an Emergency Meeting called especially for that purpose. The Master, as well as the Wardens and other officers invested on that day will be deemed to have completed a full year by the time of the next Regular and Installation meeting.
- 8 If the Master-Elect fails to attend the postponed Installation Meeting also, the outgoing Master will continue as Master for the second year in succession, and shall proceed to invest the Wardens and officers selected by the Master-Elect, or if not so selected appoint Wardens and Officers of his own choice.
- 9 If at a Regular or postponed Installation meeting, the Board of Installed Masters cannot be constituted (minimum quorum: three, apart from Master Elect and a Brother acting as Tyler), the provisions of Rule 108 will apply as if the Master-Elect were absent.

24. Conduct of business in the absence of the Master (Rule 119)

- 1 If, while in office, the Master dies, or resigns from the Lodge, or is unable to continue as Master (e.g. serious illness or job transfer to another location), or, very rarely, is removed from office, then the Senior Warden, or in his absence the Junior Warden, or in the absence of both Wardens the Immediate Past Master shall summon the Lodge until the next Regular and Installation meeting, or until the Master is able to resume his office.

The Wardens need not be Installed Masters to be qualified to summon the Lodge.

- 2 At the Lodge meeting, the Master's chair will be taken by the Immediate Past Master or, in his absence, any Past Master of the Lodge, or in their absence any Installed Master (not necessarily of the Lodge) who is a subscribing member of the Lodge. If in the rare event that an Installed Master who is a subscribing member of the Lodge is also not present, the Senior Warden or, in his absence, the Junior Warden, will conduct the business of the Lodge from his own chair, and request an Installed Master to open and close the Lodge.

- 3 If no Installed Master is present, the meeting will be abandoned for lack of quorum, and the fact recorded in the Minute Book of the Lodge.
- 4 The above stipulation also holds if a Master is only temporarily absent owing to his exigencies of his work.

25. Inability of Treasurer to continue (Rule 112)

- 1 If the Treasurer is unable to continue in office and discharge his duties, the Lodge may obtain a Dispensation from the District Grand Master to elect another subscribing member who is not a regular officer of the Lodge to assume the office of Treasurer until the next Election meeting, or until the present Treasurer is able to resume his office, whichever earlier.
- 2 Such election may be conducted either at the next Regular meeting or at an Emergency meeting especially convened for that purpose.
- 3 Notice of such election must appear on the Summons which should be issued at least ten days before the meeting is convened.

26. Tyler (Rule 113)

- 1 The Tyler must be a Master Mason and a subscribing member to at least one Lodge, though not necessarily of the Lodge of which he is appointed Tyler.
- 2 The Tyler is elected at the Regular and Election meeting along with the Master and Treasurer. However, if the Lodge resolves to have a subscribing member as Tyler without emolument, he shall be appointed by the Master along with the other Officers.

27. Election to Honorary Membership (Rule 167)

- 1 The Lodge may elect to Honorary membership any Brother who the Lodge feels has provided valuable service to the Lodge, the District or to the Craft in General.
- 2 Election to Honorary membership must be by ballot, and the procedure to be followed is similar to that for a candidate for Initiation.
- 3 An Honorary member does not pay any subscription to Grand Lodge or to the District or to the Lodge. He has no voting rights, and may not hold any office in the Lodge.
- 4 However, if he is a Past Master and previously a subscribing member of the Lodge, he may propose or second candidates for admission to the Lodge.
- 5 Once elected to Honorary membership, his name will cease to appear on subsequent Grand Lodge and District Returns.
- 6 When the Lodge has received permission from Grand Lodge to wear a Centenary Jewel or Bi-Centenary Bar, the privilege of wearing such Jewel or Bar is restricted to

subscribing members (Master Masons), and an Honorary member if he was a subscribing member within the year prior to his election to Honorary membership.

- 7 A peculiar situation sometimes arises as to whether a Lodge may elect to Honorary membership a Brother who has resigned from it. The Book of Constitutions does not address this situation; hence if the member fulfils the above qualifications, the Lodge may elect him to Honorary membership. The fact, however, remains that by resigning the Brother has voluntarily and deliberately chosen to sever his ties with the Lodge.
- 8 Honorary membership can be terminated by resignation (Rule 183) or exclusion (Rule 181). Cessation of membership (Rule 148) does not apply to an Honorary member as he does not pay any subscription.

