

OPENING

RITUAL DIRECTOR'S GUIDE TO OPENING THE LODGE

1. *Sign of Fidelity*
Page 1, line 13

Suggestion: The Sign of Fidelity is always made with the fingers *closed* and the thumb *down*. The arm should form a square, as though reaching across toward your left elbow. Keeping your right hand rigid will help give the proper sign.

2. *Ofs tk yr*
Page 1, line 14

Suggestion: The Master *may* rap first to get the Brothers' attention. His first words of the Standard Work is "Officers" but the (*) is *required* after he orders them clothed.

3. *Bn, be cld*
Page 1, line 15

Suggestion: The Master should pause momentarily after the rap and survey the room to see that all Officers are in their stations and places before proceeding with "*Br J.D.*"

4. *T se tt*
Page 1, line 18

Suggestion: "They" not "we" are duly tiled.

5. *(No. of Lodge) on the*
Page 1, line 20

Suggestion: "Third Degree of Masonry" as per Section 325 of the Book of Constitutions. The Ritual reinforces the law.

6. *through open door*
Page 1, line 22

Suggestion: The Outer Door is left open at the beginning of the meeting. Once the Tiler is informed and the door is closed, late arrivals must wait until after the Lodge is open to make an alarm.

7. *Br. T*
Page 1, line 23

Suggestion: At the door the Junior Deacon and Tiler should speak loudly and clearly enough to be heard in the East. This pertains to all Officers with speaking parts.

8. *(Junior Deacon closes door)*
Page 2, line 1

Suggestion: After the first Junior Deacon/Tiler exchange is the *only* time they rap *after* the Outer Door is closed. For all other exchanges between these two Officers, they rap *before* opening the door *only*. The correct number of knocks is six. The Outer Door is opened and closed by the Junior Deacon only.

9. *Br J.D.*
Page 2, line 5

Suggestion: “We are duly tiled” is correct not “the Tiler is informed.”

10. *We r dl*
Page 2, Line 6

Definition: “Tiled” is used here as a metaphor and is an old term referring to the “roofing” of the structure, which secures the building from the ravages of the elements. It is used here in its literal meaning to “cover” the building, but Masonically meaning to secure it from cowans, eavesdroppers and other undesirables.

11. *wh th pp*
Page 2, line 8

Suggestion: “implement” not “instrument” of his office.

12. *Takes staff,*
Page 2, line 19

Suggestion: The Lodge should determine and promulgate a standard way for the Deacons, Masters of Ceremony and Stewards to hold their staffs. The staff should always be grasped by the left hand, but may otherwise be held in an upright position, may be tilted slightly forward or may be rested against the left shoulder. Neither is incorrect, but the objective is for all Officers of the Lodge to carry their staffs the same way.

**13. *around the Lodge*
Page 2, line 23**

Suggestion: The Junior Deacon should carry a clean white apron in his pocket or leave an extra apron near his place in the event that a Brother who is known to the Lodge forgets to clothe himself appropriately.

**14. *who are unknown*
Page 2, line 25**

Suggestion: One of the primary responsibilities of the Junior Deacon is to work with the Senior Deacon prior to the Lodge Opening to greet and verify the Masonic standing of every visitor to the Lodge who is not personally known to him.

**15. *to his place)*
Page 3, line 12**

Suggestion: The Senior Warden should wait until the Junior Deacon is seated before reporting to the Master.

**16. *r M Ms*
Page 3, line 16**

Suggestion: “Receive” not “obtain” the password from the Senior and Junior Deacon, who will obtain it from the Brethren on the right and left etc. The Senior Warden receives, the Deacons obtain. Use the mnemonic “R.O.C” – Receive, Obtain, Communicate.

**17. *of MM*
Page 3, line 22**

Suggestion: The Deacons come to the Sign of Fidelity. The Senior Deacon should ascend the Senior Warden’s Station first, followed by the Junior Deacon after the Senior Deacon descends the Station. The same applies in the East except that the Deacons don’t come to the Sign of Fidelity in front of the Master (they are still under the direction of the Senior Warden).

**18. *of the dais*
Page 3, line 23**

Suggestion: The Deacons ascend the Stations to give the password to the Senior Warden and Master. Once completed, they may turn around to descend the stairs rather than attempting to back down. Additionally, the Master can assist the Deacons in backing down the steps. The desire to give respect to superior Officers is understandable, however safety should be considered.

The Deacons receive the password on the level from all the Brethren except for the Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Secretary, Treasurer and any Grand Lodge Officers seated in the East (Grand Lodge officers not seated in the East must give the password).

**19. *(During the entire...)*
Page 3, line 26**

Suggestion: It is permissible for the Deacons to assist one another in obtaining the password if there is an overabundance of Brothers seated on one side of the Lodge.

**20. *in gd stndg*
Page 4, line 14**

Suggestion: Any Brother present may vouch for an individual personally known to him as a Brother, regardless of whether the voucher himself has already given the password, because the Junior Deacon should previously have vouched for everyone present as a Brother “in good standing.”

