



Ensuring the Timeless Vitality of Freemasonry in Ontario

## **PROTOCOL & ETIQUETTE ESSENTIALS**

Prepared by the Grand Lodge P. & E. Committee  
**Issue No. 32 – First Issued June 2014 – Revised May 2020**

### **Greetings from Your P. & E. Committee**

Welcome to the June issue of “*P&E Essentials*”. It is anticipated that these informative and easy-to-read newsletters will be published six times a year, normally between January and June.

“*P&E Essentials*” is intended to be an interactive instrument, designed to help you make an advancement in Masonic knowledge. It will hopefully also assist you to achieve high quality in the delivery, comprehension and insight of the lessons communicated on the floor of the lodge. The Committee welcomes questions and/or suggestions for topics that could be addressed in future issues. Questions or suggestions not related to Protocol and Etiquette will be forwarded to the appropriate Grand Lodge Committee for response.

### **Committee Members**

The current Protocol & Etiquette Committee members are:

Gordon Crutcher (*Chairman*); Steven Armstrong; Art DiCecco; David Fernandes; Dennis Hawman; Saliem Khoury; Michael Litvak; George McCowan; Bryan Middleton; James Pearson; George Pohle; David Purvis (*Secretary*); David Stevens; and Refik Yoney.

**With appropriate advance notice – and subject to travel constraints – any member of the Committee would be happy to make a presentation about P&E in your Lodge, or at a District Meeting.**

## **MASONIC DRESS CODES**

It has been suggested by R.W. Bro. George M. Warner, a Past DDGM for Toronto West District, that the brethren may find it useful to have a summary of the applicable Dress Codes for various Masonic events. To assist with this, much of the following comprehensive outline has been extracted from the 2014 edition of *The Masonic Manual*.

**Please share this newsletter with other members of your Lodge – and your Masonic friends**



As a lead-in to this topic, several Past Masters will likely be appointed as **Grand Stewards**, (or another V.W. rank), at our Grand Lodge’s Annual Communication in July. These particular brethren are reminded that **their** Dress Code for the ensuing Masonic year will be “Semi-formal” attire, (**NOT** “Formal” wear).

White gloves and your new dress regalia are also to be worn with your tuxedo. However, should Semi-formal attire not be available to the appointee, a dark business suit is an acceptable alternative. (*Appointees can expect to receive a letter from the Grand Secretary, shortly after your appointment, which will confirm your special Dress Code.*)

### **DRESS CODES ARE IMPORTANT**

Knowing the proper dress code is a problem for some brethren but it is important. A knowledge and use of proper dress makes everyone feel comfortable and not out of place, besides providing self-confidence and lending a great degree of decorum and dignity to an occasion. The dress code naturally includes the type of regalia that should be worn.

There are several different types of dress that can be worn. The choice of a particular dress code depends not only on the function, but also on the rank of the member. The following gives a basic description of the dress itself and continues with the when, where and by whom it should be worn.

# DRESS CODES DECODED

*(Explanation of the standard types of attire for a Freemason)*

## 1. Business Dress

Business dress is usually a dark suit, with a plain white shirt and a suitably coloured, conservative tie. Sports jackets are to be avoided. Open neck sports shirts and turtlenecks are not considered to be business dress.

## 2. Semi-formal Dress (“Black Tie”)

Semi-formal dress, casually referred to as “black tie”, is the traditional black tuxedo suit with a satin collar on the jacket and a black strip down the outside of the pant legs. Either a matching black cummerbund or a black waistcoat is usual, with a black butterfly-style bow tie, black socks, and black shoes. The shirt should be the standard white tuxedo shirt, with a lie-down collar and a plain pleated front and exposed black studs and black cufflinks.

Coloured or fancy ruffled fronts or cuffs, coloured cummerbunds and coloured ties are to be avoided. White gloves are acceptable – but within our prescribed guidelines. (See Issue #12 of *P&E Essentials*, April 2011.)

