



Guidance for Masonic Festive Boards

The Masonic Festive Board is an essential aspect of our fraternity, reinforcing the values of brotherhood, tradition, and respect. This document provides structured guidance to ensure all members adhere to the proper protocols and procedures.

Significance of the Festive Board

Beyond the lodge's structured ceremonies, the Festive Board provides a relaxed environment where Freemasons can socialise and build lasting friendships. However, it is an extension of the tyled meeting and just as important as any ceremony regarding correct protocol and decorum. Efficient management and good timekeeping are marks of an effective and enjoyable Festive Board. The pace of the proceedings is under the control of the DC, ensuring smooth transitions and maintaining order.

Role of the Director of Ceremonies

The Director of Ceremonies plays a crucial role in guiding the lodge members through all aspects of the festive board. This includes:

- Reviewing the Toast List with those delivering toasts, to ensure proficiency.
- Ensuring the Toast List is the correct, up-to-date version.
- Ensuring proper pronunciation of titles and honorifics.
- Clarifying differences in Masonic titles (e.g., Pro Grand Master vs. Provincial Grand Master).
- Ensuring those giving toasts know the correct preambles.
- Reinforcing respect for the gavel, ensuring silence before the WM or DC speaks.
- Maintaining decorum at the Festive Board.

Seating Plan

The seating arrangement for Installations or other occasions where the Provincial team is attending is as follows, starting from the Worshipful Master's right:

- Presiding Officer
- Active Rulers of the Province
- Past Rulers of the Province
- Most Excellent Grand Superintendent (MEGS)
- Provincial Senior and Junior Grand Wardens
- Grand Officers (by seniority)
- Provincial Grand Master of the Mark Degree
- Holders of the PGM's Certificate of Service to Freemasonry
- Active Provincial Grand Officers of the Province (by seniority)

The order of seniority "snakes" around tables, rather than the senior officer at the top of each sprig. Lodges are free to seat other attendees as they see fit; however, the above must be adhered to concerning the Provincial team

Toasts, Preambles, & Replies

General Toasting

The Loyal Toast is given at every Festive Board and is as follows:

The King, the Craft, and Royal Arch Masonry.

It is important to note this is not the First Toast; it is the Loyal Toast.

The First Toast, which is given at every meeting, is:

The Most Worshipful the Grand Master, His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent.

The next toast is:

**The Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master, Jonathan Spence
The Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, Sir Michael Snyder
The Right Worshipful Assistant Grand Masters, etc... etc... etc...
... and the rest of the Grand Officers, Present and Past."**

These three toasts are formal and should be delivered without a preamble. The Worshipful Master stands, reads the toast, and does not acknowledge those in attendance. These toasts do not require a reply.

Toast to the Provincial Grand Master

If the Provincial Grand Master is not in attendance, the WM should simply stand and say:

The Provincial Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother David G. Maskell.

If the PGM is in attendance, the toast becomes a full toast, requiring a preamble. The Brother giving the toast, in their preamble, should acknowledge the Brethren in attendance. Below is the list, assuming everyone is in attendance (which should be adjusted to omit Brethren who are not in attendance):

**Worshipful Master,
Deputy Provincial Grand Master,
Assistant Provincial Grand Master/s,
Past Provincial Grand Master/s,
Past Deputy Provincial Grand Master/s,
Past Assistant Provincial Grand Master/s,
Grand Officer/s,
Provincial Senior & Junior Grand Wardens,
Provincial Officers,
Distinguished Brethren,
Brethren all.**

He should then proceed with the toast and conclude with:

**Brethren, I will thank you to stand and join me in a toast to—
The Provincial Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother David G. Maskell**

Note: The PGM was not included in the preamble to his toast. The same would apply to the Toast to the WM—when giving the preamble, an individual receiving the toast does not need to be addressed, as it is their toast.

The Provincial Grand Master will then reply to the toast.

Toast to the Province

If no Rulers or Active Provincial Officers on official business are in attendance, this toast remains formal. The WM should stand, read the toast, and not acknowledge those in attendance. No reply is required.

If a Ruler or an Active Officer on official business is in attendance (e.g., conducting an official visit), the toast becomes a full toast. The preamble follows the same format as above, and is concluded thus:

**I will thank the Brethren below the rank of a Provincial Officer to stand and join me in a toast
to—**

**The Deputy Provincial Grand Master –
Worshipful Brother Michael B. Pritchard.**

**The Assistant Provincial Grand Masters-
Worshipful Brothers, etc... etc... etc...
... and the rest of the Provincial Grand Officers, Present and Past.**

The Brother delivering the toast to the Province must read the full toast list at the end. A common mistake is ending with "Brethren, I give you the Province" instead of reciting the full list.

Full toasts will always receive a reply.

After the Provincial toast, the Preamble should refer only to the Worshipful Master and any active Rulers present. E.g.:

**Deputy Provincial Grand Master,
Assistant Provincial Grand Masters,
Distinguished Brethren,
Brethren All,
Gentlemen (if applicable)**

Reading the full preambles after the toast to the province is unnecessary and discouraged, as all Grand and Provincial Grand Officers will have already been acknowledged in their respective toasts and now come under the 'Distinguished Brethren' section. Generally, members continue to read the full preamble for fear of offending those not listed – I can assure you that you won't offend anyone.

Toasts should be kept brief and respectful, avoiding references to political, religious, or inappropriate topics. The DC should guide inexperienced Brethren on appropriate speech content.

Other Points

Wine & Dining Protocols

- Wine should be taken after the first course.
- Raffle is recommended after the main course.
- If coffee is being served, it should be done with dessert to avoid unnecessary delays, and it effectively becoming another course.

Absent Brethren

- The toast to Absent Brethren should not be referred to as “**The nine o’clock toast**”.
- No toast, including that to Absent Brethren, should be given before toasts to The King and the Grand Master.
- If a Lodge traditionally toasts Absent Brethren at a set time, the WM may simply mark the time without a formal toast.
- No additional ‘ceremonies’ should be included to remember absent brethren; empty chair ceremonies, or similar, are not permitted. Departed brethren should be remembered with a eulogy during the meeting if appropriate.

Mobile Phone & General Etiquette

- The use of mobile phones during the Festive Board is discouraged, as this part of the gathering is considered an extension of the Lodge meeting.
- Members should ensure their devices are either switched off or set to silent mode to maintain the decorum and spirit of the occasion.
- No elements of the festive board should be filmed. Photographs of the proceedings are allowed; however, they should be taken by a designated member after permission has been sought by those members being photographed.
- Use of phones, if necessary, should be discreet and respectful to avoid disrupting the proceedings.
- Jackets or ties should not be removed during the festive board, as it is an extension of the main meeting, and the same dress code should be observed.

Presence of Non-Masons

- At Festive Boards, Masonic Toasts should be minimal when non-Masons are present.
- Masonic Fire may be given, provided guests are informed of its meaning, and only observe.

Tyler’s Toast

- When **Gentlemen guests are present**, the first line of the Tyler’s Toast **should omit the word "Masons."**

WB Simon P. Taylor PAGDC

Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies.

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