

PROCEDURE FOR SUSPENSION FOR NON PAYMENT OF DUES

Ruling of M.W. David W. Lovering, Grand Master, April 21, 1994

1. On March 1st of each year, the Lodge Secretary will provide a list in two parts to the Worshipful Master of all members then in arrears for dues. The first part will contain the names of those members whose last known address is within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The second part will contain the names of those members known to reside out of the State.
2. The Worshipful Master, prior to March 15, should write a personal letter to each member listed in part 2 (those out of state). This letter should not specifically address the matter of delinquent dues, but rather to ascertain the welfare of the brother; is he well, does he have financial problems, does he attend a lodge in the community where he lives, is he satisfied with the fraternity, would he consider a demit so that he that he might become active in a local lodge? Consideration of these questions may prompt the brother to take some action on his own. Our first duty is to take care of each other by the practice of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. If the brother needs our help then the course of action by the Lodge should be obvious. If the brother would like a Demit it is suggested that current dues be remitted (Grand Lodge will do the same) and a demit issued. If the brother does not respond or has unfavorable feelings toward the fraternity, then the Lodge can proceed according to its By Laws with the steps delineated for suspension from the Lodge.
3. The Worshipful Master should appoint a committee to contact personally each brother residing in Massachusetts. This personal contact may be made ideally by someone designated by the committee such as a close friend or neighbor of the brother. This contact should not be made by telephone or letter; it should be done in person. The District Deputies can help coordinate contacts outside the area of the local Lodge where necessary. This first contact, again is for the purpose of determining the brother's welfare and, not to dun him for dues. The committee will contact each brother and report the results of their contact to the Worshipful Master on or before April 15th.
4. Following a determination that the brother is able to pay, a second contact should be made, preferably in person, but it may be done by letter. If the brother cannot pay all dues you arrange a payment plan that will allow the brother to pay his dues. Perhaps he can defer the payment of some of his lodge dues and pay his Grand Lodge dues (which are the only real out-of-pocket expenses of the Lodge). In other words, a sincere effort should be made to keep him a member without creating a financial burden on the lodge
5. After this approach has been exhausted, a Certified Letter should be sent to the brother. This letter should outline the procedures for remaining in good standing, i.e. pay what is owed or make an arrangement with the Lodge, request a Demit, etc. It should then state the disadvantages of suspension, i.e. he cannot visit other Lodges, he cannot be active in other bodies, such as the Scottish Rite Bodies, York Rite Bodies or the Shrine, family members may be unable to join Eastern Star, etc. Finally, it should state that his name will be read at a specified communication and if he does not make some suitable arrangement with the Master or Secretary on or before some date that he will be suspended and no further communication will come from the Lodge. The letter should also indicate the provisions for reinstatement once suspended.
6. The District Deputy Grand Master will review the file on suspensions and the accompanying documentation when he checks the Lodge records prior to his Official Visit.

NOTE: End of year Suspensions should take place PRIOR to August 1st (preferably by July 15th) rather than waiting until August 31st. This ensures the suspension report to be submitted to Grand Lodge in August prior to the annual reconciliation of membership.

Revised 9/12/2011

Note: The NPD Affidavit form must be submitted to the Grand Secretary's Office for each Suspension.