

PROVING VISITORS TO A LODGE

References:

- A. Book of Constitution latest edition.
- B. Emulation Ritual Book 12th edition.
- C. Taylor's Working – latest edition.
- D. 'Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft' –latest edition.
- E. United Grand Lodge of England Masonic Year Book – latest edition.
- F. United Grand Lodge of England Directory of Lodges and Chapters – latest edition.
- G. 'Masonic Etiquette Today' by Graham Redman.

1. Introduction

Proving a visitor who cannot be vouched for by Brethren of the Lodge is a most difficult situation. We are reminded of our responsibility regarding visitors as a Master Elect, as the Junior Warden, as the Tyler and as a Member of the Lodge. The Junior Warden should not only familiarise himself with the References but should hold his own personal copies. So first, let us look at all the Rules concerning 'Visiting'.

2. Reference A: Book of Constitution latest edition

a) *The Antient (Ancient) Charges and Regulations.*

These **are** read by the Secretary to the Master Elect prior to his Installation. There are 15 Antient (Ancient) Charges and Number 15 states: – “You promise that no visitor shall be received into your Lodge without due examination and producing proper vouchers of his having been initiated in a regular Lodge”.

b) *Rule 125 (a)*

No Brother subject to the Grand Lodge shall be admitted into a Lodge unless he be personally known to, and vouched for, by one of the Brethren present, or unless he shall be well vouched for after due examination. He shall, if required, produce his Grand Lodge Certificate and proof of good standing in his Lodge or Lodges.

NB: The following answer to the question: What is the definition of 'Due Examination?' has been taken from the Questions and Answers page of a summons for the Quatuor Coronati Lodge Number 2076 EC:- The phrase 'due examination' has not been defined by Grand Lodge, and its interpretation is left to the discretion of the Brethren who conduct the examination. In the majority of Lodges visitors are vouched for by their hosts and, for that reason more than any other, examinations are extremely rare. The above Rule(125 (a)) states that 'He shall, if required, produce his Grand Lodge Certificate and proof of good standing in his Lodge'. The words 'if required', indicate that the request is optional, implying that production of the Grand Lodge Certificate is not essential. This may be taken as a useful guide to procedure but it is urged that, in every case where there is the least doubt, 'due examination' must be strict.

c) *Rule 125 (b)*

No Brother who is not subject to the Grand Lodge shall be admitted unless his Certificate shows that he has been initiated according to the ancient rites and ceremonies in a Lodge belonging to a Grand Lodge professing belief in TGAOTU, such Certificate not to be regarded as valid unless granted by a Grand Lodge recognised by the Grand Lodge, nor unless he himself shall acknowledge that this

belief is an essential Landmark of the Order, and he is able to produce proof of his good standing in his Lodge or Lodges. It is incumbent on the Master of any Lodge to which a visitor from another Constitution seek admission to satisfy himself by adequate enquires, if need be, from the Grand Secretary, that such Constitution is recognised by the Grand Lodge.

d) Rule 125 (c)

Every visitor during his presence in a Lodge is subject to its relevant By – Laws.

e) Rule 126

It is within the power of the Master of every private Lodge to refuse admission to any visitor of known bad character or whose presence is in his opinion likely to disturb the harmony of the Lodge.

f) Rule 127

‘Unattached’. In the case of a Brother who has ceased to be a subscribing member of every Lodge of which he has at any time been a member, the following provisions shall have effect:

- (i) If he comes within the provisions of this Rule by reason of his exclusion under Rule 148 or Rule 181, he shall not be permitted to attend any Lodge or Lodge of Instruction until he again becomes a subscribing member of a Lodge.
- (ii) If he comes under the provisions of this Rule by reason of his expulsion from the Craft or by reason of his resignation from the Craft under Rule 183A or Rule 277A, his right to attend any Lodge or Lodge of Instruction shall be forfeited.
- (iii) In any other case he shall not be permitted to attend any one Lodge more than once until he again becomes a subscribing member of a Lodge, and upon such one attendance he shall append the word ‘unattached’ to his signature in the attendance book, stating therein the name and number of the Lodge of which he was last a subscribing member.

Nothing in this Rule shall preclude the attendance of a Brother at any Lodge of which he is an Honorary Member.