28. Resignation (Rule 183)

- 1 A member may voluntarily terminate his membership with the Lodge by submitting his resignation. This may be done in either of two ways:
 - By oral announcement in open Lodge at a regular meeting, or, more usually,
 - By submission of a letter of resignation. The Secretary must communicate the resignation at the first meeting after receiving the letter, unless the Brother withdraws his resignation in the intervening period.
- 2 The resignation may take effect immediately or from some later date specified by the resigning Brother.
- 3 Once announced either by the Brother himself, or by the Secretary, the resignation is irrevocable.
- 4 No formal acceptance of the resignation is necessary.
- 5 It may happen that a Brother resigns in haste or anger. The Book of Constitutions provides a "safety valve" by permitting the other members of the Lodge present at the meeting at which the resignation is announced to prevail upon the Brother to withdraw his resignation. This must be done by a majority vote. If the Brother withdraws his resignation in writing within 21 days of the vote, the resignation stands cancelled.
- 6 If a Brother resigns in consequence of a notice of exclusion served on him under Rule 181, the resignation will not prevent the Lodge from proceeding further with the exclusion process. However, the above safety valve is available for the Lodge to drop the exclusion proceedings prior to a resolution to exclude being passed and prevail upon the Brother to withdraw his resignation.

29. Exclusion (Rule 181)

- 1 Exclusion is the converse of resignation, wherein a Lodge resolves to terminate a Brother's membership. Such a decision is arrived by the Lodge when
 - continuance of a Brother's membership is either detrimental to the peace and harmony within the Lodge, or

- the Brother has brought the Lodge into disrepute, or, less seriously,
 - the Brother has failed to pay his subscription within the time specified in its By-laws.
- 2 A "Private and Confidential" notice must be sent by registered post (or equivalent) to the offending Brother at least 14 days in advance of the meeting at which his exclusion is due to be considered. The Brother must be given a fair opportunity to be present at the meeting to defend himself if he so desires.
 - 3 The other brethren must also be notified of that proceeding at least 10 days in advance of the meeting without revealing the name of the offending Brother in such notice.
 - 4 The vote to pass the resolution for exclusion will be by ballot. The resolution will be considered carried if at least two-thirds of the members present vote in its favour.
 - 5 If the resolution is carried, the exclusion will take effect immediately.
 - 6 An excluded Brother cannot join another Lodge without a clearance certificate or certificate of good standing from the excluding Lodge.
 - 7 The Lodge Secretary will communicate the name of the excluded Brother and the reason of the exclusion to the Grand Secretary through the District Grand Secretary on the next Annual Return. If the exclusion is due to non-payment of subscription, the District Grand Secretary, and through him the Grand Secretary, will be notified when the Brother pays his arrears. If this is not done, the exclusion will remain "active" in Grand Lodge records, and the Grand Lodge system will not accept his subsequent registration with any other Lodge.
 - 8 A Brother who is convinced that he has been excluded unfairly may make a written complaint to the District Grand Master for redressal, and if the District Grand Master is of the opinion that the complaint has merit, he can order the Lodge to reinstate the Brother. A Lodge which refuses to comply with such order is liable for suspension. (Rule 182).

30. Cessation (Rule 148)

- 1 If a Brother remains in arrears of his subscription for two years, he automatically ceases to be a member of the Lodge.
- 2 The Lodge is not obliged to inform the Brother of his lapse and the consequence thereof.
- 3 The cessation of membership takes effect on the midnight of the last day of the Lodge's year, which in most cases is 31 December. The Secretary must inform the fact of cessation to the Lodge at the next meeting, and enter it in the Minutes. This will also be notified to the Grand Secretary through the District Grand Secretary on the next Annual Return.
- 4 A "cessated" Brother can become a member again after having gone through the rejoining process, i.e. by regular proposition and ballot, provided he pays his arrears

to Grand Lodge, District and the Lodge. Under this rule, "arrears" denote his unpaid subscription for two years.

- 5 For example, if a Brother does not pay his subscription for 2012 and 2013, his membership ceases at midnight of 31 December 2013. He may rejoin the Lodge in 2017, by paying his arrears for 2012 and 2013, and the subscription for 2017, together with any rejoining fee that the Lodge may have specified in its By-laws.
- 6 The District Grand Secretary, and through him the Grand Secretary, will be notified when the Brother pays his arrears. If this is not done, the cessation will remain "active" in Grand Lodge records, and the Grand Lodge system will not accept his subsequent registration with any other Lodge.

