



The Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon must ensure a gradual re-opening of Lodges and reinforce protocols of the Provincial Government and the Provincial Health Officer phased approach to our “new” normal. This will be directed by the Grand Master through the Grand Secretary. As the future is uncertain, this plan will be constantly reviewed for revision and update. Any changes will be consistent with changes made by Provincial/Federal health authorities.

It is the responsibility of the WM to ensure that this plan is communicated to all Brethren in the Lodge. The Infection Control checklist is to be completed at each meeting and retained by the Lodge Secretary, if required at a future date.

This plan is developed with respect to the guidance and direction provided by our Provincial Health authorities, WorkSafe BC Regulations and Provincial/Federal Government.

Besides common sense and practicality, there are differing levels of effectiveness based on the types of control measures that are implemented. While the most effective control is to not have the meeting, the next consideration must be the elimination of the hazard. The three methods that are generally used from a mitigation perspective are engineering controls, administrative controls, and PPE (outlined in figure 1). PPE is the absolute minimum standard that **must** be adhered to.

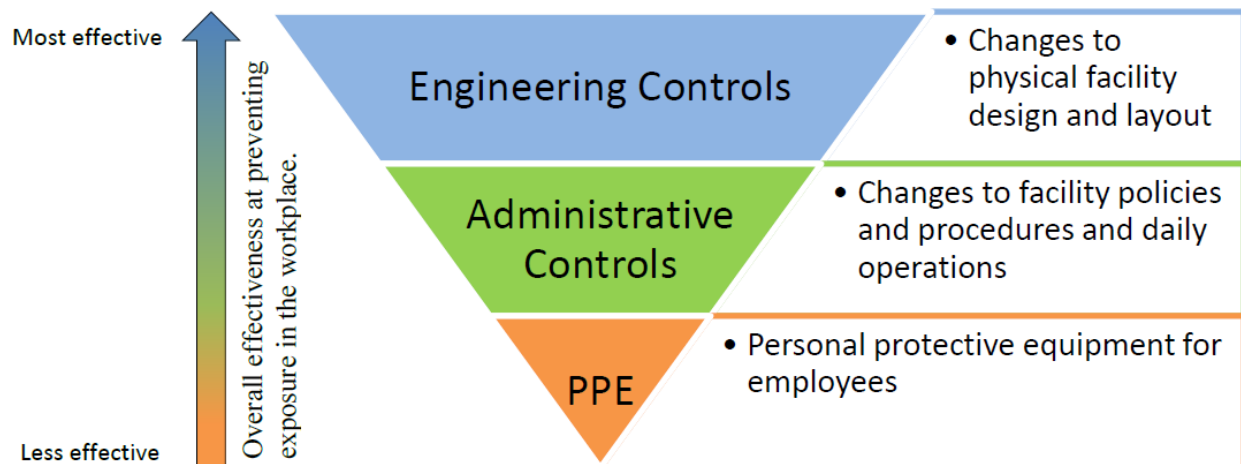


Figure 1: Hierarchy of Control Measures

This plan to safely meet has been developed considering each of these levels of controls, and the broad range of available control measures. Their appropriate and regimented implementation should allow for safe operations within the lodge.



GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Brethren must prove they are double vaccinated as they enter the building or entrance to a masonic event. This is either the government electronic QR code “passport”, or their vaccination card along with supporting picture government identification.**
- **Lodge members are to provide their own facemasks.**
- Any Brother who has had symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 14 days **must not** attend any in-person Lodge function. Symptoms include fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and new muscle aches or headache. (this is a change in order of bullet point only)
- Anyone directed by Public Health to self-isolate **must not** attend any in-person Lodge function. (this is a change in order of bullet point only)
- Anyone who has arrived from outside of Canada or who has had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case **must** self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms. (this is a change in order of bullet point only)
- ALL Brethren **must** legibly sign the Porch Book. Visitors will also provide a telephone number. This is required for the purposes of contact tracing. (this is a change in order of bullet point only)
- **Each Building Association or managing group is responsible to ensure that any required PPE including hand sanitizers, direction arrows, signage, washroom necessities are provided and in place before any meeting is to commence. This also includes ventilation system control, to ensure the building sanitization after any meeting, and conspicuous posting of this plan in the building.**
- Remember, we cannot summons or require any Brother’s attendance during this time; individual health and safety is and will remain the priority.
- Designate the touching of specific objects to individual Brethren or clean in between uses. The gavel can be placed on the pedestal for virtual exchange between the GM, DDGM and a WM at a Lodge meeting.
- Meetings outdoor must still follow ALL health & safety measures as if inside a Lodge Room.
- Increase the ventilation rates of the lodge’s ventilation system, increase the amount of outdoor air that circulates through the ventilation system, and/or, open windows and doors to allow more outdoor air to circulate within the building
- Do not use floor fans, ceiling fans are permitted to operate.
- Prop inner doors open, where possible, so the door handle does not need to be touched to walk through
- Provide hand sanitizer at each door or entrance and egress point



Procedures for opening a meeting and for brethren to attend a masonic meeting.