*NB: There are two points to note within Rule 127. First, that Rule 127 (iii) states that he shall append the word ‘unattached’ to his signature in the Attendance Book – we say **PRINT** your name. Secondly that in the book shown under Reference G above, ‘Masonic Etiquette Today’ by Graham Redman (Assistant Grand Secretary), it states that – ‘The Rule 127 (iii) precludes a Brother who becomes unattached by resignation while in good standing with his Lodge, or by election as an Honorary Member, from visiting any single Lodge more than once for all time (not, as is often supposed, once a year) although he has an unrestricted right to attend Lodges of Instruction.*

3. Reference B: Emulation Ritual Book 12 Edition

a) *Worshipful Master on Investing the Junior Warden.*

Brother xxx, I appoint you my Junior Warden and I now invest you with the Collar and Jewel of your Office. The Plumb Rule being an emblem of uprightness, points out the integrity of the measures you are bound to pursue in conjunction with me and your Brother Senior Warden in the well ruling of the Lodge **particularly in the examination of Visitors lest through your neglect any unqualified person should gain**

admission to our assemblies and the Brethren be thereby innocently led to violate their Obligation.

b) *Worshipful Master on Investing the Tyler.*

Brother xxxx, you having been elected Tyler.....to enable you to keep off all Intruders and Cowans to Masonry and suffer none to pass but such as are duly qualified...

c) *The Worshipful Master said to you at your Initiation*

This is the Book of Constitutions and these are our By-Laws, both of which I recommend to your serious perusal, as by one you will be instructed in the duties you owe to the Craft in general, and by the other in those you owe to this Lodge in particular.

4. Reference D: Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft

a) *The Right to Visit.*

The Board of General Purposes has been asked to express an opinion as to whether any Brother who is in good standing in the Craft has an inalienable right to visit any Lodge that he may choose. From time to time Brethren cause embarrassment to a Lodge or to an individual member of a Lodge by seeking to visit either by prior invitation or by arriving on the day of the meeting.

The Board is aware that under some Constitutions the 'right to visitation' is regarded as a landmark, but has concluded that it enjoys no such status under this Constitution. In particular, it does not figure in either the document '*Aims and Relationships of the Craft*' (adopted by the United Grand Lodge of England in September 1949), in common with the Grand Lodge of Ireland and the Grand Lodge of Scotland) or in the '*Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition*'. The Board has concluded that the question is as much a matter of common sense and basic good manners as of Masonic principle, and hopes that the Grand Lodge will endorse the following statement:

- (i) The custom of visiting has a long and honourable history in English Freemasonry and ought not to be discouraged. Brethren are, however, reminded that while every Freemason in good standing is eligible (subject to Rule 127 of the Book of Constitutions) to attend Lodges other than his own as a visitor, he is not necessarily entitled to do so.
- (ii) There are certain Brethren to whom Rules 122 to 124 confer the right to be present at a meeting, either in their own capacity or as the emissary of the Grand Master or a Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master.
- (iii) For visitors in the ordinary course, admission to any Lodge is subject to the power of the Master (under Rule 126) to refuse admission to any visitor of known bad character or whose presence is *in his opinion* likely to disturb the harmony of the Lodge; and apart from the fact that some Lodges have in their By-Laws a restriction on the admission of visitors, every Lodge is entitled to expect a visitor to be properly introduced by a member (or, where a Lodge has indicated its willingness to accept visitors, by a suitable Masonic authority such as a Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Secretary).
- (iv) The Board deprecates any deliberate solicitation of an invitation to attend by someone who can claim no more than acquaintance with the Brother whom he wishes to adopt as his host, but whom the making of the approach may place him in an embarrassing position.

- (v) Paragraphs (iii) and (iv) apply equally to the meal which follows, or occasionally precedes a meeting of a Lodge (Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes adopted 12th September 2007).

NB: The above Report was introduced with the following note – Reference G: The Board has been careful not to say that a visitor must only be introduced by a member of the Lodge; only that a Lodge is entitled to expect a visitor to be so introduced. A Lodge is always free to waive its entitlement to this respect if it so desires. So that for example a Brother who is temporarily staying in a particular area may perfectly properly make contact with the Secretary of a Lodge in the vicinity to find out whether it will be in order for him to attend as a visitor, and in many, if not most cases, he will be made very welcome. What such a Brother must not do, however, is insist that he has a right to visit the Lodge and try and force himself upon it. Moreover he should not expect automatically to be invited to the after-proceedings and, if he is should at least offer to pay the cost of his dinner.