31. **Membership of Grand Lodge (Rules 2, 9)**

- 1 Every subscribing Past Master, i.e. a member who has served the full term as Installed Master of a Lodge under Grand Lodge, and continues to be a subscribing member, will be a member of Grand Lodge.
- 2 A Brother who ceases to be a subscribing member in every Lodge under Grand Lodge ceases to be a member of Grand Lodge.
- 3 If he had resigned from his Lodge in good standing, he can regain membership of Grand Lodge by once again becoming a subscribing member in a Lodge.
- 4 But if he was excluded or resigned while in arrears of his subscription he cannot become a member of Grand Lodge as a Past Master until he has served a term as Master of a Lodge.
- 5 A peculiar case arose in the District of Bombay when a Grand Officer ceased to be a subscribing member by being elected to Honorary membership of his only Lodge. District Grand Secretary received the following reply to his query on the status of his Grand Rank and Grand Lodge membership from W Bro Graham Redman, Assistant Grand Secretary.

Rule 2 of the Book of Constitutions provides that the Grand Lodge comprises, amongst others, Grand Officers present and past. Those whose membership of the Grand Lodge is derived instead from being Past Masters must satisfy the test laid down in Rule 9, so that when they cease to be subscribing members of any Lodge they cease to be members of the Grand Lodge. Accordingly, not only does a Grand Officer retain his rank when he ceases to be a subscribing member of any Lodge, but he also remains able to attend the Grand Lodge (but not a Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Lodge) without restriction.

32. **Restriction of Visitation rights of an Unattached Brother (Rules 9, 127)**

- 1 A Brother who, by resignation, exclusion, cessation, or election to Honorary membership, ceases to be a subscribing member of every Lodge of which he was a member, becomes an "unattached" member.

- 2 If cessated (under Rule 148) or excluded (under Rule 181), he is not permitted to visit any Lodge or Lodge of Instruction until such time as he becomes a subscribing member of a Lodge again.
- 3 If he has resigned from the Craft or been expelled from it, his right to visit is forfeited.
- 4 In any other case he may visit any Lodge only once, until such time as he becomes a subscribing member of a Lodge again. When visiting a Lodge he will append "Unattached" to his name in the attendance register, along with the name and number of the last Lodge of which he was a member.
- 5 There is no restriction on the number of times an unattached Brother may visit a Lodge of which he is an Honorary member.

33. Visits to Lodges in Foreign Constitutions

- 1 It has come to Grand Lodge's notice that Brothers visiting foreign countries often inadvertently visit Lodges operating in the jurisdiction of a Grand Lodge not recognized by United Grand Lodge of England. This usually happens upon invitation from friends and business contacts to visit their Lodges.
- 2 Grand Lodge has repeatedly stressed that while there is no objection about brethren maintaining social contact with friends from unrecognized Constitutions, Masonic contact must be strictly avoided.
- 3 A list of recognized Grand Lodges appears in the yearly Masonic Year Book, and the Secretary, when he comes to know of a Brother going abroad and intending to visit a Lodge there, should check whether or not the intended Lodge is in the jurisdiction of a recognized Grand Lodge, and advise the Brother accordingly.
- 4 When in doubt, he is advised to enquire with the District Grand Secretary of the propriety of the intended Masonic contact.

34. Death

- 1 A Brother's membership ceases with immediate effect upon his death.
- 2 In the event of a death, the Secretary must inform the District Grand Secretary at the earliest, giving the date of death. The District Grand Secretary can then ensure that the deceased's name and date is announced at the next District Communication.
- 3 If the deceased is a Grand Officer the District Grand Secretary will immediately communicate with Grand Lodge so that deceased's name is announced at a subsequent Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge.
- 4 The Secretary will indicate the date of death in the Annual Return for the year in which the death took place.

- 5 If a Brother dies in arrears of his subscription, it is up to the Lodge to recover the same from his survivors, if it so desires. The Lodge will nonetheless have to pay the deceased Brother's Grand Lodge and District dues for the year of his death.

