



The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge

OF ANCIENT, FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

DOUGLAS VERNON JONES, GRAND MASTER

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June 17, 2021

Dear Brethren:

Degree Work Update June 2021

With the increased levels of vaccination and the decrease in Covid cases across the Commonwealth, and after reflection on the lessons learned from our very successful One-Day Conferral events in 2020, and in the past few weeks, it now becomes appropriate and reasonable to further modify the Health and Safety Guidelines for Degree Work in our districts. Effective this date, the previously issued Guidelines are lifted and are replaced with the recommendations intended to continue our primary focus, which has been to promote the welfare of all our Brothers and their families. While the worst of this Pandemic is hopefully behind us, we know there are new variants and strains that continue to surface around the globe and here, so continued vigilance is needed.

When Lodges and districts conduct Degree Work in the coming months, the continued use of the screening questionnaire and temperature scans are easy ways to prevent or reduce the potential spread of this and other communicable diseases and illnesses. The availability and encouraged use of individual hand sanitizers, especially for those involved in the actual conferral, where personal contact or touching occurs is another prudent and effective practice in personal hygiene and safety. While the wearing of masks has been perhaps the most unpopular aspect of the past months, this is still an appropriate safeguard, especially in those situations, where we cannot be certain if those in immediate contact have not been fully vaccinated, such as a new candidate, who is being conducted by one of our Deacons. In that situation, the wearing of a mask by the candidate might be a safe and reasonable approach. In the coming days and months, it will be the responsibility of our Worshipful Masters and District Deputy Grand Masters to 'rule and govern,' and in doing so, put in place health and safety practices that best address the needs and welfare of their respective Lodges and districts.

With these new procedures in place, we must now move forward in our efforts to address the backlog of candidates, as well as those previously initiated and passed Brothers, whose progress has been delayed by the Pandemic. If the decision has been made to resume Degree work for these deserving men and Brothers in the Lodge, that work must occur. The utilization of District or Regional One-Day Conferral Events will be allowed to continue through August 2021, and extension of the previously

authorized period by one month. This additional time will hopefully allow the previously suspended work to be completed, and most importantly, enable these men, desirous of the benefits of Freemasonry the opportunity to fully experience them by being part of an active and healthy Lodge.

I wish to thank our Grand Senior Warden, Right Worshipful Jack Kayle Lewis, and our Grand Physician, Illustrious and Dr. Samuel Moseley Jones, for all they have done to keep our degree work moving forward these last few months. Thanks to their leadership, and that of the District Deputy Grand Masters and our degree teams around the state, we found ways to safely and wisely work around the obstacles. Freemasonry in Virginia never stopped.

Sincerely and fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas V. Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

Douglas V. Jones
Grand Master

DVJ:ksm