b) Latecomers but unknown to the Tyler

So here is the real situation – the exam question. We will assume that the visitor is a Master Mason or above. In Cyprus we belong to a relatively small District so it can be generally guaranteed that if a Freemason, resident on the Island, visited a Lodge without due warning somebody would know him. So we are assuming that this is a visitor to the Island. Why would somebody arrive LATE fully dressed in Masonic Regalia without having first made a personal contact!! The situation played out under the following paragraphs is perhaps one of the most unlikely scenarios but is something that can be practised at Lodges of Instruction. Junior Wardens are advised to follow the Role Play and then set up their own method of ‘Due Examinations’:-

- (i) The Tyler will have asked the Visitor his name and if he is a subscribing Member of a Lodge – if so which Lodge, Number, Metropolitan Area, Province, District, Overseas etc. Or is he ‘Unattached’, if he is unattached the name of his last Lodge that he was subscribing member of.
- (ii) The Senior Deacon has just sat down after returning the Minute Book to the Secretary.

NB: Some Lodges will have a spy hole in the door of the Lodge with a dead light on both sides of the door. The dead light on the outside of the door is so that only the Tyler can ‘peep’ into the Temple. The dead light on the inside of the door is so that the Tyler cannot ‘peep’ during the ‘Inner Workings’. The ‘peep’ hole on the outside of the door allows the Tyler to pick an opportune moment to knock on the door and it also allows him to see the Tracing Boards and this of course will provide confirmation of the Degree that the Lodge is working.

5. Role Play with Lodge in the First Degree

What follows is a Role Play utilising all the Rules available based on the Emulation Ritual

a) *Announcement of visitor*

Tyler *gives the three distinct Knocks.*

IG *walks on to the carpet Step and EA Sign, faces East but turns his head to the JW- Brother Junior Warden there is a Report.*

JW *knows that it is not the Candidate so gives one Knock.*

IG cuts the Sign and goes to the door of the Lodge, unlocks and opens the door, but does not let go the handle and does not speak.

Tyler - An unknown visitor, Worshipful Brother John Smith, who is Unattached seeks admission but will need to be vouched for.

IG does not reply. Shuts and locks the door walks onto the carpet step and EA Sign faces East - Worshipful Master, an unknown visitor, Worshipful Brother John Smith, who is Unattached seeks admission but requires to be vouched for.

WM - Can anybody vouch for Worshipful Brother John Smith?

ALL *no response.*

WM - Brother Junior Warden prove the Visitor.

JW *stands.*

IG cuts the Sign and goes to the door of the Lodge.

DC *picks up his Wand and collects the Masonic Year Book and Directory of Lodges and Chapters, pen and paper from the Secretary, then collects the JW from the West side of his pedestal and escorts him to the edge of the carpet on the North side of the SW 's pedestal facing East.*

NB:

Reference E: The Masonic Year Book will allow the Junior Warden to check who is who in each individual Metropolitan Area, Province, District, those under Grand Inspectors and those five Lodges under the direct jurisdiction of The Grand Master.

Reference F: The United Grand Lodge of England Directory of Lodges and Chapters will allow the Junior Warden to check the details of all Lodges, whether they are Centenary, Bi Centenary, Hall Stone Lodges, whether they have a Chapter attached, where they meet, when they meet. The Directory provides the names and numbers of Lodges under Metropolitan Areas, Provinces, Districts, Grand Inspectors and Lodges abroad not under District or Grand Inspectors.

JW *Step and shows the EA Sign. Cuts the Sign and goes to the door of the Lodge.*

IG *opens the door of the Lodge.*

NB: *At this time some Lodges may wish to place a Past Master in the Junior Warden's Chair – but technically there is no requirement to do so.*

DC *hands the JW the Masonic Year Book and Directory of Lodges, the pen and paper.*

JW *goes out.*

NB: *At this moment in time the Junior Warden will be thinking like this – here is a Brother who has come to Cyprus with all his Regalia but has not had the decency to contact the Lodge before now. He should have spoken to his Secretary or a Lodge Secretary before departing the country of origin.*

IG *shuts and locks the door and sits down.*

DC *returns to his seat replaces his Wand in its holder and sits down.*

JW *places Masonic Year book, paper and pencil on the Tyler's desk.*

b) Proving of visitor

We will assume that the Visitor has his case with him. The Junior Warden politely offers the Visitor his hand with a normal hand shake and introduces himself to the Visitor. If the Visitor immediately gives a Token, the Junior Warden can ask – What is this? Let him answer, is he right or is he wrong? – ‘Do you have any more

Tokens?’ Remember technically there are three Tokens, First Degree, Second Degree and Third Degree. Each time let him do the work - checking his Token (Grip) every time, you do not need to return the Token.

