



The Grand Lodge of Virginia

Policy for Subordinate Lodge Web Pages on the Internet

The Grand Lodge of Virginia does not want, nor intend, to over censor or over regulate the format, content or style of any individual Virginia Masonic Lodge website, but certain guidelines have to be set. The Webmasters of our Virginia Masonic websites must be reminded of their responsibility to reflect our Fraternity in its best light. To many who are not members of our Fraternity, the information they find on your pages may be the only knowledge they have of Masonry. We urge the Webmasters to consider carefully the impact their websites may have on the reputation, traditions and character of our Masonic Fraternity.

Individual Lodge websites are considered Lodge activities and therefore are under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Virginia. A Lodge website must be presented and maintained in good working order; good taste, and conform to the Constitution, Laws, Resolutions and Edicts of the Grand Lodge.

The Internet Committee of the Grand Lodge of Virginia will monitor individual Lodge websites to verify compliance to Grand Lodge Internet Policies. If the Committee finds a Lodge website in violation of a policy, the Lodge will be notified and given ample opportunity to correct the violation. If no action is taken within a reasonable period of time, the Grand Lodge will remove the Grand Lodge of Virginia link to that site and possible disciplinary action may occur against the Worshipful Master.

The Lodge website must not link to any website where there may be any conflict with the principles of Freemasonry. If another site requests permission to link to a Lodge's website; and in the opinion of the Lodge Webmaster, the principles of Freemasonry would be violated, permission must be denied for the link. If a link is discovered from a site that did not ask permission, and that site is found to be in violation of the principles of Freemasonry, a request to remove the link must be sent.

Discretion should be used when publishing any information about the Lodge members and officers. The Lodge Webmaster should first obtain their written permission to display any personal information of the Brethren on the website. When authorized, information displayed on the Lodge website must be accurate and kept up-to-date as it pertains to names, addresses, phone numbers, dates, etc. Names of candidates for degrees must not be published in websites, news articles, newsletters or e-mails.

Lodge websites must not be designed for any specific browser software; e.g., Internet Explorer or Netscape. The site should function with any browser commonly used on the Internet.

The Grand Lodge of Virginia Committee on the Internet will recognize only one "official" website for any Virginia Masonic lodge. In cases where there are two or more sites claiming to be the "official" website for a Lodge, the Worshipful Master of that Lodge shall make a determination and notify the Committee which URL is the "official website. No individual Lodge shall have more than one link (URL) posted on the Grand Lodge of Virginia's website.

A Lodge website will not link to any business or personal websites; however, personal websites may link to a Lodge website, if they meet the criteria stated above. This restriction does not apply to the following: webcounters, guest books, awards received, free website hosts, Masonic sponsors of the site, or others, such as may be deemed appropriate by special request to the Grand Lodge Committee on the Internet. If any special request is granted by the Committee, the Webmaster should annotate this on his website to avoid confusion at a future period.

Any Lodge website which solicits funds must use existing approval methods, and when appropriate, seek approval of the Grand Master of Masons in Virginia. Approval of the Grand Master must be annotated on the website.

If a Lodge website is abandoned, the Grand Lodge Webmaster should be notified so links from the Grand Lodge website may be removed. If the Grand Lodge Webmaster discovers a broken URL, the link pointing to it will be removed. It is the individual Lodge's responsibility to keep the Grand Lodge Webmaster informed of all changes that may affect links placed on the Grand Lodge of Virginia website. Each website linking to the Grand Lodge's website will provide names, e-mail addresses and mailing addresses for two personnel responsible for the website in case any problems should arise.

Articles and graphics on the Grand Lodge's web pages are under copyright. Permission is not necessary for any Virginia Lodge to use any article or graphics from the Grand Lodge's website; however, if the graphics are from a page linked from the Grand Lodge's page, then you should seek permission of the owner of that page. Articles or pictures scanned from the Virginia Masonic Herald must have the Grand Lodge's permission to be used.

Basic format of a subordinate Lodge website should include the following (as a minimum):

- Name of the Lodge
- Picture of the Lodge (optional)
- Location of the Lodge
- Phone number (if the Lodge has one)
- Webmaster's name and email address
- Worshipful Master's name and a way to contact him
- Lodge may have links to other locations as described above, but should not be linked to the Grand Lodge prior to the Committee's approval