**21. *Br S.W.*
Page 4, line 24**

Suggestion: Once the Master reopens communication with the Senior Warden and reports the proper reception of the password, the Deacons return to their seats. The Master should wait until the Deacons are seated before he continues to communicate with the Senior Warden.

**22. *cmpos a M*
Page 5, line 15**

Suggestion: “How many compose a Master *Mason* Lodge” not “Master *Masons* Lodge.”

**23. *Treasurer and Secretary*
Page 5, line 19**

Suggestion: It is highly recommended that the Secretary’s and Treasurer’s duties be performed at the opening of Lodge several times each year. Please make the Senior Warden, Senior Deacon, Secretary and Treasurer aware in advance.

**24. *J.D.s plc*
Page 5, line 22**

Suggestion: This is the only time the Master says “in the Lodge.”

**25. *(subordinate Officers rise)*
Page 5, line 24**

Suggestion: During the Officers’ duties *all* Officers rise. This includes the Junior Officers without speaking roles as well as the Secretary and Treasurer. There should be no conversation and everyone must remain quiet during this ritual section. The Secretary and Treasurer should suspend their work until this is completed.

26. *to cr msgs*
Page 5, line 27
and
Page 6, line 6
Suggestion: Deacons say “to” only twice: “to . . .” at the beginning and also “to . . .” before the last duty.
27. *ab th L*
Page 5, line 28
and
Page 6, line 7
Suggestion: “carry messages *as* he may direct” – not “*that* he may direct.”
28. *th Sn at*
Page 7, line 9
Definition: “Meridian” is the highest point in the sky reached by the sun; noontime.
29. *sn is in*
Page 7, line 20
Suggestion: “As the sun is in the West at the close of day” not “close of *the* day.”
30. *ny b du*
Page 7, line 23
Suggestion: The word “so” (that none may go away, etc.) is often incorrectly inserted here.
31. *As th sn*
Page 7, line 29
Suggestion: The Master should not rise at this point, but wait until the Senior Warden has completed his statement. (It is, however, always the Master’s prerogative to rise or sit whenever he desires.)
32. *fr thr labor*
Page 8, line 2
Suggestion: Master: (rises) “Brother Senior Warden it is my order . . .” There should be no pause by the Master and no response by the Senior Warden here.
33. *my ord tt*
Page 8, line 3
Suggestion: The Lodge number should be spoken out and not abbreviated. No “ands” are to be inserted between the numbers.

For example: Lodge No. 1166, should be spoken as “one thousand one hundred sixty-six,” not “one thousand one hundred *and* sixty-six,” not “eleven hundred sixty-six,” and most certainly not “eleven sixty-six” or “one one six six.”

34. *(Number of Lodge) be now*

Page 8, line 4

and

My & std

Page 8, line 5

Suggestion: “Open” not “opened.” This is also true for the Senior Warden and Junior Warden when they repeat the Master’s order.

35. *This cmt*

Page 8, line 25

Suggestion: The Junior Warden says “I communicate *the same* to you” not “*this I* communicate to you.”

36. *ob th E*

Page 8, line 27

Suggestion: Master performs the movements slowly and accurately, taking care to come on the Step of each Degree before performing the Due Guard. Each movement should be distinct, and the Master should drop each Due Guard and Sign fully by bringing his hands down to his sides before beginning the next movement.

The Brethren should always give the signs together with the Master, bearing in mind that they do not drop their hands until he does so.

37. *Only The Monitor*

Page 9, line 5

Suggestion: The Monitor (Book 6) or the Chaplain’s Book (preferred) are be used if the Prayer is read.

38. *W.M. atnd*

Page 9, line 28

Suggestion: Attend “at” the altar not “to” the altar.

39. *thr gt lts*

Page 9, line 29

Suggestion: Don’t forget “in Masonry.”

**40. *Lights tapers individually*
Page 9, line 30**

Suggestion: The Senior Deacon's work at the Altar should be done with reverence and dignity. It is important that the Senior Deacon square his corners each time he moves on the floor. Opening the Great Light should be done slowly and deliberately with great care. The Great Light is always illuminated (light the tapers first *then* open the Book; at the end close the Book first *then* extinguish lights).

**41. *to his place*
Page 10, line 3**

Suggestion: The Senior Deacon does not give the Sign of Fidelity after he has completed attending at the Altar. He just returns to his place.

**42. *Br. J.D.*
Page 10, line 13**

Suggestion: The Junior Deacon does not begin by saying, "I am directed to inform you . . ." He simply informs the Tiler: "The Lodge is open on the Third Degree of Masonry." As always, it is important to keep the Tiler informed as to the Degree.

**43. *of our country*
Page 10, line 20**

Suggestion: The Sign of Fidelity is not used when pledging allegiance to the flag. We salute the flag and sing the National Anthem using the civilian salute with the hand over the heart or, if a Brother is (or was) in the military, he may use the military salute (hand to forehead).

**44. *L ofs, or*
Page 10, line 26**

Suggestion: It is not "Masters of *other* Lodges." This is implied, as all Masters are from other Lodges.