1. Brethren must prove they are double vaccinated with the provincially issued electronic QR code or a printed version of the QR code. Because some of the brethren do not have access to the electronic versions of their vaccinations, the paper record they received at the time of each vaccination will be accepted until such time as those brothers are able to acquire an electronic QR record. Brethren must also show supporting government picture identification at the time they enter the lodge building.
2. **The Worshipful Master and others with speaking roles may remove their masks while performing their duties.** Masks must be worn at all times with the above exception or when eating at a Festive Board. Masks are necessary as **most of our buildings do not have adequate mechanical ventilation.**
3. A safety plan must be in place and posted at the lodge building entrance, at the Porch Book, in the washrooms and the Festive Board rooms. Lodges should consider not holding a festive board until they meet a standard of care as provided by local health authorities.
4. Singing is not permitted.
5. White cotton gloves **will not** be worn. Ensure hand sanitizer is placed and visible throughout the lodge room. Hand sanitizer effectively cleans hands whereas gloves cannot be sanitized until they are laundered.
6. Cleaning and sanitizing the lodge room and building must be completed in accordance with provincial and local standards.

2. Conferring degrees

1. Candidates must be double vaccinated, and proof of vaccination must be provided.
2. Candidates must be asked if they are okay with having physical contact with a member(s) of the lodge during the degree.



3. Should a candidate not have proof of vaccination or state they are not comfortable with physical contact, the degree cannot proceed. These points must be asked in advance of the degree (at least the evening before the degree, if not sooner) to avoid the candidate from becoming embarrassed immediately prior to conferring the degree.
4. Candidates will seal their obligation on the VOSL with a disposable sheet of paper on the appropriate page. The sheet of paper will be disposed of immediately after they leave the altar. A waste tub will be placed to the side of the altar for this purpose.
5. The candidate's "degree clothing" will be laundered after each use.
6. The candidate's blindfold will be laundered after each use or use disposable blindfolds.

3. Balloting/Voting

1. Election of Officers by must be with a written ballot
2. Every brother will be provided slips of paper on which to write their choice for each position. All unused paper "ballots" will be disposed of in waste containers as they leave the meeting or to take home with them.
3. Pens or pencils will either be sanitized, disposed of or offered to the brethren to take home with them.
4. Deacons will collect the ballots in container which may be sanitized following the meeting or disposed of via a recycling or waste bin.
5. Completed ballots will be disposed of via regular means by the lodge secretary.

4. Balloting with Ball and Cube

Balls and cubes will be immediately sanitized after the lodge meeting. It is highly recommended multiple sets of balls and cubes be available for each candidate or where a ballot by ball and cube is required.



5. Installation of Officers (Please refer to the forthcoming GLBCY COVID-19 Infection Control Plan)

1. The Installing Master is permitted to remove his mask while performing his duty.
2. Perambulations with safe distancing is permitted. Singing is permitted if a mask is worn.
3. Investing Officers are permitted to remove their mask as they charge the new officer with their duty or have them undertake an oath for their office.
4. Brethren who are about to be installed as an officer of the Lodge will be directed by the Installing Master where and by whom they will be symbolically invested.
5. Each of the lodge officer's regalia will be available on a table and the Brother will pick up his collar and place it on their shoulders.
6. If cuffs are a part of their office, they will pick them up from the same table and place them on their coat sleeves.
7. If rods/wands/swords are part of their office, they will also pick it up from the table.
8. Each newly invested officer will be directed by the Installing Master about how they will be escorted to their chair in the lodge.

6. Board of Installed Masters (BOIM) (Please refer to the forthcoming GLBCY COVID-19 Infection Control Plan)

1. The Installing Master and others with speaking roles may remove their masks while performing their duties.
2. The Worshipful Master-elect will be asked if they are comfortable with physical contact during the BOIM. If they are not comfortable with physical contact, two Past Masters who are comfortable with physical contact will demonstrate what is necessary to the Worshipful Master-elect.



7. Long service awards or certificates or other forms of Masonic recognition

1. The Brethren being honoured will be asked to join the Worshipful Master, District Deputy Grand Master or Grand Master at the Secretary's desk.
2. A table with the Brother's award will be made available at the Secretary's area where the requisite words will be spoken to honour the recipient. The Brother will be directed to pick up the jewel and display it on their jacket breast pocket. The Brother may adhere the pin to their jacket's lapel.
3. Certificates, plaques and other awards are to be picked up from the table by the Brother receiving the acknowledgement and/or accolade.
4. Each Brother will be given an opportunity to speak, and they may remove their mask.

