



GRAND LODGE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Masonic Service Manual



Depending on Each Other for Protection and Security



GRAND LODGE MASONIC SERVICE MANUAL
FOR
INDIVIDUAL LODGES
TOP TEN BRANCHES
OF
MASONIC SERVICE

COMPILED BY
THE MASONIC SERVICE COMMITTEE
OF THE
MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE
A.F. & A.M.
OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

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THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE
OF ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

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On December 19, 1924, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts first commissioned Service Committee. As we learn from the Bee-Hive we come into the world rational and intelligent beings, so we should ever be industrious ones; never sitting down contented while our fellow creatures around us are in want, especially when it is in our power to relieve them without inconvenience to ourselves. As a result the Grand Lodge created the Service Committee to help Massachusetts Masons and their families.

Over the years, the Committee has helped numerous members of the Masonic family. While originally that help may have come in the form of money and jobs, the intervening years have taught us that there are other ways to help our families. Masons give blood, run the Masonic Youth Child Identification Program (MYCHIP), visit sick brethren, support the Home at Charlton and widows programs, and provide a myriad of other services. The Grand Lodge Service Committee is there to both administer some of these programs at the state level and advise and aid local lodges on their own versions of these programs.

As Grand Master, I am particularly glad that the Grand Lodge Service Committee has chosen to revise this book during my term of office. I strongly support the work of the Service Committee and urge every lodge to appoint its own service committee. The work of these committees is the work that we have all been taught by the Bee-Hive. The charity that we do now will extend beyond the grave unto the boundless realms of eternity.

Harvey J. Waugh

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Grand Master

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Right Worshipful Frank B. Gomes, Jr.
Grand Lodge Service Director

The following phrase is familiar to every Mason:

“a sincere wish to be serviceable to your fellow creatures”

With that philosophy and that memorable phrase in mind, the Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts has formed a committee to create a plan for individual lodges to have a successful and productive service committee. This publication will outline the key areas of Masonic Service as deemed instrumental and necessary by Grand Lodge. In addition, each area of responsibility will have ideas and suggestions for implementation. Of course, this will serve as a guideline for individual lodges to form and fashion their own service committees and teams.

The most successful lodges, in most cases, have the most active service committees. The most active service committees maintain communications with their membership and their families. Consequentially, the tenets of our professions as Masons, Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth become apparent.

We strive to regard the whole human species as one family, consisting of every country, sect and opinion with true friendships emanating between those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance. These friendships are formed with one grand aim in view – to soothe the unhappy, sympathize with their misfortunes, compassionate their miseries and restore peace to their troubled minds.

Ultimately, Masonic Service is one of the building blocks in the superstructure of our organization, placed prominently at the center of our obligations. With the efforts of the Masonic Service brethren, together we will join in promoting each other’s welfare and rejoicing in each other’s prosperity.

So mote it be.

THE LODGE SERVICE COMMITTEE

FORMATION AND ORGANIZATION:

All Lodges should strive to have an active Service Committee. The selection and appointment of the Lodge Service Committee is the responsibility of the Worshipful Master, as is its continuance and functioning thereafter. As Ex-Officio of all committees, the Worshipful Master maintains communication with the Service Committee and oversees and directs its functions. The Committee should therefore be formed as a permanent organization, to be added to, and deleted from as members become unable to carry out their respective duties or request retirement there from. Every Lodge should be organized to reach each individual member. They should endeavor to incorporate as many service features or branches as may be helpful to their particular Lodge; increasing their activities each year.

In the event that the Committee may have ceased to function, then the Master should reactivate it, if need be - from top to bottom, so that vital information and services will be available to be dispersed quickly to reach each individual brother and/or their families and others.

AREAS OF SERVICE

There are many branches of service and all Lodges should endeavor to utilize as many as possible. Of course, personnel and circumstances will differ from Lodge to Lodge. However, the need for services will usually remain constant throughout geographical areas. Therefore, when communication between Lodges is maintained, these services may be intertwined and expanded.

