

The Grand Lodge of the State of Louisiana

FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS

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Grand Master, 2021-2022
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EDICT- 2021-02

Whereas, the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the State of Louisiana, Free & Accepted Masons has an inherent duty to protect the craft from enemies, both from within and without the Fraternity,

Whereas, it is on occasion necessary and proper for the Grand Master to discipline a member of the craft, including suspension from Masonic communication and activities until the member's alleged Unmasonic behavior can be properly adjudicated by the Grand Lodge in session;

Whereas, Article IV of the Handbook of Masonic Law fails to provide for an expedited procedural process to hear the merits of the Grand Master's suspension,

Therefore, I issue the following Edict this 13th day of August, 2021, for the timely adjudication of any Grand Master's suspension under the authority of Article IV, Handbook of Masonic Law, only.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF THE GRAND LODGE OF LOUISIANA F. & A.M. this 13th day of August, 2021.

Terrell D. "Terry" Fowler
Grand Master



Attest: Steven S. A. Pence, PGM
Grand Secretary

"Charity, Friendship, Morality and Brotherly Love"

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ARTICLE IV

Section 1.

b. In every instance in which the Grand Master has seen fit to suspend a brother, the provisions of Article VII shall not apply; the following procedure shall be applicable.

The brother shall receive written notice of the suspension, with the specification of the cause for the suspension. Notice of a hearing on the suspension shall be set within thirty (30) days of the notice of the suspension. Said hearing shall be before a panel of three (3) Past Masters that have been trained and certified as Grand Lodge Trial Commissioners, if available, who shall determine the merits of the suspension. The three (3) Trial Commissioners shall be from the Masonic District of the accused brother, and the said hearing shall be in the accused brother's Masonic District. Majority vote of the panel shall determine guilt or innocence, and appropriate punishment, except for the determination of the penalty of expulsion from the fraternity, which shall only occur after a unanimous decision of the panel.

b. (1) Names of witnesses and all documentary evidence shall be exchanged between the parties seven (7) days prior to the hearing. No evidence may be presented or witnesses called that has not been exchanged with the opposing party.

b. (2) Duties of the Grand Secretary:

- i) The day formal charges are received from the Grand Master, the Grand Secretary shall start a record of the proceedings;
- ii) The Grand Secretary shall complete actual service upon the accused by certified mail, return receipt or by hand delivery by the District Deputy Grand Master of the same Masonic District, or other designee of the Grand Secretary, which shall include a copy of the charges, the names and addresses of the witnesses relied upon, notice to answer the charges within ten (10) days of the actual service of the charges and with instructions to the accused to furnish the names of the accused's witnesses, if any;
- iii) The Grand Secretary shall notify all parties and witnesses of the trial date and trial venue;

- iv) The Grand Secretary shall act as the trial clerk and shall keep an accurate and complete record and transcript and shall maintain custody of all evidence submitted therein;
- v) The Grand Secretary shall select the Trial Commissioners for the hearing, and designate the panel chairman.

b. (3) Duties of the Grand Prosecutor:

- i) The Grand Master shall designate the Trial Prosecutor.
- ii) The Trial Prosecutor shall prepare and file formal charges against the accused for unmasonic conduct, stating with specificity the basis therefore; and prepare the case for trial and shall comply with all rules of evidence and exchange of discovery as set forth hereinabove, and shall have the authority to form an investigating committee to gather evidence of the alleged unmasonic conduct.

b.(4) The Accused may represent himself or be represented pro bono by any member of the Fraternity in good standing, selected by the Accused.

b. (5) Order of Trial:

- i) The Trial Prosecutor has the burden of proof and must prove his case beyond a reasonable doubt; The Trial Prosecutor and the Accused may make opening arguments with the Prosecutor speaking first.
- ii) The Trial Prosecutor shall present his case first and has the option of presenting a rebuttal case, following the case of the accused;
- iii) At the close of the Trial Prosecutor's and the accused's cases, the parties have the right to present closing arguments, with the prosecutor arguing his case first, and a rebuttal after the accused's closing argument.

- iv) The Trial Commissioners shall first determine the innocence or guilt of the accused. If the accused is found innocent, he shall be reinstated as of the date of suspension. If the accused is found guilty, the Trial Commissioners shall next determine the penalty,

b.(6) Penalties:

Notwithstanding any other provisions of Masonic Law, in every trial resulting in conviction, the penalty shall be either a reprimand by the Grand Master at the next Annual Session, suspension for specified period of time as determined by the Trier of Fact, not to exceed twenty years, or a permanent expulsion from the Fraternity. Expulsion shall require unanimous agreement of the panel. Reprimand, or suspension for a specific period, shall require a majority vote of the Trial Commissioners; any provisions in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

b. (7) Grand Lodge Review:

- i) The trial proceedings are automatically referred to the Appeals and Grievances Committee, for review as provided in Article III, Section 3, and to make recommendations to the Grand Lodge;
- ii) Final review shall be by the Grand Lodge which may affirm, or amend any sentence, or reverse or annul a sentence of expulsion or suspension. Annulment of a sentence of expulsion or suspension immediately restores the brother to membership in his lodge as of the date of his suspension by the Grand Master.

b. (8) Grand Master's Powers of Commutation and Dismissal:

- i) The Grand Master shall have the power to grant commutation of sentences under this article, provided that, should he do so, the brother must still apply for reinstatement to his local lodge;
- ii) The Grand Master shall have the power to dismiss the charges of unmasonic conduct under this article, prior to the trial of the charges. Should the Grand Master dismiss the charges of unmasonic conduct the brother shall be reinstated to the date of the suspension.