8. Official Visit by the District Deputy Grand Master

These visits will follow the same procedures as a lodge meeting and will follow the protocol in the Book of Ceremonies.

9. Official Visit by the Most Worshipful Grand Master

These visits will follow the same procedures as a lodge meeting and will follow the protocol in the Book of Ceremonies.

10. Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is reducing the close contact of individuals and striving to allow for a 2-metre separation between Brethren:

- It is recommended that the WM designate a specific Brother to make timely communication of this document and any amendments going forward.
- It is suggested that the Porch Book be placed as near to the building entrance as possible in order that physical interaction is minimized. Only one Brother to sign in at a time, respecting physical distancing.
- Also, designate a Brother at the entrance to the building to ensure that Brethren are wearing their masks and have proof of vaccination before entering.
- It is recommended that there is **controlled** access to the Lodge Room.



- Direct foot traffic in one direction for access and egress. It is further suggested that the Lodge entrance be the access point and the Preparation Room, or such exit be designated as the egress. One Brother to enter the Lodge Room at a time. Use hi-visibility tape to make arrows showing the flow.
- Brethren do not shake hands or hug at this time.
- Read out the Lodge's Emergency Evacuation Plan describing how the Brethren can evacuate quickly and safely. It is also important to clearly communicate this plan to the Brethren of the Lodge and invited visitors.
- **The Infection Control checklist is to be completed at each meeting and retained by the Lodge Secretary, if required at a future date.**

11. Increased Cleaning and Sanitation

Increase the current cleaning and sanitation schedule to be more frequent and ensure it covers all common touch points. Sanitizers should be verified for their efficacy by the following steps:

- Use the list on Health Canada's website to identify if your current sanitizer has been reviewed and confirmed effective against SARS-CoV-2: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>
- If you use bleach for cleaning, it should be used at a concentration of 500ppm (made by mixing 10mL of bleach with 990mL (approx. 1 L) of water. Note: On food contact surfaces, this will require a rinse step after 5-minute contact time. **Do not use for hand sanitization.**
- Common touch points must be cleaned and sanitized before and after meetings, and if possible, after any potential contamination event; these include door handles, buttons, washrooms, lodge furniture, etc.
- Provide information about your cleaning plan. Specify, in writing, who is responsible for cleaning, the cleaning schedule, and what the cleaning protocols will include (e.g., which surfaces)

12. Hand Hygiene and PPE

Proper hand hygiene is vital to reducing the risk of illness. This should be done in conjunction with good cough and sneeze etiquette, avoiding touching your face and, where necessary, using personal protective equipment.

- Hand sanitizers **must** be available and used at the entrance to the building.



- Handwashing sinks **must** be fully stocked with liquid hand soap, paper towel and warm, running water to promote proper handwashing. (Well before the meeting)
- Signs **must** be posted to remind brethren of proper hand washing techniques
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60-90% alcohol) for hand hygiene
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – this may be needed when close contact cannot be avoided, however, physical barriers and/or a change to the general flow movement are preferred measures
- Respiratory etiquette **must** be followed – coughing or sneezing into a tissue or elbow
- PPE – Brethren **must not** wear gloves; proper hand hygiene must be practiced. . If Brethren wish to wear surgical gloves or other disposable gloves, please do.
- PPE – Brethren **must** wear masks; they should avoid touching their faces and adjusting the mask as this may increase their risk. Masks should be appropriately fitted, and N95 masks do not work with beards. Non-medical masks are permitted.
- Donning and doffing procedures (how to safely put on and take off PPE) must be followed.

13. Illness Policy

Ill Brethren and family **must** not enter the lodge **at any time**.

- Brethren should be advised not to attend if they are exhibiting symptoms of illness
- Brethren should advise the WM that they are exhibiting symptoms of illness and therefore not attending.
- Brethren must also inform the WM if symptoms develop after a Lodge visit.

14. Food Policy

It is possible to prepare and serve food safely

- Order in or get takeout from a Permitted facility shown to be operating safely.
- Consume food that has limited potential for food handling mistakes i.e., individually packaged take-out meals.
- Do not serve any meals buffet-style or share dining implements.
- If preparing food, use gloves and masks.
- Place disposable tablecloths over the eating area and maintain social distance while eating.



- Dispose of tablecloth and any food packaging. Wipe down the area with sanitizer, for certain where a Brother may have sat.
- **The Infection Control checklist is to be completed at each meeting and retained by the Lodge Secretary, if required, at a future date.**

References:

Worksafe BC Covid 19
Provincial Health Officer
Yukon Health Officer