The following are areas of Service for Masonry:

1. BLOOD DONOR PROGRAM:

Until advances in technology make it possible to create blood, we must live with this simple fact of life - blood is one commodity that cannot be manufactured except within the human body. This resource is available only when individuals volunteer to make a donation. The available blood supply is maintained through donations from volunteers at blood drives.

Massachusetts Masonry is proud to continue our support for the American Red Cross while fulfilling our pledge of service to our brethren, their families, and our communities. This collective effort is in large part responsible for the establishment of an available supply of blood for all patients in the northeast.

Over the years, the Masonic Blood Donor Program has grown and experienced many changes. Years ago, it was designed to be similar to a bank account, whereby we could only take out from it what we put into it. At the Red Cross, technology and years of experience have created a much more efficient and structured organization. Now, the Massachusetts Regional Red Cross provides blood for most Massachusetts hospitals. Understandably, the program is as successful as the volunteer donors make it. Consequently, every Lodge and every District in Massachusetts is designed to have a Blood Program.

An effective Blood Chairman should be a blood donor or former donor, and extremely interested in advancing the Blood Donor Program. He should consider having assistants who, because of medical restrictions or other reasons, might not be able to donate but wishes to assist in the program. They would incorporate a system listing the names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, etc. to communicate notices for upcoming blood drives, as well as to give thanks and acknowledgements for their support. In addition to maintaining records for the Masonic membership, records might be added with similar information for family members and friends of the fraternity.

To grow this program, it is suggested for those who cannot donate, efforts be made to enlist their friends, neighbors, fellow workers and others to donate for them. Also, acknowledgement and recognition with certificates or gallon pins are an excellent way to promote this program and to honor those who have given their time and effort, along with their gift of life. Recognition to brethren and friends of Masonry is entirely appropriate and the pins are available through the Grand Lodge Supply Department and from the Red Cross.

To receive recognition, donors should contact the American Red Cross Donor Services and request a copy of their donations record and submit it to the Lodge or District Blood Chairman. This is a wonderful means to promote Masonic Awareness through Masonic Service.

The Blood Donor Program is a key aspect to the Masonic Service Program and as such, it is listed first, among our areas of service. Blood Donors, through their selfless act of generosity, allow hospitals across the region to treat patients, thereby sustaining, prolonging and improving lives. Masonry in Massachusetts has long been a strong supporter of the American Red Cross and is justifiably proud to continue this vital element of Masonic Service.

TO DONATE BLOOD: The Lodge Master, Secretary, Blood or Service Chairman should contact the American Red Cross Donor Services - Massachusetts Region, 180 Rustcraft Road, Dedham, MA 02026, 1-800-GIVE LIFE or the Red Cross website; <http://www.redcross.org>. The recruitment services department will assist in referral to the nearest local donor center or give the necessary assistance to help the Lodge sponsor a local blood drive.

2. VISITING THE SICK AND DISTRESSED PROGRAM

One of the most important functions of our service work is attention to our sick and shut-ins. No matter how diligent and efficient a Master and his officers may be, these few men cannot accomplish what a well-organized Visitation Committee might be able to do. The key is communication. Maintaining accurate records, complete with phone numbers, snail-mail and e-mail information is strongly suggested. Greeting cards, including Get Well, Sympathy and Holiday Greetings could be sent. Calls on the sick and distressed should be made as often as possible. Short visits are preferable, and should be made by a variety of brethren. Not all men make good visitors, so consideration in this respect should be given in selecting visitors. Important characteristics for visitations would be men who have the personality and/or talents to cheer and uplift a patient. It is also important to recognize that some shut-ins feel cut off and disconnected from others. Bringing information about other Brethren, Lodge or District activities and various local or fraternal information may serve to reconnect our brethren to their lodges and fraternities.

3. VISITS TO THE MASONIC HOME

Visits to the Masonic Home at Charlton are a worthwhile project for a Service Committee. It is often true that guests at the Home seldom see any of the brethren from their own Lodge and perhaps feel like forgotten souls. The Master's program could include the conferring of a degree at the Home; or arrangements could be made to have brethren call with their families and take the guests for rides through the countryside. Our Guests receive a great amount of pleasure knowing that they are remembered and the brothers helping receive a great deal of satisfaction and fulfillment from their participation. This proves that Masonry in Massachusetts is working.