NB: Remember that the Third Degree Token can be given in a different number of ways – they are not all the same as described in the Emulation Ritual Book.

Check his dress, Apron, Collar and Jewels. If he has Jewels ask him what they are.

NB: Make sure that you can distinguish the following Apron Badges and Collar Jewels: Grand Officers Present and Past, Past Grand Stewards, Provincial and District Grand Rank Present and Past; Senior Metropolitan (London) Grand Rank; Metropolitan (London) Grand Rank, Metropolitan (London) Rank, Senior Overseas Grand Rank, Overseas Grand Rank, Overseas Rank and a Master Mason who has Past (and sometimes Active) Provincial or District Grand Rank.

Ask him if he was aware of the Rules regarding visiting other Countries. Every Lodge Summons will state that Brethren visiting other Countries should seek advice initially from their own Secretary before making Masonic contact – has he done so, if not why not?

c) Documentation.

- i. Ask to see his Grand Lodge Certificate – if he has not got it with him then say sorry but no entry. **NO GRAND LODGE CERTIFICATE NO ENTRY.** Your Lodge may not agree with this – so you must continue with the examination.
- ii. If he has his Grand Lodge Certificate with him ask him to sign his name and check the signatures. Ask him for some form of identification so that you can check that he is who he says he is and that the signature on the Certificate is the same as the identification he produces.
- iii. Check the Grand Lodge Seal (A false Grand Lodge Certificate will probably not have an embossed Seal).
- iv. Ask him the date of his Initiation both in AD and AL format.
- v. Ask him what the three Pillars denote and what orders of Architecture they denote.
- vi. Ask what Working Tool is missing – this is a Trick Question – he should not say the Skirret - he should tell you that they are not Working Tools but depict the Three Great though Emblematical Lights, the moveable and immovable jewels and the Furniture of the Lodge.
- vii. Ask to see his Certificate of Good Standing.

NB: If you have never seen a ‘Certificate’ of ‘Good Standing’ obtain a blank one from your Lodge Secretary.

- viii. The receipt of his last Lodge Dues.

- ix. Ask him if he has an old Lodge Summons from his last Lodge. His name should appear as a subscribing member. Quiz him on the Subscribing list of Members and the Officers of the Lodge.
- x. Ask him the name of his last Lodge where he was a Subscribing member or if he is a Subscribing Member of a Lodge – which one he belongs to, the name and its number and where it meets– the name of the Worshipful Master and Almoner. Check the details in the Year Book.
- xi. If he tells you that he is ‘Unattached’ he should still have a Certificate or letter of Good Standing. Ask him why he is ‘Unattached’.

d) Practical

- i. Ask him what Degree the Lodge is in? If it is Emulation he will know from the Tyler’s knocks when he summoned you, the Junior Warden. If it is a Taylor’s Working Lodge he can honestly say I do not know because the Tyler in Taylor’s Working would have only given one knock to summon you the Junior Warden.
- ii. Ask him to describe the arrangement of the Square and Compasses when the Lodge is in say the Second Degree.

NB: Some of the older Lodges have a duplicate set of the Three Great though Emblematical Lights with the Tyler and an unknown Visitor would be required to arrange them correctly for a given Degree.

- iii. Ask him to advance to you as an Entered Apprentice showing the Signs and giving the Token and Word. Ask him whence is the word derived? Ask him the import of the word?

NB: If he points his right arm out to the front of his body before placing his hand to the l o t w p – ask him why he did so? He should say that he was taught to do so at his Initiation and that it represents one of original Forms of Freemasonry called the Manual and shows his hand placed on the Volume of the Sacred Law as a token of his ascent to the Obligation of a Mason. Remember that this initial movement of the right arm is not taught in Emulation, Taylors, Stability, Universal or Logic. But you will see many Masons making this initial movement. So you can quiz him on why he does so.

- iv. Ask him to demonstrate the Pass Grip from the First to the Second Degree and give the Pass Word. Ask him what the word denotes and how is it depicted in our Lodges.

NB: There is another word within the Second Degree that denotes the same as the Pass Word, you can try and quiz it out of him.

- v. Ask him to advance to you as a Fellow Craft showing the Signs and giving the Token and Word. Ask him whence is the word derived? Ask him the import of the word? And when conjoined with that in the former Degree?

- vi. Ask him to demonstrate the Pass Grip from the Second to the Third and give the Pass Word. Ask him –What was? Ask him the import of the word?
- vii. Ask him to advance to you as a Master Mason showing the Signs.

