

Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada
In the Province of Ontario
LODGE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Craft Stewardship Pillar



FIVE STEPS TO APPLICATION

Preparing Prospective Applicants Considering Freemasonry

This document is designed for pre-screening of potential applicants, prior to the completion of an Application for Initiation. It is a tool to assist in evaluating and determining their suitability for membership in your lodge, knowing from experience that Freemasonry is not for everyone.

You are encouraged to use this guide in its entirety, fulfilling each step before completing the Summary Report Checklist which, with the Application, will be given to the Committee of Inquiry to assist them in the interview process.

Men find their way to the Craft in a number of different ways. The traditional way has been to know someone in Freemasonry, such as a relative or friend. After learning about the Craft, he would ask how to become a Mason, and thus the process began. We have hundreds of years of practice in dealing with applicants and initiates known to one or more of us.

Today, men are increasingly learning about Masonry through various media – books, articles, TV shows, Internet articles and word of mouth. They do some investigating, become intrigued and make contact with Grand Lodge or a local Lodge, seeking to become a Mason. How do we approach the new situation of getting to know the man and his motives well enough to find two Brothers willing to sponsor him as an applicant? Many Lodges have faced this challenge in recent years and have approached it in different ways.

The purpose of this program is to offer a consistent approach for both the traditional applicant, who is known to one of our Brethren, and the more recent process of finding two Brethren who know the potential applicant well enough to recommend him as a member of their Lodge. It incorporates the traditional process with a framework that, if followed, will give a number of Brethren the opportunity to recommend him, regardless of the way he has come to the West Gate.

The Potential Applicant Selection Process should consist of five steps:

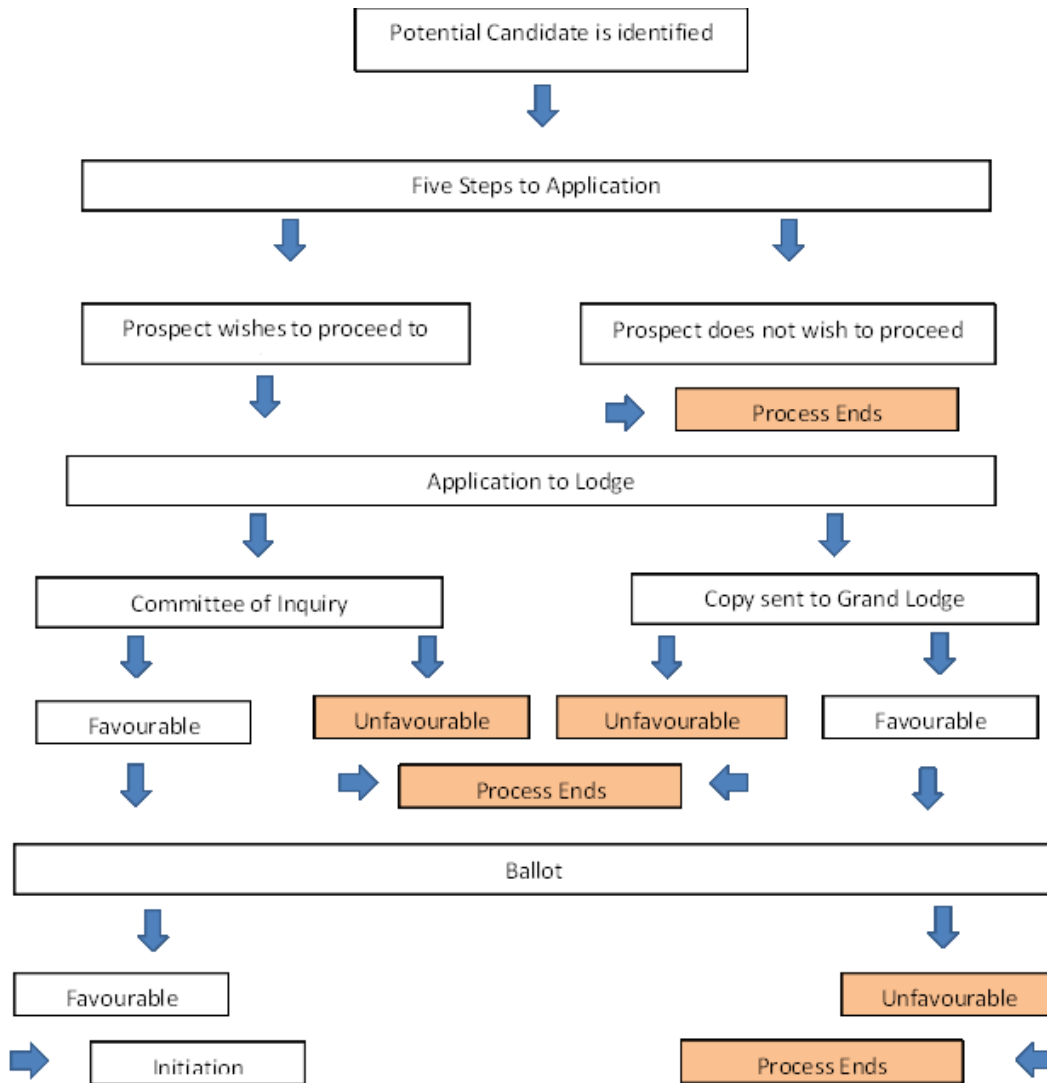
- Step One – The initial response – set the meeting.
- Step Two – The first meeting.
- Step Three – The second meeting and introductions to other members.
- Step Four – Social functions.
- Step Five – The Application and sponsor signatures.