4. CPR & FIRST AID PROGRAM

Several Grand Masters have requested Lodges to have members certified in administering emergency procedures for CPR. The Grand Lodge Service Committee maintains a list of certified instructors and will assist Lodges in establishing a program. A Lodge CPR program could be open to the community and become a great Masonic Awareness tool when assigned to an active Service Committee member. All courses are conducted according to the standards of the National Safety Council.

- a) **Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)** is an emergency medical procedure for a victim of cardiac arrest or, in some circumstances, respiratory arrest. CPR is performed in hospitals or in the community by laypersons, or by emergency response professionals.

CPR has for 50 years consisted of the combination of artificial blood circulation, (chest compressions) with artificial respiration (also known as mouth-to-mouth.) In March 2008 the American Heart Association, in a historic reversal, endorsed the effectiveness of chest compressions alone--without artificial respiration--for adult victims who collapse suddenly in cardiac arrest. CPR is unlikely to restart the heart, but rather its purpose is to maintain a flow of oxygenated blood to the brain and the heart, thereby delaying tissue death and extending the brief window of opportunity for a successful resuscitation without permanent brain damage. Paramedics can take eight to 12 minutes to arrive, but someone suffering sudden cardiac arrest needs help immediately. A bystander with access to an AED can greatly improve the chance of survival. Defibrillation and advanced life support are usually needed to restart the heart.

- b) **First Aid** is the assistance given to any person suffering a sudden illness or injury, with care provided to preserve life, prevent the condition from worsening, and/or promote recovery. It includes initial intervention in a serious condition prior to professional medical help being available, such as performing CPR while awaiting an ambulance, as well as the complete treatment of minor conditions, such as applying a bandage to a cut. First aid is generally performed by the layperson, with many people trained in providing basic levels of first aid, and others willing to do so from acquired knowledge.

5. WIDOWS PROGRAM

This area of service relates directly to our Masonic obligation – “to help, aid and assist...” It would also ensure that the future of a member’s wife or significant other (as a possible widow) will not be one of loneliness and neglect. This program is to provide friendship and guidance to let the widow know that she has been remembered and not forgotten. She remains an important part of the Masonic family.

The Widows Program has unlimited possibilities that may include invitations to Lodge social events, personal visits and attention, notes for holidays or special occasions, transportation to doctors, stores, etc. Every Mason is a candidate for membership on this committee and every Mason should play an active role in the Widows Program.

The Grand Lodge Supply Department has a supply of widows’ pins (broken column encircled by a wreath) which are available for a minimal cost. Many Lodges remember their widows with flowers at Christmas and have a widows’ night to honor their widows and the above items are presented.

Standard Lodge procedure dictates that the Lodge Secretary notify the Grand Secretary upon the death of a brother. They will have a Grand Chaplain write a personalized letter of condolence to the widow from Grand Lodge. This is a special effort from the Grand Chaplains and is done only for Masonic widows.

6. BRETHREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

a) HOSPITAL EQUIPMENT INFORMATION

Individual Lodges, Districts and the Grand Lodge have a hospital equipment program to loan sick room equipment to individuals in the community. The Service Committee representative assigned to this task will find his efforts rewarding. If the Lodge does not have a program yet and would like assistance starting one then call the Grand Lodge Service Department for help. Additional information can be obtained on the MassMason.org website.

b) FUNERAL INFORMATION

A Masonic funeral is usually performed by the Lodge officers at the request of the family. It is important to honor all requests made for a Masonic Funeral Service even if there is a question about the current status of the member. When requested, err on the side of caution and always do the funeral service. The Grand Master will issue a healing if necessary.

The Lodge officers need to be aware that every funeral director is not a Mason and are not always aware of what it is that we do. It is important to contact the funeral home once a request is made, familiarize yourself with the facility, confirm the date and time of the service, ask about the set up of the facility, order evergreens ahead of time and do not take to trimming the funeral home bushes, ask the funeral director ahead of time to provide a table for the evergreens, ask if they have a room where the Lodge officers may gather before the service to open the Lodge. Ask questions; do not leave anything to chance.

