

DeMolay in Washington COVID-19 Guidelines

June 7, 2020

**Dad Jeffery A. Brunson, Executive Officer
DeMolay in Washington**

Objective – We are in this together

Our objective is to be prepared as we restore our fraternal society and brotherhood while protecting the health of all Members, Squires, Advisors, Parents, and Guests. Moving forward, we will continue to be cautious and follow state and local public health guidance to prevent a rapid surge of COVID-19 cases.

All DeMolay Chapters in Washington State will return to physical meetings and activities at the same time. By all indications from our Governor and the Washington State Department of Health, that will be when we all move into Phase 3. This is when the restrictions on physical gatherings of people moves from a maximum of 5, to no more than 50. When I give the signal to re-open, it is with the understanding that all involved cannot let their guard down on COVID-19. Our position remains precarious because no vaccine exists for COVID-19, which means we have little immunity and therefore an outbreak can happen anywhere, anytime, and to anyone.

Until there is a safe and effective vaccine, effective treatment, or herd immunity, it is crucial to maintain a level of community interventions to suppress the spread of COVID-19 throughout all phases of recovery. This includes heightened protections for the health and safety of those involved with DeMolay in Washington. Each phase in our state, slowly allowing us to return to physical in-person meetings and activities, and eventually full capacity, is grounded in the following required basic practices for individuals to:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Maintain six feet physical distance from others not already in your “isolation bubble.”
- Wear a cloth face covering in public places.
- Monitor yourself daily for COVID-19 symptoms.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home if you feel ill, especially if you have a cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or if you have two or more of the following symptoms: fever, chills, shivers, muscle pain, headache, chest pain or tightness, sore throat and new loss of taste/smell.

Regularly disinfect hard surfaces, touch points, and commonly touched objects. Please understand that everyone has a role to play for the protection of your health, your fraternity brothers’ health, your family’s health, and the health of your community.

Reopening our Chapters - Together

1. It all begins with an “Announcement of Permission” from the Executive Officer to start the reopening process. This will not happen until all Chapters in all locations of Washington State have moved to Phase 3 by the Governor and when the Grand Master of Washington Masons allows Masonic Member to return to Lodges.
2. Each Chapter must report to their Region Deputy the following:
 - Determination of who will be the designated Active DeMolay “Stay Safe Chairman” and “Stay Safe Advisor” along with their contact information. This will form the basis of your “Stay Safe Team.”
 - Assessment of the Chapter’s meeting location, including contacting the building manager (or equivalent) to learn and understand the building’s cleaning protocols, and establish protocols for the Chapter’s responsibilities in cleaning the building for their use. Determine with the building manager, Temple Board, Building Association, and/or Sponsoring Body who is responsible for supplying cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer.
 - Ensure contact has been made with the head of the Sponsoring Body and permission is given to reopen the Chapter.
 - “Stay Safe Team” will create outlined guidelines for Chapter activities in locations other than the usual meeting place.
 - “Stay Safe” educational meetings will be held (via Zoom or other electronic means) by each Chapter with all active Members, Squires, Advisors, and Parents prior to reopening. Attendance will be taken and only those who have participated in at least one “Stay Safe” meeting will be allowed to return to physical in-person Chapter events (including Guests).
3. Common sense must prevail. Recommended procedures from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) shall be followed at all times. Should anyone show symptoms during a meeting or activity, they should immediately be separated from the rest of those present and steps should be taken for their prompt return home. These incidents shall be reported to office@wademolay.org as soon as physically possible. Additionally, any surfaces or objects they came in contact with should be disinfected immediately.
4. Establish and continue open communications with your local and state authorities to determine the most recently updated requirements within your specific community. The purpose of this document is to outline key recommendations and provide general guidelines for conducting DeMolay meetings and activities as they relate to enhanced precautions. In all cases we have to trust in the wisdom of our families, our Members, and our Advisors to ensure a safe environment for all.
5. As Executive Officer, I am open to input from anyone involved with our organization and will continue to monitor the situation and amend these guidelines, as necessary.

Physical Meetings – General Guidelines

Returning to the new normal of Chapter Meetings will only happen once a Chapter has completed all processes in *“Reopening Our Chapters”* and is approved by the Chapter’s Advisory Council first, then the Region Deputy, and finally by the Executive Officer.

You are now ready to get going and start where you left off back in March-ish... however a lot has changed since then! Events have been cancelled, postponed, or went to Zoom. Members and Advisors have either stayed connected, reconnected or have slowly vanished. Potential members are somewhere, but do you know where? You had officers, a term-plan, and motivation moving forward; but some have changed, events have changed, and the energy is totally different. Our State Membership Director has outlined a *“Plan for Restarting your Chapter”* and is creating an *“Out of the Gate Membership Program”* to help get you going again.