NB: He may show the Second Degree Sign first and then take a Step and convert those Signs into the Master Masons Sign or he may just take a Step and show the three Master Masons Signs in sequence – both procedures are correct.

- viii. Ask him to demonstrate the Five Points of Fellowship and give you the two words of a Master Mason. Ask him why he whispered the words of a Master Mason? He should tell you that he was taught that they are always given in a whisper except in open Lodge.
- ix. During all these situations you will be forming a mental, although true, picture of this man. You must now consider very carefully the next step. As even up until now all might not be as it seems. **This then must be your decision:**

JW – ‘I am very sorry but although you appear to have passed my proving I cannot allow you into the Lodge as it may damage the harmony already therein’.
If he is a true and worthy Brother he should accept this decision amicably. If he does not accept your decision and at a later time states a complaint you could never be faulted of your decision at a tribunal.

or

JW *ask him to give the knocks of the Degree on the door of the Lodge.*

NB: This is old fashioned but in the early days the Mason requesting entry would give the knocks himself on the door of the Lodge – not the Tyler.

or

Tyler *gives the Knocks of the Degree on the door of the Lodge.*

IG *walks to the carpet and stands on it faces East, Step and EA Sign* - Worshipful Master there is a Report.

WM - Brother Inner Guard see who wants admission.

IG *Cuts the EA Sign goes to the door and opens it.*

Tyler - Brother Junior Warden on his return.

IG *shuts the door and locks it walks to the carpet and stands on it Step and EA Sign* - Worshipful Master, the Junior Warden on his return.

WM - Admit him

IG *Cuts the Sign and goes to the door of the Lodge.*

DC *stands picks up his Wand and walks directly to the door of the Lodge*

IG *opens the door and allows the JW to enter, once inside he shuts and lock's the door and sits down.*

DC *escorts the JW to the carpet.*

JW *stands on the carpet Step and EA Sign which he holds* - Worshipful Master I have examined the Visitor, Worshipful Brother John Smith, and vouch that he can be admitted to this Lodge.

WM - Thank you Brother Junior Warden.

DC *escorts Junior Warden back to his Seat via the East side of his Pedestal, once in position the Junior Warden gives a court bow to the DC and sits down.*

DC *acknowledges the court bow, faces the Worshipful Master and remains standing.*

WM - Brother Inner Guard, admit the Visitor.

IG *stands and goes to the door.*

DC *walks directly to the door.*

IG *opens the door.*

DC *escorts the Visitor to the edge of the carpet.*

Visitor *stands on the carpet Step and EA Sign.*

DC *escorts the Visitor to a seat.*

Visitor *gives a Court bow to the DC and sits down.*

DC *acknowledges the Court bow, returns to his seat, replaces his Wand in its holder and sits down.*

WM – Brother John Smith, you are welcome - *and continues.*

or

JW *stands on the carpet Step and EA Sign which he holds* - Worshipful Master, I have examined the Visitor, Worshipful Brother John Smith and I am unable to vouch for him.

WM - Thank you, Brother Junior Warden.

DC *escorts Junior Warden back to his Seat via the East side of his Pedestal, once in position the Junior Warden gives a Court bow to the DC and sits down.*

DC *acknowledges the Court bow, returns to his seat, replaces his Wand in its holder and sits down.*

WM *continues.*

Note 1: An Entered Apprentice or Fellow Craft who is visiting another Country should have requested a First or Second Degree Certificate in accordance with the Book of constitutions Article 174 (c). Practical proving will be limited but must be along the lines of advance to me as an Entered Apprentice giving me the Sign, Token and Word of that Degree. Advance to me as a Fellow Craft giving me the Sign Token and Word of that Degree. No Certificate or Voucher – no admittance.

Note 2: A story told by Graham Redman (Assistant Grand Secretary) tells of a Grand Officer who visited a Lodge abroad and was asked by the Lodge to undergo a full examination – The Grand Officer was not happy with this and on his return to the UK complained to the Grand Secretary, no doubt expecting that a serious complaint would be made to the Grand Secretary of the District concerned. To his chagrin he found that he was the one to be roundly rebuked for his attitude. And remember it can, in reverse, work the other way – what we must not do is to allow somebody to return to the UK saying that getting into a Lodge in Cyprus was easy because nobody bothered to prove me!

Worshipful Brother Dave Hubbard MBE; DistGStB. DEO.

AGAPINOR Lodge Number 8905 EC

21st March 2011