



DISTRICT GRAND LODGE OF CYPRUS

12 March 2020

Dear Bro Secretary / Companion Scribe E

There are some concerns regarding Lodges / Chapters being unable to hold a meeting due to non-attendance of members during the current Coronavirus situation. To enable you to deal with this situation, you are urged to follow the following guidance:

Measures laid down with a view to preventing the spread of the coronavirus disease COVID-19.

1. The Minister of Health in the Republic Of Cyprus has made a legislative Order called the Quarantine (Measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus COVID-19) Order 2020, No. 1. the relevant part of which provides:

“With a view to preventing the spread of the coronavirus disease COVID-19, the following measures are laid down with effect from 10 March 2020 to 31 March 2020:

- (i) *No more than 75 people may gather or remain in the same single, indoor space, of private or public use, until 31 March 2020. Provided that the prohibition does not apply to gatherings of over 75 people who carry out their established and usual professional duties and activities, such as offices, companies, industries etc. so long as basic hygiene rules are observed. Provided further that the prohibition does not apply to cases of short movement within such a space, or to and from such a space, such as malls, supermarkets and other areas where visitors are moving and will not remain in the same place for a long period of time. ...”.*

2. In the context of Lodge/Chapter meetings, that there can be no more than 75 attendees in the same room at the same time at any meeting between now and 31 March 2020. This also applies to those Lodges/Chapters that may meet in hotels or other similar venues (e.g. the Carob Mill in Limassol) – even though at such hotel or premises there may be *“over 75 people who carry out their established and usual professional duties and activities ... so long as basic hygiene rules are observed”.*

3. Although Cyprus law does not apply in the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia, the District Grand Master and Grand Superintendent urges any Lodge or Chapter that may meet on premises in those Areas to apply the same restrictions.

4. We are all familiar with the well publicised basic hygiene rules, which common sense dictates should be adhered to at all times. Also, there should not be any bodily contact. No hand shakes or greetings before, during the ceremony or after it by anybody. This includes any after proceedings.

Lodge or Chapter meetings

5. Rule 137 of Book of Constitutions provides that there is no power to cancel a regular meeting of a Lodge. Rule 137 is directed to “normal” conditions, under which the Lodge is obliged to be summoned for each of its stated meetings. A meeting date can of course be moved by dispensation not more than 28 days in either direction and a meeting cannot be cancelled in advance – though it can be abandoned for lack of a quorum.





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If the situation of the Corona Virus were to worsen, then depending on the severity of the situation this may well give rise to conditions that are not normal. If the District Grand Master/ Grand Superintendent takes the view that in order to protect the health of members (and by logical extension their family and the general public) is necessary, he may direct that meetings should be suspended, on the basis that necessity overrides the requirements of the Rule.

6. Lodges should therefore for the time being be summoned in the usual way. The quorum for a valid meeting of a Lodge is five (excluding the Tyler and any candidate), of whom one must be an Installed Master, and two must be members of the Lodge concerned; it is not a requirement that the Installed Master be a member of the Lodge. If on the day of the meeting a quorum cannot be achieved, the meeting must be abandoned, and a note entered in the Minute Book. Words along the following lines may suffice: *“The regular meeting of the Lodge onday of, 2020 was duly called in accordance with the attached summons. Owing to the incidence of the coronavirus the required number of Brethren to open the Lodge could not be assembled and the meeting was abandoned”*.

7. If the meeting abandoned is that for the election of the Master, the final paragraph of Rule 106 will govern the situation. If the meeting is that for the Installation Rule 108 will apply.

8. Consideration should also be given to moving the date of a meeting by not more than 28 days by dispensation under Rule 139(c). Care should, however, be exercised in such a situation that Rule 172 (which requires a minimum interval of 28 days between initiation and passing, and between passing and raising) is not inadvertently infringed.

9. Lodges should not be concerned that, if a meeting has to be abandoned in these circumstances, it may affect their entitlement to a Centenary or Bi-Centenary Warrant in the future; there are many precedents for an enforced break in continuity of working being disregarded by the Grand Master when deciding whether to grant such a Warrant.

Similar considerations will apply in relation to Chapters.

The situation is being closely monitored and Brethren and Companions will be informed of any change.

Yours sincerely and fraternally,

G.L.Goldsack

Deputy District Grand Master

