

"Ask Hiram"

What is/are the difference(s) between "Executive Order," "Proclamation," "Dispensation," "Grand Master's Decisions," "Official Acts of the Grand Master," and "Edicts."

Although the Methodical Digest does not have a section for official definitions, I will examine each of these for you, and describe them in my own words.

An "Executive Order" is an order given by the Grand Master directing a Lodge and/or the Brethren to follow instructions as contained within the Executive Order. It has the effect of Masonic Law. It is effective for the Grand Master's term in office only.

A "Proclamation" is issued by a Grand Master and proclaims ("makes an announcement to the Craft") the Grand Master's wishes or instructions to the Craft. It does have the effect of Masonic Law. It is effective only for the Grand Master's term in office.

A "Dispensation" is basically written permission from the Grand Master for a Brother and/or a Lodge to do something that is otherwise prohibited by Masonic Law. It is for a specific purpose and time as defined within the Dispensation itself. These are applied for prior to the event for which the dispensation is sought. Some events require a Dispensation and are spelled out in the various sections of the Methodical Digest. It may, in some instances, extend beyond a Grand Master's term in office.

"Grand Master's Decisions" are decisions made by the Grand Master on a case-by-case basis that heal violations of Masonic Law or set aside Masonic Law for a specific instance only. They also may result in action being taken against a Lodge and/or a Brother when the Grand Master decides that such action is necessary. They are similar to a Dispensation; however, the act has already occurred. If approved by the Delegates at the following Grand Annual Communication, the decision will become part of our Masonic Law and would be placed in the Methodical Digest.

"Official Acts" of the Grand Master are essentially decisions that he has made throughout his term in office which do not involve violations of Masonic Law or that the Grand Master feels should not become a part of Masonic Law. These do not become a part of Masonic Law even if the Delegates approve the Committee on Past Grand Masters report on the Grand Masters Address. They are one-time only acts by the Grand Master on a case-by-case basis.

An "Edict" is a rule of action taken by the Grand Master. It governs our conduct the same way as Masonic Law. It is valid only for the term of office of the issuing Grand Master, unless approved by the Delegate's at the following Grand Annual Communication; it becomes a part of Masonic Law as would become part of the Methodical Digest. (Effective until the Law is changed by action of another Grand Master or action taken at another Grand Annual Communication.)

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