

Guidance Notes for Lodge Officers

Official Visits

1. It is the Provincial Grand Master's wish that all Lodges should enjoy the benefits of regular official visits. To improve communication he has adjusted the structure of the Province so that his Deputy and Assistants have particular responsibility for about fifteen Lodges each within the Province, with the intention that it is they who will visit those particular Lodges in the course of the year. The Provincial Grand Master has retained direct responsibility himself for certain Lodges, but will of course be visiting others in the Province when desirable and of course for special events such as Centenaries and Jubilees. A smaller number of Lodges has been allocated to Past Assistants so that all the Lodges in the Province are "looked after" in this way.

On all Visits the Official Visitor will be accompanied by a member of the Provincial GDC's team, who will make contact with the Lodge Secretary and DC before the meeting, so that all are fully prepared. The Official Visitor will be supported by a delegation of Provincial Grand Officers, usually four, who will be drawn from other Lodges in the Province. Normally the Official Visitor, and the Delegation, will be received after the Lodge has been opened but before the minutes are taken.

The escorting DC will enter the Lodge first, to "demand" admission for the Official Visitor (unless he should be one of the Wardens, when he will "request" admission) and then form an escort to retire and lead him and the Delegation into the Lodge. The WM must offer the gavel to the Official Visitor if he is the PGM, the DepPGM or one of the AsstPGM's, but should not offer it if he is one of the Wardens.

After being formally welcomed the Official Visitor (if an AsstPGM or senior) will accept the gavel, take the chair, and introduce the members of the Delegation. A Warden will introduce the members of the Delegation while standing front of his seat at the WM's right hand. The AsstPGM having returned the gavel to the WM, and taken his seat/the Warden having sat, the Provincial DC will call the Brethren to salute him.

If a certificate is to be presented the Official Visitor will be pleased to perform his duty, but normal courtesy requires that he should be invited to do so well beforehand. Lodges wishing to invite an Official Visitor to give one of the addresses at an Installation Meeting should definitely make such a request in advance, when sending his copy of the Summons for the meeting.

The escorting Provincial DC will organise the Official Visitor's retiral procession, and will act as Master of Ceremonies at the Festive Board.

Keystone Collarette - Mark and Ram

2. A Lodge Keystone Collarette should be presented to the incoming Master after he has received the Warrant, Book of Constitutions and Regulations, By-Laws but before he invests his Officers. The Investing Officer should use the form of words as set out in part IV of the 1998 editions of the Mark and RAM Rituals No. 2, explaining to the new Master/Commander the significance of the Jewel, its presentation to the Lodge by the Grand Master, and should inform the Master that the Collarette and Jewel should be worn as part of his regalia at all meetings of Mark and Royal Ark Mariner Lodges which he attends during his term of Office.

Salutes

3. The following are the salutes authorised by Grand Lodge:-

	Mark	RAM
MW Grand Master	11	11
MW Pro Grand Master	11	11
RW Deputy and Asst Grand Master	9	9
RW Provincial Grand Master	7	7
Present and Past Prov/District Grand Master	7	7
RW Brethren	7	7
Members of Grand Master's RA Council		7
Deputy and Asst Prov/District Grand Masters	5	*5
VW Brethren	5	
Other Present and Past Grand Officers	3	
RAM Grand Rank		3
Present and Past Prov/District Grand Lodge Officers	3	
Past Ranks are entitled to the same salute as those of active Rank		

* Only when representing the Provincial Grand Master

Dispensations

All requests should be submitted to the ProvGSec, well in advance of the meeting, preferably at least six weeks before. The appropriate colour coded request document will then be supplied by the PGSec for completion, and should be returned to him with the correct fee payable to Mark Grand Lodge, which is now £20.00 plus £3.50 VAT.

When however, a dispensation is to be sought after the event, in order to regularise a situation (nunc pro tunc) the fee is increased to £30.00 plus £5.25 VAT.

The fees due to the Province, which will be collected retrospectively with the Annual Dues, are:-

Dispensation issued by Mark Grand Lodge	£3.00
Dispensation granted by the Province	£3.00
Dispensation granted (nunc pro tunc) by the Province	£4.00

Installation and Yearbook Returns

Installation and Yearbook return forms will be sent out by the ProvGSec with the Annual Return Forms, and should be completed immediately after the Installation Meeting and sent to the DepProvGSec without delay.

Annual Returns and Dues payable by each Lodge

The Annual Forms will be dispatched from Mark Grand Lodge before the end of August each year, together with the necessary instructions for their completion, and will be distributed by the ProvGSec as soon as possible after receipt, together with summation of any amounts due in respect of new registration fees for the previous year. "Welcome Packs" issued and dispensations obtained. The returns are compiled from information recorded at Mark Grand Lodge, and the calculation is checked against the Lodge records, and the names of any new members who have not been inserted in the spaces provided, and appropriate additions made to the total of dues payable. The former needs to be clearly annotated in the columns provided to show when, and why, brethren have ceased their membership during the preceding year, but the calculation of the dues must not be reduced on their account. Annual dues are payable where a brother has been a member for any part of a year. The current rates of annual dues payable are:

Mark Grand Lodge	£12.00 plus £2.10 VAT
Provincial Grand Lodge	£ 3.50 for Mark £ 2.50 for RAM

Lodge Accounts

Two copies of the "audited" annual accounts of the Lodge should be sent to the ProvGSec immediately after the meeting at which they have been presented and adopted.

Toasts Lists

Current Toasts lists for the Mark and RAM following the 2005 Annual Meeting are included in the Year Book on pages 57 and 108 respectively. Notifications of any revisions will be circulated by the ProvGSec as necessary.