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Linda R. Winn-Christenson
Worthy Grand Matron
2019-2020

June 12, 2020

To: All Texas OES Chapters
RE: Grand Masters Message

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Below you will find a copy of the Grand Master's message to Texas Masonic Lodges regarding the clarification on the latest Executive Order (GA-26) dated June 3 from Governor Abbott.

I ask that all Chapters follow the message of the Grand Master and abide by his instructions to Lodges.

We may continue to hold OES Stated meetings. We are instructed to hold attendance to no more than 50% of either building occupancy or seating capacity and those over age 65 or in other high-risk categories are encouraged, but not mandated, to wear face mask. You will note the Governor's office continues to discourage personal contact, therefore until the Grand Master gives his approval, I am directing Texas Eastern Star Chapters to postpone all initiations.

I hope this letter will answer most of the questions I have received regarding EX. Order GA-26.

We are blessed in Eastern Star to have the love and support of Sisters and Brothers through out the world. Let us count our blessings and pray for humanity to be blessed with love and peace.

Sincerely,
Linda R. Winn-Christenson
Worthy Grand Matron
2019-2021

A MESSAGE FROM OUR GRAND MASTER

Brethren,

Since my Proclamation of April 29, Texas Masons have had many questions concerning the reopening of our lodges. Governor Abbott's June 3, Executive Order (GA – 26), raised others. The Executive Order places various restrictions on different types of business and activities. It wasn't clear to me from the Executive Order how our lodges are classified, and therefore what restrictions, if any, apply to our activities. Because it has always been my intention that Texas Masons obey the laws that apply to the larger community, I thought that it was important to obtain clarification of the Governor's Executive Order.

With the able assistance of our brother, Hon. John Raney (John is the state representative for House District 14 representing Brazos County), the Grand Secretary, and I spoke by telephone this week with the governor's senior assistant concerning the issue.

In our telephone conversation, Mr. Toomey informed us that the Executive Order limits attendance at our lodges to no more than 50% of their respective capacities. For most lodges, the capacity is the number which the building's occupancy permit allows. For others, it's just one-half of the seating area in the Lodge room. Mr. Toomey also said that because of the demographics (age) of our membership, the Governor's Office **STRONGLY** recommended that all Masons attending Lodge wear facemasks.

I asked Mr. Toomey whether those parts of our ritual in which physical contact between members typically took place, such as the manner in which we conduct new officers during installations, was permissible under the Executive Order. He explained that any physical contact between individuals promoted the spread of COVID-19 and should be discouraged.

As a result of our telephone conversation, the message to Texas Masons is this; my Proclamation of April 29 is consistent with Governor Abbott's Executive Order of June 3, with the added limitation that occupancy is limited to fifty percent of capacity. All Texas Masons must adhere to the Proclamation with the governor's additional limitation. Remain safe, be careful, and let's get our lodges open safely.

Paul W. Underwood,
Grand Master 2020