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## Memorandum Concerning COVID-19

This memorandum is to provide guidance to the Chapters, Advisors, and Active DeMolays of the Jurisdiction of Massachusetts DeMolay in considering moving forward with the virus known as COVID-19.

It is important to note that this is a new virus and therefore the knowledge and information concerning this illness are going to be changing on a constant basis. The purpose of this document is to try and provide basic guidelines for participants in order to attempt to conduct the business of running a DeMolay Chapter. It is important to bear in mind that in the event that a major development such as a new sweeping guideline from the government or a vaccine is developed then more changes will take place.

It is also important to note that in person exposure to a person who is infected with COVID-19 is necessary for viral transmission. Not all persons infected have symptoms. By attending a DeMolay event all persons present assume all risk related to possible exposure to COVID-19.

Ultimately no guideline or level of precaution is 100% guaranteed to insure you may not contract the virus. It is Massachusetts DeMolay's hope that by providing some basic direction that we can help Advisors and Members protect themselves.

The information contained is based on the information provided by [The Massachusetts Child and Youth Serving Program](#).

In the Memorandum the major areas of consideration to be discussed are:

### **General Guidelines and information**

- a. Use of masks
- b. Symptoms of COVID-19

### **The Chapter Meeting**

- a. Set up and take down
- b. Changes to the running of a meeting
- c. Leaving the Hall

### **Events**

- a. What type of events to have
- b. Screening attendees
- c. Getting to and from events
  - i. The need for Basic Health Screenings prior to transportation by an advisor

### **Having food at events**

### **Testing and Notification**



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### **General Guidelines and information:**

It is important to keep a social distance of 6 feet if at all possible, with any person or persons you do not live in the same household with.

Washing of hands for 20 seconds and making sure all surfaces of the hands are cleaned

- a. This is done with soap and water or other commercially available hand sanitizer.

Wear a mask or facial covering while within 6 feet of anyone else or in any situation where you are unable to social distance, but especially anyone you do not share a household with.

- b. This is both indoors and out of doors

If your mask or facial covering develops stains or other signs of long-term usage, then change it out for a new mask or wash it if a cloth mask.

When coughing or sneezing cover your mouth with your elbow

Use of Gloves is not recommended. In order to use gloves appropriately one must change out the pair of gloves when moving from one singular task to the next, often this is not possible. It is better to wash one's hands or use commercially produced hand sanitizer than it is to use gloves.

The one exception is if serving food.

**Wearing a facial covering:** As the Center for Disease Control has stated, the Coronavirus is mostly spread by inhaling water droplets that have viral particles attached. It is therefore necessary to wear a facial covering at all times during DeMolay events at this time while not consuming food or beverage.

This is especially to be adhered to while indoors and or not being able to social distance.

The facial covering should sit at the bridge of your nose and extend just below the mouth. If you pull the facial covering down below your nose, then it is not being utilized appropriately and you are still putting others at risk. If your facial covering has a wire, then the wire should be on top and you should form the wire around the bridge of your nose.

If your facial covering is dirty or soiled, then you should change it out for another.

While wearing a facial covering it is important to continue to be vigilant about not touching your face. Do not wipe your nose on the inside of your mask and use it as a tissue. If you sneeze into your facial covering please change it out for a new one.



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**The Symptoms of COVID-19 that have been determined thus far by the Center for Disease Control are:**

- Fever (Temp 100.4 degrees+)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity)
- Flushed cheeks
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea, nausea, vomiting)
- Fatigue (Fatigue alone should not exclude a DeMolay from participation.)
- Headache they may attend the next event
- New loss of smell/taste
- New muscle aches

If an attendee exhibits any of these signs during a Chapter activity then their participation needs to be stopped, they should return home at this point or not attend the event.

If an attendee exhibits these symptoms prior to a meeting or event and did not have any known exposure to anyone with COVID-19 diagnosis, then they may attend the next event unless they still have symptoms. They do not need to stay away for 14 days merely make sure their symptoms have subsided.

If an attendee has contact with a person who has a known diagnosis of COVID-19 then the DeMolay should not attend in person events for a period of 14 days. If you develop symptoms in that 14-day period, then consult your parents and/or primary care physician about next steps.

Any person who is feeling ill for any reason should be encouraged to stay home and or remove themselves from a meeting or event at the earliest they feel ill.

