



GRAND LODGE OF IDAHO
ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS
219 NORTH 17TH STREET BOISE, IDAHO 83702 TELEPHONE 208/343-4562

Steven L. Hall
M.:W.: Grand Master
PO Box 54
Meridian, ID 83680-0054

Phone: (208) 590-2777
Email: Eaglechief57@gmail.com

Masonic Family,

June 19, 2020

My thoughts and prayers are with each and every person affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic, but especially my Brothers and Sisters of the Idaho Masonic Family. I recognize that we are all tired of staying at home and following other practices recommended by the CDC to protect ourselves from illness, and that we all long for the lifestyle we had prior to the arrival of this highly communicable virus. I, too, am yearning to meet and socialize with my Masonic Family and to attend masonic events when it is possible to safely do so. The bad news today is that the Pandemic is NOT over, as evidenced by local, state, national and international news headlines. Currently, COVID-19 cases in Idaho are again on the increase, and, as we have seen since this Pandemic began, not all areas of our State are equally affected.

Governor Little issued a statement on June 11, 2020 that Idaho "barely" met the criteria for entering Stage 4 of the reopening process. We proceeded into Stage 4 reopening on June 13, 2020. Stage 4 regulations allow gatherings in excess of 50 people, but still require social distancing; the wearing of masks is also highly recommended. Despite these safety precautions, Idaho has had an increase of 336 new cases in less than a week into Stage 4 reopening. In Idaho, the average number of new cases per day for the month of May was 17.5; the average number of new cases per day since June 13, 2020 has more than quadrupled to 77.3. Today, Idaho is reporting 128 new cases, the third highest day since March. Idaho is currently one of 22 states to have experienced an increase of new cases greater than 50 percent during the past week.

Every activity that involves interacting with others during this Pandemic has some degree of risk. As Grand Master, I am charged with protecting the welfare of EVERY member of our Masonic Family throughout this Jurisdiction, regardless of the prevalence of COVID-19 in their immediate community. Decisions have to be made to evaluate the risk-benefit of various activities, including the consideration of what level of risk is acceptable. My concern is that a member of our Masonic Family would contract the virus through attending a masonic activity. There is no meeting, gathering or function we have as a Masonic Family that is worth putting anyone's health and life at risk.

The CDC has determined that an asymptomatic person can unknowingly transmit the virus to those they come in contact with. Additionally, according to the CDC, the more closely one interacts with others, the longer the interaction lasts, and the greater the number of people involved in the interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. My question to each of you is, would you attend a meeting or activity KNOWING that someone attending has COVID-19? How would you know that the person next to you does NOT have the virus?

Due to the current exponential increase of COVID-19 cases within Idaho and the United States, I believe that the prudent course of action is to continue Edict 1-2020. This Edict will stand as written.

M. W. Steven L. Hall
Grand Master
Grand Lodge A.F. & AM of Idaho