## 3. Morning Suit

Generally, morning dress is meant for formal affairs held in the morning or afternoon. The most common jacket is a long cutaway charcoal grey or black coat with tails, grey and black striped pants with a pearl grey vest. The shirt should be white, plain pleated with a turned down collar and a regular small-patterned grey and black striped tie. Both the socks and shoes should be black. Gloves, if worn, should be grey. A Director's suit is an acceptable alternative for those who wish to wear it.

## 4. Formal Dress (“White Tie”)

Formal dress, casually referred to as “white tie and tails”, consists of a black coat jacket with tails and satin peak lapels, black pants with a satin side stripe, black socks, and black shoes. The vest and shirt are to be of white piqué material, with a dress collar and wing tips.

Mother of pearl studs and cufflinks are used. A butterfly-style piqué, white self-banded tie is worn outside and on top of the collar wings. White gloves are worn for lodge functions, as are all approved jewels,

(but not at banquets, or consecration, or dedication ceremonies).

With the exception of Grand Stewards and other appointed V.W. ranks, a Present Grand Lodge Officer is expected to wear formal dress (i.e. white tie and tails) on most occasions.

**Unless** the provisions of Section 131 (d) of the Book of Constitution applies – i.e. for brethren appointed to the Board of General Purposes - Grand Stewards and other appointed V.W. ranks **are to wear** semi-formal dress (i.e. a black tuxedo).

As is often the case with many forthright declarations, there are some deviations. A Present Grand Lodge officer attending his own lodge, for instance, on a normal evening could wear business suit or semi-formal dress. Of the Present Grand Lodge Officers, the following have no choice but to wear formal dress on most occasions: the Grand Master, the Deputy Grand Master, the District Deputy Grand Master and members of the Board of General Purposes. Dress, therefore, is at one and the same time governed by protocol and yet left, in many instances, to the choice of the wearer. There are so many variations of circumstances that it is difficult to list them all. The chief point is that uniformity of dress among the officers, rather than the style, is essential to the dignity of the occasion.



## GUIDELINES TO OUR MASONIC DRESS CODES

### Business dress is appropriate:

1. For lodge members attending a regular or emergent meeting with the apron being fastened outside the jacket.
2. For members attending the Ceremony of Installation. Past Grand Lodge Officers should wear dress regalia. In all cases the apron is fastened outside the jacket.
3. For all members attending Divine Services, with the apron being fastened outside the jacket. Past or Present Grand Lodge Officers would wear dress

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regalia. This would be the correct dress at whatever time of day the Divine Service was held.

4. For all members attending a Memorial Service at a funeral home. Present and Past Grand Lodge Officers would wear dress regalia. In all cases, the apron is fastened outside the jacket.
5. For members at social functions. Regalia would not be worn. In this case the W.M. might, depending upon the type of social event and its formality or informality, decree a certain type of dress that could be more casual than business dress.
6. For members at the banquet for a Grand Master's Reception. Regalia would not be worn.
7. For members attending the Grand Master's Banquet at the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge. Regalia would not be worn.
8. For all members attending the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge. Regalia would be worn. The apron must be worn outside the jacket.

#### **Semi-formal dress is appropriate:**

1. For members taking part in the Installation Ceremony, with Past Grand Lodge officers wearing dress regalia. In all cases the apron is fastened outside the jacket.
2. For lodge officers at all regular and emergent meetings of their lodge, with the apron fastened outside the jacket. *(Note: A lodge could resolve that all of its officers would wear only business dress.)*
3. For lodge officers, organizing committee members and members at the head table at the banquet for a Grand Master's Reception. Regalia would not be worn.
4. For a Present Grand Lodge officer attending a regular or emergent meeting of his own lodge. The apron must be worn outside the jacket.
6. For the Grand Master's Banquet at the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge a white dinner jacket is customary for the Grand Master, Past Grand Masters, the Deputy Grand Master, and members of the Board of General Purposes. Head Table Guests may also do so if they wish. Regalia would not be worn.

7. For the District Deputy Grand Master on his official visit to a Daylight Lodge. The apron is fastened over the jacket.