Know the religion of the Brother that you are doing the service for, speak with his survivors and be sure that you are using the appropriate traditions and scripture for this individual. Practice the ritual; this is one of the few public ceremonies we perform, you want it to be done well and you want it to leave a good and lasting impression on the family that made the request.

It is only natural that when a Brother passes on we give too little thought to the family left behind. It would be an excellent gesture if the Lodge, through the Service Committee, did not forget the widow and orphan. Every Lodge, through its secretary, is encouraged to request of the Director of the Grand Lodge Service Department a personalized letter of condolence written by one of the Grand Lodge Chaplains and sent to the widow or significant other of a deceased Brother. These letters are often cherished by the recipient for many years into the future. Please refer to the Widows Section of this booklet for additional valuable information on what we can do to remember those left behind.

c) LEGAL INFORMATION

When Brethren and their families have legal issues to resolve, many have no experience in the legal arenas and are seeking brotherly direction. The Service Department has the contact information for several legal areas. A simple phone call or e-mail to the Service Department may provide confidential advice or sufficient direction to resolve the matter. At the least, the Masonic Service community may be able to offer significant guidance.

d) MASONIC READING THROUGH OUR GRAND LODGE LIBRARY

Some Lodge Service Committees are fortunate to have a Lodge Librarian. Through his efforts, many members have taken advantage of the opportunity to borrow books from the Grand Lodge Library. The Librarian obtains an availability list, circulates it among members, and handles requests. It has proven to be a valuable service to shut-ins and an excellent resource for those without electronic communication capabilities.

7. THE MASONIC TROOP SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Masonic Troop Support Program is an area of Masonic Service that provides an invaluable service to Masons, and the friends and family of Masons, serving in the military and stationed overseas. This program works to identify and care for these brave individuals who are serving in foreign lands, far away from loved ones. By sending their information to the Masonic Troop Support Program through the Grand Lodge website, <http://www.masonictroops.com> and a care package with home based items and a phone card will be shipped to them.

If your lodge is interested in participating a meaningful program that will serve the ones who serve us all, please consider this worthwhile and gratifying endeavor.

8. TRANSPORTATION AND CAR POOLS

There are several phases of transportation for consideration. We can always render a worthwhile service by offering transportation to the aged and handicapped Brethren. For groups who live at distant points, the Service Committee could arrange to have the Brethren in his group carpool or travel together. Traveling together not only stimulates fellowship, but it is more convenient and less expensive. Sometimes an elderly member or widow may need transportation for shopping or a doctor's visit, a hospital visit, etcetera. A Transportation Committee might arrange for some assistance for members and/or their families.

9. MYCHIP

MYCHIP (Masonic Youth Child Identification Program) has identified more than 300,000 children since its inception in 1988, and it continues to assist families today. The program provides tools to help law enforcement authorities find and identify a lost or missing child. The Masons of Massachusetts, partnering with the Massachusetts Crime Prevention Officers Association and the Massachusetts Dental Association, donate MYCHIP resources to make this service available to the public. None of the materials are copied and all the identifying materials are given to the child's family.

MYCHIP Includes:

VIDEOTAPE: A brief videotaped interview that can be quickly distributed to the media in order to reach a huge audience.

FINGERPRINTING: Fingerprinting is a well-known means of identification. Resourceful parents keep fingerprints available should the need arise.

TOOTHPRINTS: A toothprint bite impression is quick and easy. Teeth, like fingerprints, are unique. A dental imprint gives both accurate and important information for identification purposes.

CHEEKSWAB: A Q-tip is gently rubbed on the inside of a child's cheek to gather DNA material.

This program is nationally recognized and applauded. It serves as a valuable tool for parents as well as law enforcement officials. Additionally, the program is an excellent way to promote Masonic Awareness in every community.

For specific information on the MYCHIP Program, visit the website at www.MYCHIP.org

10. CONTACT WITH BRETHREN

Residents

We must try to never lose contact with our Brethren. Ideally, EVERY member who has not been to Lodge during the Masonic year will receive a phone call from the Master and/or Wardens in June or July. For smaller Lodges, this should be easy. For larger Lodges, the Lodge Service Committee should assist in this, but the Master and Wardens should be actively involved in contacting older (85 years of age or older) Brethren who have been absent the entire year. This **MUST** include contacting Brethren who live outside the area of the Lodge, especially those living out of state. Contact should be by telephone or personal visit, a letter does not suffice.

