

# The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ohio

KEITH W. NEWTON  
GRAND MASTER



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## Dispensation for All Ohio Lodges

Effective Monday, April 6, 2020, I hereby issue, by means of this communication, a Dispensation to all Ohio Masonic Lodges to hold their Stated Meetings using alternative methods available on the internet or conference calling. Use of an alternate method is a choice of the Worshipful Master and not a requirement. Ohio Virtual Stated meetings are to include:

- A password protected secure tool for members to utilize for accessing a virtual Lodge Stated meeting (e.g. Zoom, GoToMeeting, WebEx, etc).
- An email to the lodge members sent from our Grand View membership program and posted on the lodges Grand View dashboard.
- The Worshipful Master or Warden in charge will proclaim the meeting open: "This Stated Meeting is symbolically opened in the Entered Apprentice Degree."
- Conduct business of the lodge.
- Fellowship with our brethren.
- Education programs.
- The Worshipful Master or Warden in charge will proclaim the meeting closed: "This Stated Meeting is symbolically closed in the Entered Apprentice Degree."

Note: Ritual work of any type or nature, candidate examinations, and candidate balloting are not permitted.

One recommended tool available for lodges to use is Zoom. Instructions on how to use the Zoom for virtual meetings are attached for use. There are several other tools available for use. The only requirement for Lodge use is the tool must have the ability to require a password for members to access the meeting.

Note: this dispensation is for all Ohio Masonic Lodges. Ohio appendant bodies may hold virtual meetings if approved by their state leadership. Similar use or not of virtual meeting tools by Ohio appendant bodies is at the discretion of their leadership.

The State of Ohio has not provided any relief permitting group meetings at this time. Restrictions on physical meetings/gatherings imposed in the letter dated March 16, 2020 remain in place through May 10, 2020 as stated. Events postponed during this period may be rescheduled when permitted.

Note: Masonic Funeral Services, if scheduled, are permitted at the request of the family and with members who volunteer to be present and maintain social distancing.

This Dispensation is intended to provide a temporary alternate method for a Lodge to hold Stated meetings only. It does not limit any other individually organized virtual fellowship activities we all enjoy. This Dispensation will remain in effect and will not expire until further notice when the permission for groups to meet in person is granted. I will then notify all lodges of their permission to resume normal meetings.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Keith W. Newton".

Keith W. Newton  
Grand Master