These steps are a guide, with suggestions on how to approach each step. There is a two-page hand-out in step two, which should be given to the potential applicant for completion and discussion at the next meeting. It is the last two pages of this document.

When the Investigating Committee makes its recommendation, the documents should be retained by the Secretary for a period of time to be decided by the lodge. This is especially important if the process has not resulted in the initiation of the prospect.

The Program

The Program is outlined in the following chart:



Guideline Notes

The following are some suggested questions and scripts; however, it is better to put them in your own words.

STEP ONE - The initial response - Set the meeting.

Q: Hi (Name), my name is _____; I am a member of, Lodge. I understand that you are interested in becoming a Freemason.

A: *if YES reply with:* That's great (Name), we are always delighted to welcome well informed and sincere men into our fraternity. *If NO your conversation is short. Be polite but end the conversation with an invitation to contact you if he changes his mind.*

Q: So (Name), what do you know about Freemasonry?

A: *It is important that you listen carefully to this answer and make key notes on the Summary Check List.*

Q: That's a good start (Name) Some men who approach us may be curious about Freemasonry and perhaps do not have the self-motivation needed. If your interest is not sincere and you have questions about Masonry I am willing to answer them. If, however, you are serious about pursuing a life in Freemasonry then I suggest that we meet and get to know each other. Does that seem like an appropriate next step?

A: YES - serious about a life in Freemasonry
NO - trivial interest

Q: Okay, it would be helpful if you were to make a list of any questions you may have and bring it with you to our first meeting. This will be your opportunity to find out everything you ever wanted to know about our fraternity. I will personally answer all of your questions, honestly and completely.

** Set the time and place for an initial meeting. Complete Step One on Summary Report Checklist.*

STEP TWO - The first meeting.

Q: Well, (Name) what brings you to Freemasonry?

A: *It is important that you listen carefully to this answer and make key notes on the Summary Check List.*

Q: Did you bring a list of questions?

Go over these and answer them for the potential applicant.

Q: Good questions but there are a few things that were not addressed that we should review.

Give the potential applicant the two page hand-out.

- Explain each of the important points for the potential applicant to take home and think about.

Q: I would like to talk to you about our lodges and our structure.

Take this opportunity to describe the following:

- The three degrees
- The progression
- Where he will start
- The dress code
- The physical layout of the lodge room and why.
- The offices and titles
- The refreshments
- The special events
- Anything else you can think of.

STEP THREE - The second meeting and introductions to other members.

This should be a warm and friendly meeting without too much talk about the Craft

- Answer any questions he may have.
- Recommend that he attend at least two lodge festive boards, and that he and his partner attend a major social event. Advise the potential applicant that these social occasions are an excellent time for him and our members to become acquainted with each other.

STEP FOUR - Social functions.

These are social events. The potential applicant and his partner should be made very welcome.

The potential applicant, after participating in several social functions, should have become known to a number of Masons in the Lodge by this point. It is suggested that an informal conversation be held with the Worshipful Master and other officers and members of the Lodge before making a decision to invite the Potential applicant to complete an application for membership.

Note:

If the prospective applicant is well known to one or more Brethren who are prepared to recommend him as a member of their Lodge based on traditional processes, it is not necessary to conduct all of the suggested steps in this process.

It is, however, recommended that the prospective applicant be given the Information for Prospective Members handout; have the information explained to them and their questions answered; ensure that they are introduced to other members of the Lodge through social or planned events and that the appropriate sections of the Summary Report Checklist be completed.

STEP FIVE – Present the Application to the potential applicant and obtain sponsors signatures.

Describe what happens after his application has been signed:

- Presented in open lodge for all to hear.
- Committee of three will interview you and your partner at your home.
- Committee reports to the lodge.
- The members then vote on your acceptance.
- If favourable, you will receive a letter from the lodge secretary asking you to attend on a specific date in order to be initiated into Freemasonry.

Summary Report Checklist

Name of potential applicant: Date of first contact

Brethren meeting with potential applicant

Is the prospective applicant well known to either of the Brethren who are introducing him to Masonry?

Yes No

STEP ONE - The initial response - set the meeting

Refer to the Guideline notes for a suggested approach on how to conduct this contact.

Return contact made. Date: | |

Does potential applicant wish to meet? Yes No

Is the potential applicant serious about a *life* in Freemasonry? Yes No

Was the potential applicant asked to write a question list and bring to the first meeting? Yes No

What does the potential applicant know about Freemasonry?

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STEP TWO - The first meeting.

Refer to the Guideline notes for a suggested approach on how to conduct this meeting.

