

Digest of Masonic Law

CHAPTER 20

WORSHIPFUL MASTER

**As to Eligibility, Election, Installation, Term, Resignation,
Removal, Vacancies, Succession in Office, and Discipline of
Master, See Chapter 19**

POWERS AND DUTIES

LODGE BUSINESS AND WORK

Constitutional Provisions

The Master is supreme in his Lodge and must be held to worship. No appeal can be taken from his decision, nor call for the previous question, nor motion to adjourn, can be entertained. (Art. X, Sec. 6)

Besides the duties inculcated by the unwritten law, and the installation ceremonies, which every Mason should understand, remember, and faithfully perform, there are duties required by the Constitution, of the Worshipful Master, the Wardens, the Treasurer, and Secretary which cannot be neglected without being liable to Masonic censure. (Art. X, Sec. 8)

Regulations

20.01 The Master is supreme in the Lodge, from whose decision an appeal cannot be taken to the Lodge. (Art. X, Sec. 6)

20.02 The Worshipful Master must be held to worship by the Brethren and be implicitly obeyed in every legitimate official order.

20.03 The Worshipful Master is limited in his official authority only by his installation vows and Charges, the Constitution, Resolutions, and Edicts of the Grand Lodge, the Rules and Regulations of his Lodge, and the ancient established usages and customs of the Fraternity.

20.04 The Master's expressed "will and pleasure" is absolute law in his Lodge; yet he should preside, not haughtily, but with dignity, courtesy, and affability.

20.05 The Worshipful Master guides and controls all the work and business of the Lodge, opens, closes, dispenses, calls off, and calls on at his pleasure.

20.06 The Master has absolute and supreme control over the work of the Lodge, and when there are two or more applicants for the same Degree elected and waiting at the same time, it is his discretion to direct which shall have precedence.

20.07 The Worshipful Master cannot order the removal of a disorderly Brother from the Lodge, but may instantly "cease labor" until harmony be restored.

20.08 It is the prerogative and duty of the Worshipful Master to postpone the transaction of any Lodge business when, from small attendance of the members, or other good reason, the interests of the Craft require it; but, ordinarily, the business should not be delayed solely on account of small attendance.

20.09 In all matters of extraordinary import there should be a full attendance of the members of the Lodge before final action, and the Worshipful Master should not permit such matters to be hurriedly disposed of by a minority of its members.

20.10 When any Lodge proceedings are found to be irregular, they shall abate, by order of the Master; but such abatement does not bar any subsequent regular proceedings upon the same subject.

20.11 If any Brother deems Lodge proceedings irregular, he should in the first instance call them to the attention of the Master, whose duty it is to order irregular proceedings to abate. An application should not be made to the Grand Master until the Master has first had an opportunity to rule upon the question.

20.12 Smoking in a Lodge Room is prohibited while the Great Lights are open on the Altar.

20.13 The Master cannot delegate his authority to a Past Master to preside in his absence, for the Senior Warden, or in his absence, the Junior Warden, presides.

20.14 A Warden, vacating his position as such, or any other Brother, may confer a Degree and give the lecture, or do any part of the work of the Lodge in the presence and at the request of the Master. In this, the Master does not, and cannot, vacate or transfer his authority; but he can always act through any Brother whose assistance or skill he may desire, and the acts thus performed in his presence, and by his authority, are his acts.

Rulings and Decisions

Worshipful Master is not required to follow order of business recited in By-Laws since conduct of Lodge business lies within sound discretion of Worshipful Master. (1946 Proc. 36)

Man claiming to have been suspended N.P.D. twenty (20) years ago applying for and being reinstated when in fact he had been expelled U.M.C. may be stricken from the rolls by order of the Worshipful Master. (1952 Proc. 33)

The Worshipful Master may then change the order of election if deemed appropriate. (1986 Proc. 75)

APPOINTIVE POWERS

References

Master appoints Subordinate Officers of Lodge. Const. Art. X, Sec. 2; Chapter 19

AVOUCHMENT

References

Master is judge of sufficiency of avouchment. Regs. 40.10, 40.11

BALLOTING

References

Master shall order ballot re-spread if first ballot is irregular. Reg. 35.15

Rulings and Decisions

Worshipful Master has no power to call ballot dark after receiving objection when ballot was clear when spread. (1950 Proc. 72)

CANDIDATES

References

Master shall arrest progress if objection arises. Reg. 37.11
Master may defer consideration of petition for Degrees. Reg. 33.03

LODGE CHARTER

Regulations

20.15 The Charter of a Lodge is always constructively in the possession and control of the Master, and should be securely kept in the Lodge; but its temporary absence therefrom will not vitiate the proceedings.

20.16 It is not in the power of the Worshipful Master to arbitrarily disband a Lodge and surrender its Charter.

References

The Master may decline to produce Charter to visitor demanding sight of it. Reg. 40.05

Rulings and Decisions

It is not necessary that the Lodge Charter be physically present at an Outdoor Degree, but it may be represented in the person of the Worshipful Master. (2008 Proc. 107)

COMMITTEES

Constitutional Provisions

The Master and Wardens of each Particular Lodge are a standing Committee on Masonic Education their respective Lodge jurisdictions. (2015) (Const. Art. X, Sec. 25)

Regulations

20.17 It is competent for the Worshipful Master to attend and direct the deliberations of all the Lodge Committees.

20.18 If a Committee, or any member thereof, neglects to perform the required duties, the Worshipful Master should promptly discharge him or them so neglecting, and make a new appointment.

Rulings and Decisions

Worshipful Master has absolute authority to appoint all committees except when provided differently by By-Laws. (1951 Proc. 27)

COMMUNICATIONS

References

The Master may command attendance at any time. Reg. 25.02, 25.07

DIMITS

References

Master shall instruct Secretary to issue dimit to applicant therefore if entitled to it. Reg. 41.01
Dimit shall be signed by Master, countersigned by Secretary, and bear Lodge Seal. Reg. 41.08
Master cannot dimit. Reg. 19.13

PROPERTY OF LODGE

References

The Master and Wardens shall not sell, convey, or mortgage Lodge property except by action of the Lodge in Stated Communication after due notice. Reg. 25.05

REPRESENTATIVE TO GRAND LODGE

References

The Master and Wardens or their proxies are representatives of their Lodge to Grand Lodge. Const. Art. X, Sec. 7; Regs. 29.01, 29.03, 29.04, 29.05

PAST MASTER'S DEGREE

Regulations

20.19 A Worshipful Master elected and installed should obtain the Past Master's Degree at the earliest practical period, but the want of it does not bar his right to preside.

U.D. LODGES

References

The Master of a Chartered Lodge cannot be a petitioner for U.D. Lodge. Reg. 19.18

Rulings and Decisions

Neither the Master nor the Wardens of a Chartered Lodge can become Charter members of a new Lodge during their year in office. (1954 Proc. 61)

REVIEW OF ACTS AND DECISIONS

References

Any act or decision of the Master may be reviewed by Grand Lodge or by the Grand Master in recess. Reg. 25.46

If proceedings be deemed irregular the matter should be called to the Master's attention and no review thereof should be sought until the Master has had opportunity to rule thereon. Reg. 20.11