#### **Morning Suit is appropriate:**

1. For the Grand Master, Past Grand Masters, the Deputy Grand Master and Chairmen of Committees of the Board of General Purposes, at the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge. Dress regalia will be worn. The apron is fastened under the jacket.
2. For any member of the Board of General Purposes at the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge. Dress regalia will be worn with the apron being fastened under the jacket. *(Note: While "appropriate", a Morning Suit is not a mandatory requirement.)*
3. For the District Deputy Grand Master on his official visit to a Daylight Lodge, (if he owns a Morning Suit). The apron is fastened under the jacket. *(Note: If the DDGM does not own a Morning Suit, he may wear semi-formal dress – i.e. a tuxedo – as an alternative.)*

#### **Formal Dress is appropriate (with the exception of Grand Stewards and other appointed V.W. ranks, as noted in the "Formal Dress" section on page 2 above):**

1. For Present Grand Lodge officers at Constitution and Consecration Ceremonies, Cornerstone Laying Ceremonies and Dedication Ceremonies. Dress regalia should be worn. The apron is fastened under the jacket.
2. For Present Grand Lodge officers at the banquet for a Grand Master's Reception. Regalia would not be worn.
3. For Present Grand Lodge officers at the Ceremony of Installation or any lodge formal event. Dress regalia is worn with the apron fastened under the jacket.

Dress can be a problem. The suggestions given above are to be used as a general guide to the correct dress for certain members on particular occasions. It must be remembered that protocol in Masonry is not designed to make members feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. If a present Grand Lodge officer decides to wear semi-formal dress at a meeting that calls for formal dress, he will not have slighted protocol. He would be welcomed in just the same manner as anyone else.

Protocol and etiquette in Masonry go beyond dress and become a matter of personal good taste within the limits of a few general guidelines.

Far be it from our protocol to make a member decide that he would rather absent himself from a meeting than to be considered improperly attired.

The occasion is the thing and you attend to do honour to it, not to unduly worry about protocol. Protocol, in many ways, is the outward symbol that makes an evening an event to be remembered. These comments, however, are not intended to condone laxity in choice of dress or a disregard of ordinary common sense and good manners.

Protocol would suggest that, at certain times of the day, a particular form of dress should be worn. Masonic functions sometimes begin in the early afternoon with a function in a lodge room, followed shortly thereafter by a formal banquet. In such circumstances, the Grand Master will dictate the appropriate dress code for present Grand Lodge Officers.

Brethren should pre-determine the appropriate dress code which applies when visiting lodges in other Grand Jurisdictions. Some are very strict (e.g. the United Grand Lodge of England). Others are slightly more relaxed. Current Grand Lodge Officers have no option but to observe the appropriate dress code of THIS JURISDICTION when visiting lodges elsewhere.

All brethren, regardless of your rank, should be aware that in our Grand Jurisdiction **there is no such thing** as “summer dress”, or casual attire in a lodge room. (Exceptions may be made for presentations in barns, quarries, BBQs, etc.)

No jewels other than those specified for officers, the jewel of a Past Master, a representative of another Grand Lodge, a Royal Arch Mason and any other jewel, button or medal specifically designed and approved by Grand Lodge, such as the William Mercer Wilson Medal, the Grand Master’s Meritorious Service Award, and long-service recognition pins, are to be worn in lodge.

## DRESS and UNDRRESS REGALIA

For an explanation of when Past and Present Grand Lodge Officers should wear dress or undress regalia, please refer to Issue #6 of *P&E Essentials* (April 2010).

## THE WORSHIPFUL MASTER’S COLLAR

All Past Masters are reminded that the Worshipful Master's collar is to be worn **only by** the Worshipful Master. If the W.M. is absent, the I.P.M. or P.M. or Warden who presides in his stead does not wear the collar and jewel of the W.M.

Also, a W.M. only wears his collar:

- Within his own lodge.
- When **conducting** a Divine Service.
- When **conducting** a Memorial Service.
- When attending a Grand Lodge Communication.
- When attending an Official Visit with the DDGM in the district to which each belongs.
- When attending a Divine Service conducted by the DDGM

The collar is **not** worn in the banquet room, or when visiting another lodge for any purpose not listed above, (e.g. Installations, Degree Teams, etc.).



*Above - A good illustration of the appropriate dress code for both Lodge Officers and for Grand Lodge Officers when attending a lodge meeting.*

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