Non-Residents

A non-resident member, if not kept in touch with regularly, may very easily lose interest in his home Lodge. Without the personal touch associated with Lodge attendance and fraternizing with members of his Masonic family may quickly form the habit of non-attendance and lose interest. Even though he may receive his calendar each month and a bill for dues each year, a correspondence group may, through a personal or newsletter, retain his Masonic interest and perhaps inspire him to knock at the door of a Lodge in his present town or residence.

If on the other hand a consistent follow through is maintained with the Grand Lodge Service Department, notification of the Brother's presence can be sent to the local Lodge, and the hospitality thus promoted may cement the Brother's interest in his mother Lodge more firmly than ever. The computer can generate excellent reports of out of the local area members and if a large number of members are in the same state, one of these members might enjoy being the contact for that area.

Along these lines, a Lodge might consider contacting resident members of out of town lodges. In every community there are Masons belonging to out of town lodges whom a Service Committee might find receptive of any fellowship the local Lodge might care to extend to them. The Grand Secretary's office can give the Lodge a printout of Masons residing in certain zip code areas. After the local Lodge members are screened out the remainder of the area Masons could be invited to your Lodge thereby gaining new friends, cementing Masonic ties and possibly new affiliate members.

A Service Committee might very well list all known Masons, not members of their Lodge, and include them in the organizational structure of their own Lodge set-up, so that members might phone or contact them regularly. This is an excellent way of extending service to every Mason in the community and it may result in better attendance and increased fellowship.

11. RECEPTION COMMITTEE

Although areas of Masonic Service have been identified, there has been considerable interest in the reception committee. While this may easily fall under other categories, it certainly is related to Masonic Service. Therefore, we include it here for special consideration. Regardless of the category, this committee is a valuable and worthy function in any well governed Lodge.

A Reception Committee is an important asset to a Lodge, and may be well managed as a function of the Service Committee. Visiting brethren or members who seldom attend may come into our anteroom and unless someone greets them and tries to make them feel at home, may be so uncomfortable that they will not care to come again. The Lodge may work diligently to increase attendance but unless the brethren enjoy themselves, their work may be for naught.

The three brothers selected to investigate a candidate should be considered to act as the candidate's reception committee. For example, when the candidate attends Lodge, these men could introduce him to the Brethren, stay with him as much as possible, and make him feel at home among his new associates.

(We suggest the Reception Committee might consist of Lodge Elders and newer members, thereby combining youth and enthusiasm with age and experience. A simple greeting at the door along with an invitation to join together at dinner will make most visitors feel right at home. Being included in the festivities and sitting among Brethren is something all Masons desire and our fraternity should respond accordingly.)

GRAND LODGE SERVICES RENDERED

A few of the Services rendered by the Grand Lodge Service Department are:

To arrange investigations for suspended members out of state seeking reinstatement

To locate members for our Lodges who live outside of this jurisdiction

To call on local hospital patients for Lodges that are too far away to do this themselves

Note: The three previous items are also handled for other jurisdictions for their members who live in Massachusetts.

CONCLUSION

It is understandable that not all Lodges can undertake all of the phases of Masonic Service. But again, the recollection of your Masonic obligations should be enough to initiate renewed interest and enthusiasm in the service arenas of Masonry. Every Lodge should be organized to reach each individual member. They should endeavor to incorporate as many service features or branches as may be helpful to their particular Lodge; increasing their activities each year. Lodges should maintain communication and offer assistance to widows and orphans of departed Brethren. The efforts and deeds of the Masonic Service departments make our fraternity special.

If help is needed do not hesitate to phone or write the Service Department.

As the personnel of our large organization is subject to change, we are not listing them here. If requested, a roster will be forwarded to each Worshipful Master and District Deputy showing the current complete Organization of Committeemen, Director of Service, and District Service Officer composing our Department.

www.masonicservice.com

GRAND LODGE SERVICE DEPARTMENT

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Websites

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