1. Before each meeting, ensure that all cleaning protocols for the building have been completed, including the cleaning responsibilities of the Chapter before their use. For example, all touch-points and hard surfaces need to be wiped down with disinfectant – all chairs, podiums, Scribe’s desk, sign-in desk and pen, Chapter Regalia (Bible, schoolbooks, candles, gavels, flagpoles, etc.), door handles and knocker, and bathrooms. Your “Stay Safe Team” will be responsible for seeing this is completed.
2. All who enter the building must immediately either wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer. An Advisor needs to be stationed at the front door to ensure this is happening. Upon moving from the common areas to the Chapter Room, all must reapply hand sanitizer. To be clear, hand sanitizer should be used before entering the Chapter room, even though the person had washed hands or used hand sanitizer upon entering the building. If possible, leave all doors leading to hand washing sinks ajar or open to minimize contact. Same with other internal doors if possible.
3. All persons must maintain physical distancing of six feet utilizing the size of our Chapter rooms and common areas. All persons attending the Chapter meeting should sit at least 3-4 seats apart from one another to implement physical distancing and avoiding points of contact. Consider the size of your bathrooms and determine a plan for usage.
4. Upon entering the building, all persons must wear appropriate face coverings until leaving the building. If there is a medical condition that prohibits a person from wearing a mask, they should consult with the “Stay Safe Advisor” who will recommend to that person they should stay home until the restriction is lifted. Consider including them digitally for the business portions only.
5. When the meeting or activity has concluded, ensure that all cleaning protocols for the building have been completed, including the cleaning responsibilities of the Chapters following their use. For example, all touchpoints, hard surfaces, and areas used by the Chapter should be wiped down with disinfectant. Prior to leaving the building all

persons must either wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer. Your “Stay Safe Team” will be responsible for seeing this is completed.

6. Maintain supervision outside, after the meeting, if your members tend to congregate or interact outside and discourage close contact between them.

Ritual Modifications

1) Opening and Closing

- i) Eliminate forming the triangle.
- ii) The Marshal shall conduct by leading and should not physically escort any person.
- iii) Officers, Members, Advisors, and Guests must practice social distancing at all times and sit with at least 3-4 seats between them. Officers who sit together (i.e. Marshal and Chaplain / Senior Deacon and Standard Bearer) need to move chairs at least six feet apart or have one sit on the sideline.
- iv) Once Officers are in place and Opening Gavel is rapped, those who are well distanced from others may remove their face covering while in place. However, if one prefers to continue wearing their face covering, they are welcome to keep it on.
- v) Once the Closing Gavel is rapped everyone must return to wearing their face covering until they have left the building.
- vi) Until further notice eliminate the collection of the Word of the Day and Word of Emulation. The Deacons shall continue to walk the marching lines and deliver the ritual part as though the collection had taken place.
- vii) Grips, handshakes, and other signs involving physical contact will not be necessary.
- viii) If there is a visitor that is known by the members, there is no need to test them. If the visitor is not known, he can be verified through other means (i.e. description of the grip).

2) Business

- i) All normal Introductions shall be done in place. It is still vitally important to properly receive visitors and introduce distinguished guests, however these will be done from their seats. The Chapter Dad can modify or shorten Introductions, as necessary.
- ii) Balloting on candidates will be conducted in the normal manner except the Senior Deacon will place the ballot box on a podium and all will come to the ballot box. The Senior Deacon should sanitize the ballot box, balls/cubes when destroying the ballot.
- iii) Sharing of pens and other materials is to be discouraged.

3) Degree Work

- i) If the Chapter needs to hold Degrees (traditional or short form), face coverings must be worn at all times and should be explained to the Candidates and their Parents before arrival at the Chapter.
- ii) If there are multiple Candidates, choose one to represent the group throughout the Degree, expect for the obligations. The remaining Candidates will be seated on the sidelines.