Reason for interest in Freemasonry:

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Questions about Freemasonry:

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Handout provided and explained? Yes No

STEP THREE - The second meeting and introductions to other members

Refer to the Guideline notes for a suggested approach on how to conduct this meeting.

Notes on your discussion:

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Did another brother attend? Yes No

STEP FOUR - Social functions

Refer to the Guideline notes for a suggested approach at these meetings.

- Major lodge social event attended
- Game Night
- Summer Picnic
- Holiday Party
- Other

Was his partner or family able to attend any of these events?

- Meeting night festive boards Meeting Night, Date
- Meeting Night, Date

Any feedback from the brethren of the lodge?

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STEP FIVE - The Application and sponsors' signatures.

Refer to the Guideline notes for suggested communication at this step.

Are both sponsors prepared to sign the application? Yes No

Application presented to lodge secretary Yes No

Date | | 20.....

If no, is further time recommended? Yes No – not a good match

Any additional information:

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To be retained by the Lodge in accordance with retention practices of Grand Lodge.



Information for Prospective Applicants

As man seeking further information and a possible *life* in Freemasonry, it is important that you understand how things are done. Every new Applicant for Freemasonry must be sponsored by two Freemasons who are members in good standing of a lodge. The two members must sign a statement that they know you, and can vouch for you and your character. In the past most people who approached Freemasonry were well known by another Freemason. They were a family member, a long-time friend, a workmate or a neighbour, and a Freemason could vouch as to their character.

Today's world is different and many people contact us through casual conversations or *via* the internet or telephone, which means no previous relationship, exists. We may know absolutely nothing about you and it is not possible for any Freemason to recommend someone under these circumstances. In order to overcome this, it is necessary to schedule a series of opportunities so that we can get to know each other and to give you a chance to learn about our fraternity.

Before proceeding any further, if you have not already done so, it is recommended that you visit the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Canada in the Province of Ontario website and in particular this informative item: <http://www.grandlodge.on.ca/what-do-masons-do/ask-a-mason>.

Some very important points you should know.

Freemasonry is *not* for everyone. The following points are designed to assist you in determining whether joining Freemasonry is a suitable choice for you. These points may also prompt you to ask additional questions, for a better understanding of your suitability.

1. If your interest in Freemasonry is in any way an attempt to tap into a large membership base for the purpose of furthering your career or business, please be aware that this behaviour has never worked in the past, nor will it work now. Freemasons do not in any way support this type of activity.

Do you understand this important point?

2. Becoming a Freemason is *not* an event; it is *not* something that you decide to do on a Monday and is completed within a week. Rather, it is a process that requires time and effort, both mental and physical, and does carry some financial obligations. It involves commitment on your part and on the part of the lodge that receives your application.

Do you understand this important point?

3. Freemasonry is not a religion but it is based on belief in a Supreme Being.

Do you believe in a Supreme Being who has made their will known to man?

4. Freemasonry is a lifetime commitment and most Freemasons remain active throughout their lifetime.

Are you prepared to make such a long-term commitment?

5. As a Freemason you are expected to attend your lodge regularly, unless there should be sickness, emergencies, family or work obligations.. In most lodges this would mean a regular meeting and if time permits, a special or “Emergent” meeting each month, If your circumstances allow, you may become involved in committees and other programs of the Lodge.

Are you prepared to make this type of commitment?

6. There will be a one-time initiation fee as well as annual dues. Additionally there may be other financial expenditures in the form of banquets, charitable contributions, *etc.* It is not unusual for Freemasons to contribute to worthy charities.

Would this financial requirement present a problem for you?

7. Freemasons aspire to improve themselves as men in addition to contributing to humanity through service. We ascribe to a high moral standard while dealing with others.

Would this be valid or correct statement of how you would like to live your life?

8. Some memory work is required, within Freemasonry, which you will be asked to repeat during lodge.

Would you be comfortable with this?

9. Some of the members of the lodge you are inquiring about will want to meet your family and answer their questions as it is important for Freemasons to have the support of their spouse or partner and family. We call this a Committee of Inquiry and it is a part of the application process.

10. You need to understand that if you choose to become a Mason, there may be times when your Masonic duties may conflict with family and career plans. It is vitally important that you are able to balance your obligations to Family, Career and Freemasonry, in that order. We ask you to give this serious consideration before taking the final steps to make application.

Do you understand this important point?

If you feel you are interested in continuing the process, please read the following points:

1. Prior to an application being filled out, members of the lodge in which you are interested would like to get to know you, and perhaps your family, by having you attend some of our social functions. You will also be asked to attend the banquet time associated with a meeting to further the opportunity for you and the members to assess suitability.
2. It is important that you understand that Freemasons do not solicit for membership, and as such, it will be your responsibility to call to arrange a meeting or series of meetings with one of the lodges. At the meetings, any questions you have regarding the points you have just read about joining Freemasonry, should be addressed.

For links to Masonic Districts and Lodges please go to:

<http://grandlodge.on.ca/home/our-organization/masonic-links.html>