**Parents please provide facial coverings:**

It will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide facial coverings for their child for the foreseeable future.



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### **The Chapter Meeting:**

The Chapter meeting is central to the running of a DeMolay Chapter, it is important that a meeting be as smooth as possible. In dealing with the novel Coronavirus it is important to keep these guidelines in mind.

The guidelines utilized will depend on the phase of opening that is determined by the Commonwealth.

During Phase III of the Commonwealth being open a business meeting will be allowed. It is encouraged that Chapters limit themselves to one in person business meeting a month if a Chapter decides to have in person meetings. Chapters should limit the length of the meeting as prolonged exposure has been shown to be a factor in transmitting or contracting the COVID-19 virus.

Prior to the meeting the Advisor should be checking in with attendees to determine if they have symptoms of any kind.

#### **Set up and take down**

1. It may seem unfair but please designate 2-3 DeMolays to both set up and take down. It is also important that these DeMolays take down also
2. Please make sure they wash their hands both before and after doing so.

#### **Running the meeting**

1. All attendees should wear a face covering during the meeting. The reason for this is ventilation in many chapter rooms is not optimal. All Attendees who do not reside in the same household should social distance while in the chapter room. Members of the same household may sit together.

#### **During a meeting:**

1. The Marshall will not be used for business meetings at this time.
2. Any person that wishes to speak during the meeting should stand and be recognized, and then speak from their respective position in the chapter room.
3. The Chaplin's station will not be directly next to the Master Councilor. The Chaplin should be stationed at a social distance. With the chair on the floor.
4. The Senior Deacon will perform all standard bearer functions and the station of standard bearer should not be set up.
5. The Junior Deacon should be stationed not in the West next to the Senior Councilor but 6 feet away from any officer or visitor in the room. This is left up to the chapter discretion, as each chapter room lay out is unique.
6. The meeting will begin and end in stations, there should not be a "walk in" and/or making of the triangle/shield.



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Degree work will not be taking place during phase III. Degree work can resume during Phase IV and initially please utilize the guideline below. If Phase III becomes an extended period of time, we will revisit this decision.

1. If doing degree work, then the Master Councilor should give the obligation from a standing position on the opposite side of the altar. The Master Councilor should do this by himself and the SC, CH, JC should not join him on the Eastern side of the altar.
2. If degrees are done, then the Marshall should ask the examination queries in the lobby outside the chapter room where social distancing can be adhered to.
3. When conducting the journey of the Crown of Youth. The Crown of Youth then the Crown should be placed on the altar. Candidates should be afforded seats in the North of the chapter room. Each Preceptor should approach the Altar and place their jewel in the Crown of Youth and then speak their part from a socially distant position next to the Altar.
4. When performing the secrets of the order then members should be provided hand sanitizer preferably before and after the demonstration if possible. If necessary, have the members exit the room and wash their hands following the demonstration.
5. The DeMolay degree should have the Inquisitors spread apart for social distancing.
6. Jacques DeMolay should roll/position himself in the different positions with guards pointing to where he should go instead of physical contact being made between DeMolays.

This list cannot encompass all the changes necessary for the running of a meeting in your specific location. The important aspects are that attendees should be encouraged to social distance before, during, and after the meeting from those they do not live with. Also, masks should be employed at all times. All attendees should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene.

### **Events:**

#### *If having events:*

**Virtual Events:** Virtual events where social distancing is taking place are encouraged. Yes, it is true that Massachusetts DeMolay has been employing this strategy for months now. It is merely being reiterated that this is the safest event to have at this time.

**In Person Events:** The two types of in person events are indoor and outdoor events.

Outdoor in person events are encouraged over indoor in person events. It provides quality ventilation and allows for better social distancing. Outdoor events are encouraged in areas of wide-open spaces. This will allow social distancing.

Any outdoor event should avoid highly physical activity with a lot of close contact such as team sports



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Possible outdoor activities to think about are anything utilizing a frisbee, lawn games such as cornhole and can jam. Hiking can be done as a chapter, but social distancing should be encouraged and not all members might want to wear a mask while physically exerting themselves. Other possible ideas include a scavenger hunt/ geo tagging quest of some sort

Facial coverings should be utilized when social distancing is not possible.