35. **Dispensations**

- 1 A dispensation is a means of permitting something which is normally forbidden according to the Book of Constitutions.
- 2 The Book of Constitution permits Dispensations only for a limited number of cases (Appendix 4).
- 3 Besides these, a Dispensation may be granted under special circumstances at the discretion of the District Grand Master. For example, if the regular day of meeting of a Lodge coincides with the day of the District's Annual Communication, a Dispensation for change of date may be issued.
- 4 Not all dispensations may be granted by District Grand Master. Some dispensations, e.g. permitting a Lodge with less than five subscribing members to continue operation, must be granted by Grand Master himself (Rule 188).
- 5 Every application for dispensation must indicate clearly the reason for seeking the dispensation. The Book of Constitutions requires the grant of most dispensations "on good cause shown".
- 6 It is important to check with the Book of Constitutions to see if there is any rider attached to the grant of a dispensation. For example, a dispensation for change of place of meeting may be granted if meeting "at its regular place should for any reason be impracticable or undesirable". (Rule 142).
- 7 Dispensations are issued against payment of a fee which is indicated in the District By-laws, and which may be changed by the District Board of General Purposes subject to approval by the District Grand Lodge.
- 8 Certain dispensations are given free of charge. These are listed below.
 - If the day of Regular meeting falls on a District holiday, and a dispensation for change of date within seven days on either side of the regular meeting date is applied for.
 - If the day of Regular meeting coincides with the day of a District Communication, or any Masonic event called by the District Grand Master.
 - Dispensation under any Rule applied for at District Grand Master's request or direction.
- 9 An application for Dispensation does not necessarily imply that it would be automatically granted. District Grand Master has the right of refusal, and there have been isolated cases where District Grand Master has exercised this right.

36. Submission of Annual Return

- 1 The Annual return is essentially a “balance sheet” of membership in the Lodge on the last day of a given year, which is 31 December for most Lodges in the District. It gives a snapshot of the Lodge membership and the additions and deletions therein.
- 2 It is mandatory for each Lodge to submit its Annual Return to Grand Lodge through the District Office within three months of the end of its subscription year. (Rule 146(i))
- 3 The District Office sends to the Secretary of each Lodge the following set of documents which together constitute the Annual Return. These are:
 - Annual Return form (AR1) from Grand Lodge.
 - District Return form.
 - Dues Computation sheet.
- 4 The points to be noted while filling the Annual Return are detailed in Appendix 5 to this Handbook.

37. Submission of Installation Return (Rule 151)

- 1 The Installation Return is a record of the Principal Officers (Master and Wardens) of a Lodge for a 12-month period following the Installation Meeting.
- 2 It is mandatory for each Lodge to submit its Installation Return to Grand Lodge through the District Office immediately after the Annual Installation Meeting.
- 3 Besides the names of the Master and Wardens and their dates of Installation / Investiture into their respective offices, the Installation Return also contains the names of the following:
 - Every subscribing Past Master in and of the Lodge. A Past Master of the Lodge is necessarily a Brother who has passed through the Eastern Chair of the Lodge. A Past Master in the Lodge is a Brother who has passed through the Eastern Chair of another Lodge.
 - The Almoner and Charity Steward. These entries are mandatory, and the Grand Lodge system cannot accept the Return without them.
- 4 If a Warden be absent at an Installation Meeting and therefore not invested, that fact should be noted on the return. The date of his subsequent investiture must be communicated to the District for onward transmission to Grand Lodge.
- 5 Any Dispensation obtained from the District in respect of the Installation must be recorded (number and date) in the space provided on the return.
- 6 The Return may be filled by hand on the form provided by District Grand Secretary, or on the computer. Ink-signed hard copies (2 nos.) must be submitted to the District

Grand Secretary. If the Return is filled by computer, the hard copy must be printed on 100 gsm paper for durability.

38. Submission of Masters' and Past Masters' Activity reports

- 1 Every year the District Office sends to the Lodge Secretary the template of the Annual Confidential report on the contribution made by the Worshipful Master and Past Masters of the Lodge over the preceding 12-month period 1 July to 30 June.
- 2 The information submitted therein will assist District Grand Master in judging the merit of the Brother for appointment / advancement to a District Grand office. Non-submission of the Report may preclude brethren from the defaulting Lodge from being considered for District office.
- 3 The report is to be signed jointly by the Secretary and the Master.
- 4 It is to be submitted duly completed and signed by 30 September of each year or by such date as notified by the District office.
- 5 Please note that for the report to be considered by District Grand Master, it is imperative that the Lodge should not be in arrears in respect of submission of Installation and Annual Returns and dues. A declaration to that effect is mandatory.

