

The Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Texas
Office of the Grand Commander
Amarillo, Texas
June 19, 2020

GENERAL ORDER NO. 3, SERIES 2020-2021

Subject: Emergency Directive Regarding COVID-19 Restrictions

To: The Grand Officers, Past Grand Commanders, Officers and Members of the Constituent Commanderies of Texas.

Greetings, Sir Knights:

While the federal and Texas state governments have attempted to reopen our economies, it is apparent that, in Texas in particular, we are lagging behind much of the country as far as the spread of COVID-19 is concerned. Statistics show that cases in our state are still sharply rising, and it is currently unknown when we will peak or plateau, which will no doubt hinder attempts at reopening and returning to some semblance of normality. The Grand Master of Masons in Texas has issued guidelines for masonic meetings, which currently allow for some in-person meetings with restrictions, however, the Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of the U.S.A. has issued General Order #12, which is still in effect, prohibiting in-person meetings of all commanderies within its jurisdiction.

In concordance with the Grand Master's General Order #12, and in the best interests of the health and safety of our membership, **I hereby cancel all in-person Commandery meetings of any kind until further notice, with no exceptions.** This applies to any and all in-person stated or called meetings, degree and ritual work, practices, committee meetings, social gatherings, etc., in compliance with Grand Encampment directives.

Additionally, as authorized by General Order #12, **Stated Conclaves of Constituent Commanderies WILL be allowed to meet by teleconference or webcast** in order to conduct essential business, contingent upon the availability to the membership of the means necessary to conduct such meetings. Many platforms are available for this online meeting format, such as WebEx, Skype, GoToMeeting, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc., some of which are free to use, while others are not. The preferred platform will be left at the discretion of the individual commanderies, depending on what is available to them, and how much they are willing to pay for services. **No ritual work shall be performed, nor any orders conferred during such online meetings.**

While General Order #12 is in force, the Grand Master has rendered inoperative the provisions of Sections 48(d), 59, 176 and 195 of the Constitution and Statutes of the Grand Encampment.

Sir Knights, these extraordinary measures are not invoked lightly. We all miss our fraternity and fellowship, and are anxious to get back to normal. However, in light of the fact that a large percentage of our membership are subject to high-risk factors, and the highly contagious nature of the coronavirus, these restrictions are deemed necessary to protect the health and welfare of our membership. I urge everyone to follow safety and social distancing guidelines established by public health experts, and at this time to avoid our accepted pleasantries of hand-shaking, hugging, and other close-contact

activities. Our goal is to keep everyone safe and healthy, so that when the time comes, God-willing, we can return to normal, and get our personal lives, as well as our great fraternity back on track. I appreciate everyone's understanding and support during these trying times. God bless you all, and God bless our fraternity.

This General Order is to be read aloud at the next Stated Conclave following its receipt, and the action noted by the Recorder in the minutes with a copy attached thereto.

Fraternally,

Gary H. Freedman

Gary H. Freedman
Grand Commander

Attest:

Jerry N. Kirby

Jerry N. Kirby
Grand Recorder