Indoor Events are the riskiest to have in terms of possible transmission. Low ventilation and the inability to social distance make this the riskier option. Please take into account the number of people attending an event. Initially Massachusetts limited the amount of people to attend any gathering to ten total. When the Commonwealth moves to open up that number will grow to 25 when Phase III is implemented. Please understand that while we can do this it is important more than ever to be vigilant that we are still in a pandemic.

If having indoor events, please take steps to ventilate the area. If the chapter room has an emergency exit, then utilize this to allow air to escape the room.

All attendees should social distance if not from the same household. **Facial coverings should be utilized.**

#### **Screenings:**

1. For in person events it will be necessary to screen participants. Any person that answers affirmative to any screening question cannot participate in that event and possible future events depending on the situation.
2. Massachusetts DeMolay will provide guidance on a screening process that will need to be utilized prior to the running of events.
3. Part of the screening process will be listing all persons at meetings and events. In the event a person who attended an event is found to be COVID-19 positive then it will be necessary for the contact tracing effort to know who they came in contact with at our events. This will be included in the screening tool.
4. This process will be in the form of pertinent questions that advisors will have to ask both groups and individuals prior to the start of any event.
5. The questions will be provided on the Massachusetts DeMolay Website to allow for advisors to complete the questions in real time and not have to worry about paper forms.

**Transportation to and from events will depend on the Phase of opening by the Commonwealth:**

#### **Transportation to and from events during Phase III:**

1. It will be the responsibility of parents to provide transportation to and from events during Phase III. Advisors will not be transporting DeMolays during Phase III and carpooling is not recommended.



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### **Transportation to and from events during Phase IV:**

1. We encourage advisors to ask parents/guardians to provide transportation to and from events. Please let parents know that a screening process will be necessary and that their DeMolay may be asked to return for the next event.
2. If it is necessary for an advisor to transport DeMolays from multiple households then the screening will need to take place prior to the DeMolays getting into the car with the advisor.
3. Facial coverings will need to be worn by all in the vehicle at all times as social distancing is not being maintained.
4. Since the DeMolay has already been screened it will not be necessary to rescreen the DeMolay unless they develop symptoms on route to or at the event.

### **Having Food:**

If having food at events such as a collation following a meeting, then certain precautions must be taken.

1. All food items should be single serving and individually wrapped if possible. An example is if providing potato chips then a single large bowl should not be utilized, but they should be portioned out into cups first. This ensures that individuals are not reaching into a communal bowl.
2. This should be done for drinks as well that are not in bottle form. If punch is provided, then please do not utilize a "punch bowl". The beverage must be individually portioned beforehand.
3. If providing something like pizza, then it should be removed from the box and placed on single plates or napkins. This single portion service should be utilized for the foreseeable future.
4. Anyone serving or preparing food should be utilizing hand hygiene and or gloves to do so.
5. Sit down meals are not recommended as it creates an inability to social distance.
6. Reminders that individuals should dispose of their items in the trash so to make it that others are not touching their used items.
7. Utensils should be disposable and if at all possible, wrapped in a manner for single use. If not possible then please separate out utensils so once again people do not have to reach into a communal box to retrieve it.

### **Testing and Notification:**

If a DeMolay or advisor comes forward and states that they have been exposed to COVID-19, then Massachusetts DeMolay may reserve the right to ask that that individual gets tested for the virus prior to attending events.

Massachusetts DeMolay reserves the right to ask for documentation of negative testing prior to allowing attendance at in person events if the Executive Officer or his designee believes there is a risk of transmission from an individual.

If a DeMolay or advisor has symptoms, then Mass DeMolay may reserve the right to request a person be tested for the virus prior to attending events.



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We ask that all participants come forward to Massachusetts DeMolay, or its Executive Officer if they have found that they have contracted the virus known as COVID-19. All privacy will be observed based on the individuals wishes. Massachusetts DeMolay is merely trying to take all possible precautions for its participants and protect them from possible contraction of COVID-19.

Massachusetts DeMolay will ask for permission to notify any person that may have been exposed at a DeMolay event. This will include but not be limited to anyone who was in contact at a DeMolay event within the 48 hours prior to onset of symptoms.

If a DeMolay or advisor has symptoms or otherwise feeling ill and wishes information about getting tested, then they should contact their primary care physician or seek other medical attention for direction.

[Center for Disease Control information concerning Community and Faith Based Organizations](#)

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to the Executive Officer.