



**GRAND LODGE
FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS
OF WASHINGTON**

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Memorandum for Grand Lodge Team members and Lodges

Subject: Masonic Protocol and correspondence

Brethren:

In the last thirty days there have been at least three violations of Masonic Protocol. Even though Masonry is universal and we consider it one big family there are still rules that need to be followed. Some are contained within our Washington Masonic Code while others are in Masonic reference material. The Grand Lodge of Washington, which includes all members and Lodges, adhere to these Masonic rules.

As such, a Mason is not authorized to communicate with other Masonic Entities outside of the Jurisdiction of Washington. To be even more specific, given the nature of our relationship with Prince Hall in Washington, members are not authorized to communicate with Prince Hall, as well. It is the duty of the Grand Secretary, as defined by the Washington Masonic Code, to do this. It is also a violation to use Masonry to promote your business if your business is not of a Masonic retail nature.

I would like to summarize these recent violations:

The Senior Warden of a Lodge sent an e-mail out to many other Grand Lodges asking if his company could provide a service to Lodges and at the same time giving a discount. Another incident involved the Worshipful Master who wanted to improve on Lodge attendance and sent an e-mail out to a large number of Masonic Jurisdictions asking how to promote new ideas. And still another issue involved a Lodge Secretary who wanted information from another Lodge in another Jurisdiction and sent an e-mail to the other Grand Secretary without first going through our Grand Secretary.

On face value, these incidents seem very innocent, but in every case they come back to the Grand Secretary as questions like: Hey Grand Secretary, did you know this Brother-X from your Jurisdiction sent this e-mail out? Or it may go something like, Grand Secretary Right Worshipful Owen we are in receipt of a request from a member of your Jurisdiction and if approved by your office we will forward a response. And still other responses are admonishments of a breach in Masonic Protocol.

Think about it Brethren, the person on the other end of an e-mail or letter does not know you to be a Mason and for all practical purposes you are just another person trying to promote special interests or using information to solicit support for non-approved purposes.

Masonic Protocol
July 23, 2009

Included for your information is an excerpt from the Grand Lodge of Washington's Lodge Officers Handbook (page 3-1):

It is equally important for the Master as well as the Secretary to be conversant with the method of corresponding with other Lodges, both in our and in foreign Jurisdictions. Being so informed may prevent embarrassment to the Lodge or the breach of Masonic etiquette, laws, or customs.

It is written into the Constitution and By-Laws of some Jurisdictions that all correspondence with other Jurisdictions must be cleared through the Grand Secretary's office. It is even more stringent in others, in that the Lodges are forbidden to correspond with Lodges outside their own Jurisdiction.

If one of these Lodges should desire to confer a Degree as a courtesy, it cannot write directly and convey this information, but must write the Grand Secretary of their Jurisdiction and he, in turn, will forward the information to our Grand Secretary who will inform the Lodge. This is done as a matter of precaution and protection. There are cases on record where clandestine Lodges have requested regular Lodges to do courtesy work for them and have almost succeeded.

Each Masonic Jurisdiction is sovereign. Therefore, all correspondence between Lodges of this state and those of another, or between Lodges and Foreign Grand Lodges, should be cleared through the Grand Secretary's office.

Seldom is there a letter to the Lodge or to the Secretary that does not warrant immediate attention, especially official business. Correspondence from the Grand Master or the Grand Secretary should be given first consideration. When writing to the Grand Master or the Grand Secretary, prompt service is expected. By the same token, promptness is due on our part.

Worshipful Masters, I direct that this letter be read in its entirety to the members at your next stated meeting and it noted in your Monthly Report, Form 10, by the Lodge Secretary that it was accomplished.

Fraternally,



Gale H. Kenney
Grand Master

cc: Grand Secretary