39. Visiting Officers

- 1 District Grand Master assigns certain Grand and District Officers as Visiting Officers to the Lodges in the District.
- 2 The Visiting District/Grand Officer is a representative of the District Grand Master at a Lodge meeting. He can play a significant role in the progress of the District by working in tandem with individual Lodges and Chapters. The Visiting Officer will no longer be merely an observer, but an active participant in Lodge affairs.
- 3 It is planned that each Lodge will have at least two, preferably three, such visits in a year.
- 4 While in the Lodge, Visiting Officers will assist in whatever way they may be asked in the Lodge's regular working. They are not supervisors or inspectors. They are there to help the Lodge meet regularly, and note any problems or issues the Lodge may have. If a solution is apparent, they may venture to suggest it informally. It is up to the Lodge whether or not to accept the suggestion. The decision will have no repercussions on the Lodge.
- 5 They will submit a brief report of their visit, and make appropriate suggestions on how the Lodge can contribute to the District's progress.
- 6 The purpose is not to admonish but to encourage. If the Lodge has an attendance problem, the Visiting Officer will work with the Lodge to see how that can be resolved. If a new member shows signs of slacking off, then the Visiting Officers will assist in mentoring the member back into Masonry.

7 Appendix 6 details the following

- The role of the Visiting Officer and the Lodge's duties towards him.
- A template of the Visiting officer's report to the District.

40. Centenary Warrant and Centenary Jewel (Rule 252), (MET, Redman)

- 1 Upon a Lodge's completion of 100 years of uninterrupted existence, its members are entitled to wear a Centenary Jewel by permission of the Grand Master. This permission is given to the Lodge in the form of a Centenary Warrant.
- 2 About a year before the 100th year is about to commence, Grand Lodge will write to the District Grand Secretary inviting the Lodge to submit an enquiry as to whether it would be entitled to a Centenary Warrant permitting its members to wear a Centenary Jewel, and if so, what evidence would be required in support.
- 3 The Lodge must be able to establish not only the date of its origin but also that it has worked regularly and without interruption for one hundred years. The Lodge must show it has never, in the past hundred years, failed to meet for a whole year, and hence has not rendered itself at any time liable to be erased under Rule 189.
- 4 If the Lodge has an interruption in its working at any time, the period prior to the break is disregarded and the Centenary will fall at 100 years after the Lodge has resumed working. It is not a matter of merely delaying the Centenary by the length of the break.
- 5 The Grand Master has the discretion to disregard the break if he is satisfied that the Lodge had made every effort to hold meetings but was prevented by *force majeure*, i.e. circumstances beyond the Lodge's control, e.g. natural disasters like earthquakes or a state of war, etc.
- 6 The Centenary Warrant is issued upon payment of a fee which is announced by Grand Lodge every year.
- 7 The Centenary Jewel will be struck in line with the Grand Lodge-approved design shown in the Book of Constitutions.

41. Relocation of a Lodge (Rule 141)

- 1 The Book of Constitutions permits a Lodge to be relocated to another geographical area or to another location in the same geographical. The procedure given below is to be followed.
- 2 A Notice of Motion signed by at least seven subscribing members must be submitted at a Regular Meeting. The Notice of Motion may also include a change in day of meeting if necessitated as a consequence of the relocation.

- 3 The Notice of Motion must be included as an item on the Agenda for the next Regular Meeting or Emergency meeting called specifically for the purpose.
- 4 For the motion to be carried, at least two-thirds of the members present must vote in its favour.
- 5 The approval of the Grand Master is mandatory for the relocation to take effect. If the relocation is to another District, the approval of the District Grand Master of the destination District must also be mandatorily obtained.
- 6 The Lodge will alter its By-laws accordingly and these will be submitted for District Grand Master's approval.
- 7 Until a permanent location is decided upon, the Lodge may meet at another location by obtaining a special dispensation under Rule 142 for change of place of meeting. The dispensation will specify the period for which the Lodge is permitted to meet and carry on its business until the permanent location is finalized.