Note: This is an optional invitation only to be used if such Brothers are present and the Master does not intend to recognize them individually. It is not a required part of the Opening.

**45. *the E **
Page 10, 28**

Suggestion: When recognizing individuals, the Master should address each Brother by name. That Brother will stand and come to the Sign Fidelity, and then the Master will recognize the next Brother, etc. Once all Brothers are standing, the Master may welcome them and they can thank him in unison before sitting down en masse.

KNOCKING

RITUAL DIRECTOR'S GUIDE TO KNOCKING AT THE OUTER DOOR

The Junior Deacon controls the Outer Door. He is the only one who can open or close it, and one of his duties during a Lodge meeting is to observe the Ritual knocking protocol. Contrary to popular belief, the Junior Deacon does *not* need to knock every time he opens or closes the Outer Door, and over-knocking is an extremely common error to say the least. Indeed, it is not unusual for a Junior Deacon to routinely exchange knocks with the Tiler every time he opens the Outer Door as well as every time he closes it. This is not only improper and unnecessary, but an excess of loud knocking can be unpleasant for the Brethren on occasions when the Lodge receives delegations and Masonic dignitaries. Fortunately, there are three simple rules that govern when and how the Junior Deacon and Tiler are required knock on the Outer Door. On all other occasions, the Junior Deacon can open and close the door with no knocking whatsoever.

RULE NO. 1 – INITIATING AN EXCHANGE OF KNOCKS: *The Junior Deacon only knocks first* as part of a Ritual dialogue with the Tiler. This only occurs: (1) when he informs the Tiler that the Lodge is about to open or about to close; (2) when he informs the Tiler that the Lodge is either open on a specific Degree or closed; and (3) when he asks the Tiler if any Candidates are in waiting. If he has no Ritual lines for the Tiler, he does not knock. Thus, when Brothers seeking admittance have alarmed the Lodge, he does *not* knock before re-opening the door to admit them. *The Tiler only knocks first* to alarm the Lodge, usually because a Brother seeks admittance.

RULE NO. 2 – DOOR MANAGEMENT AND TIMING OF KNOCKS: Knocks only come *before* opening the Outer Door *unless it is already open*, in which case the knocks must be given after closing it as a matter of practicality. This only happens once in the entire Ritual, when the Outer Door is closed at the beginning of the Lodge Opening. It is never proper to knock before opening and again after closing the Outer Door.

RULE NO. 3 – RESPONDING TO KNOCKS: When one officer knocks on the Outer Door, his counterpart on the other side must knock three times in reply before the door is opened.

CLOSING

RITUAL DIRECTOR'S GUIDE TO CLOSING THE LODGE

Note: Most suggestions for the Opening apply to the equivalent lines in the Closing, with the addition of the following:

1. *as w/ a*
Page 21, line 9

Suggestion: "The last as well as first great care" not "The last as well as *the* first great care."

2. *r d td.*
Page 21, line 17

Suggestion: The short form of closing was eliminated by a vote of Grand Lodge as of 2011. There is now only one acceptable form of closing. Ignore any reference to the "short form."

3. *nw cld &*
Page 24, lines 7, 15 & 21

Suggestion: "*Stand* closed" not "*stay* closed."

4. *nx rg cmtn*
Page 24, lines 8, 16 & 22

Suggestion: "Next *regular*" not "next regular *stated*" and also not "next *stated*." The *regular* communications of the Lodge are *stated* in its by-laws.

5. *rg cmtn, nls*

Page 24, lines 8, 16 & 22

Suggestion: “specially” not “especially.”

6. *should we, my*

Page 25, line 7

Suggestion: “So should we, my *Brethren*” not “my *Brothers*.” *Brethren* is used when talking to all Brothers in general. *Brothers* is used when speaking to part of a class or when making a specific reference.

The proper pronunciation is in two syllables: “*breth-ren*” (never “*bruth-ren*”) The “th” is vocalized.

7. *a & pt*

Page 25, line 8

Suggestion: Unlike in the Lodge Opening, there is no introduction (i.e., “give your attention to the Chaplain”) before the Chaplain gives the Prayer at the Closing of the Lodge.

8. *W.M. May the*

Page 25, line 23

Suggestion: “May the *Blessing* of Heaven” not “the *Blessings* of Heaven.” *Blessing* is singular here, not plural.

9. *& cl th*

Page 25, line 30

Suggestion: “The Great Light” not “the *three* Great Lights.” Great Light is singular here, not plural.

Because the word “close” is used here, it refers only to the Holy Bible (described in the Entered Apprentice Degree on page 45 as “*the* Great Light in Masonry”). This is because one can “close” a Book but cannot “close” the Square and Compasses. In the Lodge Opening, on the other hand, the Three Great Lights are “displayed” – meaning that the Book is opened and the Square and Compasses are *displayed* on top of it.

10. *L is clsd*

Page 26, line 10

Suggestion: The Junior Deacon must leave the Outer Door open at the Close of Lodge after the Tiler is informed. The Lodge is not officially closed until the Master raps the gavel once.