- iii) The Senior Deacon will not physically escort the candidate/brother. He will be instructed to follow the Senior Deacon with a physical distance of six feet.
- iv) For obligations only, Stewards will lead the remaining Candidates west of the Altar, maintaining proper physical distancing (six feet).
- v) Eliminate the placing of the right hand on the Holy Book and on another's shoulder.
- vi) Eliminate "physical" kissing of the Holy Book. Master Councilor should say "You shall now symbolically kiss the Holy Book to seal your vows."
- vii) The MC will skip the "right hand of ..." at the altar following the obligations.
- viii) Deacons will demonstrate the grips and signs, but no physical grip.
- ix) Stewards will lead the remaining Candidates back to their seats.
- x) The Senior Deacon and Candidate should maintain proper physical distance from the Preceptors and Councilors.
- xi) *This may be accomplished two ways:*
 - (a) If the Chapter Room is large enough for the Senior Deacon and Candidate to maintain a six-foot distance from the Preceptors, the Senior Deacon should place the Crown of Youth on the preceptor stand and step back. The Preceptor may then proceed to "symbolically" place the jewel on the Crown of Youth. Alternatively, the SD may maintain possession of the crown while the Preceptor symbolically gestures the placement of the jewel into the crown from a safe distance.
 - (b) If the Chapter Room does not allow for the above, place a pedestal inside the circle formed by the seven candles as allowed by the Ritual of Secret Work. The Senior Deacon should place the Crown of Youth on the pedestal and lead the Candidate West of the Altar. In turn, the Preceptors advance to their candle to symbolically place the jewel and deliver their part.
- xii) *For the DeMolay Degree Drama:*
 - (a) Chapters may be creative in the physical distancing instances throughout the drama maintaining proper decorum.
 - (b) Guards should lead the prisoners in maintaining a six-foot distance and place them accordingly.
 - (c) The guards should not drag, move, carry, or physically support Jacques DeMolay.
 - (d) When reentering the room and departing at the end of the drama, DeMolay should use a crutch, badly limp, and/or stumble, to demonstrate that he has been severely stretched upon a rack.

Fellowship following a Meeting

DeMolay is built on brotherhood and being social, however until further notice - before and after meeting - socializing, gathering, and food/snacks/refreshments can be only pre-packaged food. Distribution must be grab-and-go style and at all times maintaining physical distancing. Social time should be limited (approx. 10 minutes) and there will be no active eating allowed in the building.

In-Person Chapter Activities – Guidelines

There is not much that changes from our “**Physical Meetings – General Guidelines**” when we are holding activities at our home building. Items 1-6 are still relevant whether we are in a Chapter room or the dining hall and must be adhered to. A focus should be placed on cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and shared objects before, during and after an activity. We need to monitor and ensure physical distancing during game nights and other events. This will require some planning and pre-work from the “Stay Safe Team.” This is a perfect time to be creative and use your brainstorming skills. Involve everyone in the plan so there are no questions and you are clear with instructions.

Please limit the size of your planned gatherings, events, and extracurricular activities to those that can maintain physical distancing and support proper hand hygiene. Recommended is 25% of normal capacity. Face coverings must be worn in public settings. If food is offered at any Chapter activity, use pre-packaged, boxed or bags for each attendee. Avoid the types of food offerings that require being served and/or shared from common dishes.

Activities at offsite locations, businesses, and public facilities/areas will require inclusive communications with all Members, Advisors, Parents, and Guests outlining who, what, where, when, why and how much along with a pre thought out “Stay Safe” plan in place.

Bottomline

As we begin the process of moving back into our Chapter rooms, holding activities, attending functions, and participating with our community, it is my intent to provide common sense direction and guidelines to hopefully ensure a safe environment for all. Your Chapter leadership (Officers and Advisors) need to continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation. Please reach out to your Region Deputies and/or me with any questions, suggestions, or recommendations for your Chapter, Region, State, and these guidelines.

If at any time you, or a person in your immediate “isolation circle”, comes into contact with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case, or gets diagnosed with COVID-19, you should self-isolate and refrain from attending any DeMolay activity for no less than 14 days until such time that you recover, complete the isolation period, or get tested for COVID-19. Any and all suspected or confirmed cases, or contact with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be reported to office@wademolay.org as soon as physically possible. All information will be kept confidential as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Executive Officer, Jeff Brunson, will inform close contacts of the sick individual that they may have been exposed to someone carrying or themselves exposed to COVID-19. If a person gets tested based on personal symptoms and the results come back negative, that person should still not return until such time as they are symptom free without the help of medicine of any kind for at least 24 hours. The individual should present the negative test result to the “Stay Safe Advisor” in order to return to Chapter activities.

These protocols and requirements are in effect until further notice. The over-riding intent is to ensure the safety of all persons present by maintaining proper physical distancing and avoiding points of contact. Chapters must also abide by all local Civic and Masonic regulations, in particular any limitations on the allowable number of attendees.

Jeffery A. Brunson, Executive Officer
DeMolay in Washington
Effective June 5, 2020