42. Application for assistance from the District Fund of Benevolence

- 1 A subscribing member or his dependant may make an application for assistance to the District Board of Benevolence in respect of the following:
 - To meet the cost of medical treatment
 - Relief of financial distress
 - Education of child (assistance given through the Bombay Masonic Association)
- 2 All applications for financial assistance to a Lodge Brother or his dependants from the District Board of Benevolence will be made through his Lodge, and on the prescribed form devised for the purpose by the District Board of Benevolence. The Board will not consider direct applications from Brothers or their dependants.
- 3 In the ordinary course, an Initiate of the District is qualified to apply after three years of membership in the District, and a Foreign Joining member after five years. The Board reserves the right to reduce these intervals on a case-to-case basis in view of special circumstances.
- 4 The prescribed form will need to be filled completely, giving pertinent details to enable the Board to assess the application's merit and decide on the quantum of assistance, if any.
- 5 The Board relies on the integrity of the Lodge brethren who, by permitting submission of the application, collectively vouch for its genuineness. Nevertheless, the Board, if it so desires, may require the applicant to present himself with relevant documentary evidence for an interview.
- 6 A copy of the application form is circulated to all Lodge Secretaries, who may take additional copies for future use.

- 7 Further details are given in the By-laws of the District Board of Benevolence (separate booklet).
- 8 **IMPORTANT**
Negligence on the part of the Secretary in submitting the Registration form may prove detrimental to the Brother should his case be forwarded to one of the Central Charities operating under Grand Lodge.

APPENDIX 1 - Model By-Laws (Lodge)

(To be attached)

APPENDIX 2 - District Holidays

The District Office will remain closed on Saturdays, Sundays, and the following public/bank holidays.

- New Year's Day (1 Jan)
- Republic Day (26 Jan)
- Holi (2nd day)
- Good Friday
- Maharashtra Day (1 May)
- Independence Day (15 Aug)
- Ramzan Id
- Parsi New Year
- Ganesh Chaturthi
- Dassera
- Diwali (Amavasya)
- Christmas Day (25 Dec)

The District Office will remain open on other public/bank holidays.

The above holidays, and no other, will qualify for a free dispensation for change of date of meeting under section 139(b) of the Book of Constitutions, provided, the revised date of the meeting is not more than seven days on either side of the regular day.

APPENDIX 3 - Order of Precedence of Lodge Officers

Worshipful Master (Regular)

Senior Warden (Regular)

Junior Warden (Regular)

Immediate Past Master*

Chaplain (Additional)

Treasurer (Regular)

Secretary (Regular)

Director of Ceremonies (Additional)

Almoner (Regular)

Charity Steward (Regular)

Mentor (Additional)

Senior Deacon (Regular)

Junior Deacon (Regular)

Assistant Director of Ceremonies (Additional)

Organist (Additional)

Assistant Secretary (Additional)

Inner Guard (Regular)

Steward (Additional)

Tyler (Regular)

*The Immediate Past Master is not strictly an officer of the Lodge.

APPENDIX 4 - List of Dispensations

(To be added)

APPENDIX 5 - Annual Returns

The Annual Return comprises the following documents.

- (i) Annual Return form (AR1) from Grand Lodge.
- (ii) District Return form.
- (iii) Dues Computation sheet.

You have the option to enter your membership information either by hand or by computer. In either case, please follow the instructions given below.

Instructions for Grand Lodge Return (AR1)

Please read Part 3 (Instructions page) very carefully. The following additional instructions are supplementary to the Instructions given in part 3, and are based on categorical instructions received from Grand Lodge based on their observations.

- For members' names given on the Grand Lodge return, indicate only the changes in membership status in the space provided. The change referred to here would be one of the following: (i) election to honorary membership, (ii) resignation, (iii) exclusion under Rule 181, (iv) cessation of membership under Rule 148, (v) death.
Please see the instruction below which distinguishes between cessation of membership under Rule 148, and exclusion of a member under Rule 181.
- **Important**
Please ensure that **exact dates** of the above changes are given in **dd-mm-yy** format. Without exact dates, the Grand Lodge system cannot process your return.
- Amendments to the status of members must be made legibly if done by hand. If done by computer, please indicate them in **bold type**, so that they can stand out, and will not be missed by Grand Lodge staff when transferring them into their record.
- If entry of several amendments on the same sheet would result in loss of clarity, then please enter them on a separate sheet to be included as an attachment to AR1.
- Missing addresses must NOT be entered on the Return form, either by hand or by computer. They should be **typed** on separate sheet(s) of paper for processing at Grand Lodge. This measure prevents erroneous information entry into the Grand Lodge system, resulting from misreading of foreign names by Grand Lodge staff.
- Names of members admitted into your Lodge may be entered either in the blank space at the bottom of the form, or on separate sheet(s) if the blank space is insufficient. The following information must be included for each member:
 - (i) Full name (surname first in BLOCK LETTERS),
 - (ii) date of birth in dd-mm-yy format,
 - (iii) date of admission (dd-mm-yy format) into your Lodge along with mode of admission (I = initiation, J = joining from a lodge under UGLE, FJ = joining from a lodge from a foreign constitution, RJ = rejoining member).

