

DeMolay in Washington

Ritual Modifications for COVID-19

June 8, 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.

Ritual Modifications

1) *Opening and Closing*

- a) Eliminate forming the triangle.
- b) The Marshal shall conduct by leading and should not physically escort any person.
- c) 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.
- d) 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.
- e) Once the Closing Gavel is rapped everyone must return to wearing their face covering until they have left the building.
- f) 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.
- g) Grips, handshakes, and other signs involving physical contact will not be necessary.
- h) 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 grip).

2) *Business*

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) Sharing of pens and other materials is to be discouraged.

3) Degree Work

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) 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.
- d) For obligations only, Stewards will lead the remaining Candidates west of the Altar, maintaining proper physical distancing (six feet).
- e) Eliminate the placing of the right hand on the Holy Book and on another's shoulder.
- f) Eliminate "physical" kissing of the Holy Book. Master Councilor should say "You shall now symbolically kiss the Holy Book to seal your vows."
- g) The MC will skip the "right hand of ..." at the altar following the obligations.
- h) Deacons will demonstrate the grips and signs, but no physical grip.
- i) Stewards will lead the remaining Candidates back to their seats.
- j) The Senior Deacon and Candidate should maintain proper physical distance from the Preceptors and Councilors.
- k) *This may be accomplished two ways:*
 1. 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.
 2. 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.
- l) *For the DeMolay Degree Drama:*
 1. Chapters may be creative in the physical distancing instances throughout the drama maintaining proper decorum.
 2. Guards should lead the prisoners maintaining a six-foot distance and place them accordingly.
 3. The guards should not drag, move, carry, or physically support Jacques DeMolay.
 4. 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.

These protocols and requirements are in effect until further notice.

Jeffery A. Brunson, Executive Officer
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Effective June 5, 2020