If the above information is entered by hand, please give the full name (surname first) in BLOCK LETTERS, and underline the **SURNAME**.

- **Important**
Please take especial note of instruction 3 concerning Registration forms.

Please ensure that Registration forms for members admitted in 2013 as well as previously, if still held with you, are submitted in duplicate along with the completed Returns. **This also applies for brethren who have ceased to be members of your Lodge, but whose forms you still hold.**

The forms must be completed and duly signed by the Candidate, Proposer and Secunder, Worshipful Master and Secretary in the appropriate places.

For a Joining member, the Registration form must indicate the particulars of all Lodges that he has ever been a member of, including those from which he has subsequently resigned.

- Please note the difference between Cessation of membership (by Rule 148) and Exclusion of a member (by Rule 181). The Secretary often confuses one for the other, resulting in an erroneous picture of the facts.
If a member fails to pay his subscription for two successive years, his membership automatically ceases under Rule 148. In such a case, the date of cessation is the last date of the second year of non-payment. Barring a few exceptions, the last date of the year is 31 December for most Lodges in the District.
- **Important**
If you are completing the Return using the computer, you must take three printouts on A4 size 100 gsm, paper. This is to ensure durability of the return over several years in Grand Lodge files. Do NOT, as has been done before by some Lodges, take large-sized printouts, as these are inconvenient to store in Grand Lodge files.
- Although not a specific requirement, you are advised to indicate the name of the signing Master. This is especially important if the Master's signature is not sufficiently legible to indicate his name. The same applies to the Secretary in case the Secretary has changed, and the current Secretary is different from the one whose name is printed on the Return form.

Instructions for District Return

The instructions given above for Grand Lodge returns hold in general for District returns also. You are also directed to the Instructions page of the District Return for details.

Please note the following:

- Names of brethren whose Registration forms have been received during the year are already entered in Part 2 (Form of Registration of New Members).
For every name that you enter as a new admission to your Lodge, please ensure that you enclose the Registration form in duplicate, if not already sent earlier.
This point has been adequately covered above under "Instructions for Grand Lodge Return".
- If there has been no addition to your Lodge's membership during the year, please return the form duly signed with "NIL" written across it.

Computation of Dues

The Dues Computation sheet (enclosed in duplicate) accompanies this circular. It is self-explanatory.

Submission of return to the District Office

The following documents may please be sent so as to reach the District Office.

- | | | |
|-------|--|--------|
| (i) | Updated and ink-signed Grand Lodge Return form (Part 2) | 2 Nos. |
| (ii) | Updated and ink-signed District Return form (both parts) | 1 No. |
| (iii) | Filled and ink-signed Dues Computation sheet | 1 No. |

- (iv) Your cheque for the total dues (Grand Lodge + District) made in favour of **District Grand Lodge of Bombay** 1 No.
- (v) Pending Registration forms, if any.

APPENDIX 6 – Visiting Officers

VISITING OFFICER'S ROLE

<u>Duties of Visiting Officer to his Lodge</u>
Promote the Lodge's sustenance.
Promote transparency between the Lodge and the District by being an effective two-way conduit of information.
Encourage and motivate the Lodge towards achieving the District's strategic objectives.
Inform the District of any noteworthy events in the lodge, worthy of emulation by others or of placing on the District website.
Assess members' potential for District Office.
Guide the Almoner in filling application form for financial assistance for a brother / dependant.
Assist in the mentoring process by spending time with new members/initiates and new officers.
Participate in workings and help with quorum, if requested.
Give a report of his assessment of Lodge discipline and performance.

<u>Restrictions on Visiting Officer</u>
To keep away from lodge "politics", if any. Not to "pronounce judgment" on any contentious issue within in the lodge either in his individual capacity, or on behalf of the District.
Not to be judgmental about Lodge traditions and practices, or impose his own ideas.
Not to recommend or influence Worshipful Master on appointments of Lodge Officers.
Not to make any commitment to the Lodge on behalf of the District.
Not to join the Lodge, nor accept Honorary Membership, while he is Visiting Officer to it.

<u>Duties of Lodge towards Visiting Officer</u>
To forward a copy of the Summons of every meeting.
To keep Visiting Officer updated on matters pertaining to Lodge and District.
To acquaint Visiting Officer of the traditions and practices of the Lodge.
To extend the usual Masonic courtesies.
For outstation Visiting Officer, to arrange for pickup and drop.

VISITING OFFICER'S REPORT

Name of Visiting Officer with rank	
Name of Lodge visited.	
Date(s) of your visit.	
Did you receive a copy of the Summons regularly?	
Was there sufficient quorum (at least 5 members + Tyler)?	
Could you determine the main reasons for Brothers' absence?	
Was the Lodge tyled on time?	
Were the Principal offices occupied by Lodge brethren?	
Which offices were filled by visitors, including yourself?	
In which degree(s) was the Lodge opened? Was it done satisfactorily?	
Are there new recent entrants to the Lodge? How many initiates? How many joining?	
Are they being 'looked after' well enough to be retained for the next three years?	
Were the communications from Grand Lodge and District announced in open Lodge at the respective risings?	
Is the Almoner (or another brother) in touch with brethren or widows who might need the "brotherly touch"?	
Is there a congenial atmosphere within the Lodge?	
Any obviously contentious issues which might cause long-term damage to the Lodge/District?	
Do you recommend any brother for District rank? What qualities of his do you base your assessment on?	
What is the Lodge's average attendance at District Communications? 3 members? 5 or more?	
When did ANY DGM (or his representative) last visit the Lodge, on invitation or otherwise?	
Does the District get invited to Installation Meetings? If not, why not?	
In case of outstation Lodge, would the Lodge be willing to "host" without great financial burden a Half-yearly Communication?	
Has any major landmark just passed or is due to come in the Lodge's history? e.g. Centenary, shift of venue for meetings, renovation of Temple building, etc.	
Remarks:	Signature: Date:

APPENDIX 7 - Secretary's Diary

For Every Meeting

1. Write minutes (Next day after meeting).
2. Send Summons of the next meeting to Press (not later than one week after meeting)
3. Issue Summons to the members (Two week before the meeting)
4. Book Dinner (one day before the meeting)
5. Write Report of the Lodge Committee (same evening)

For Every Meeting (As And When Required)

6. Book of Constitutions and Lodge of By-laws for Candidates.
7. Question cards to Candidates.
8. Obtain clearance certificate from joining Brother.
9. Apply for Certificate for Master Masons of Affiliation.
10. Fill Membership Register.
11. To make necessary correction in the Roll of Members when any member is honoured with Grand Lodge Rank, or District Grand Lodge Rank.
12. Annual Return (1st Week of January), G.L./DGL.

For Election Meeting

13. To read the By-laws of the Lodge.
14. Election slips.
15. Propose Past Master's Jewel.

For Installation Meeting

16. Order Past Master's Jewel. (Next day after Election Meeting)
17. Minutes.
18. Book Hall for Installation Rehearsal
19. Invitation to District Grand Lodge Deputation and request District Grand Master to deliver address to Brethren of the Lodge.

20. Summons to Press.
21. Appointment of Officers, and circulate to member concerned as early as possible for their acceptance.
22. Sharing work of Installation Ceremony.
23. Appoint Past Masters in place of S.W., J.W., I.G., and D of C for the Board of Installed Masters.
24. Career of Master Elect.
25. Circular for rehearsal Meeting (two weeks before rehearsal) Lunch, if any.
26. Programme printing.
27. Submit account for audit.
28. Draft Stewardship Report of W.M. (Not later than one week before Installation)
29. Circulate audited statement of accounts.
30. Issue summons.
31. Issue Invitation.
32. Submit Books to District Grand Secretary for Inspection (Not later than one week before Installation meeting).
33. Lodge Committee Report.
34. Slips to Proposers and Seconders for donations, auditors & additional members on Lodge Committee, Bank Resolutions, W.Master's Donation.
35. On Installation night keep handy, Book of Constitution, District Grand Lodge By-laws, Lodge By-laws, list of Officers, list of Toasts and Past Master's Jewel.
36. Inventories to be signed by outgoing and incoming Master, Tyler and Secretary.
37. Fill in Bank specimen signature card, and obtain signature of Officers.
38. Book Dinner.

Immediately After Installation Meeting

39. Letter to Bank
40. Installation Return