



The Grand Lodge of Alberta
ANCIENT, FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS

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Grand Master's Message

Brethren,

I have been monitoring the news from last night and the updates posted on the AHS website for information relating to new Covid-19 restrictions and guidelines that are being requested and implemented across the province. In light of the statements issued by Dr. Dena Hinshaw all Lodges in the **Edmonton Zone** shall adhere to the advice being communicated. DDGM's planning District Meetings in the weeks ahead that will be held inside the City of Edmonton will comply with the earlier directive issued in September which specifically addressed attendance at these District Meeting assemblies. All other areas shall continue to comply with the conditions outlined in previous updates.

The important context of Dr. Hinshaw's communication is quoted below:

"The Edmonton zone now faces a crucial juncture. While the system is able to support the current caseload in hospitals and ICUs, the acute care impact is a lagging indicator. It typically takes one to two weeks before a rise in cases contributes to a rise in hospitalizations. We have been in close contact with officials in the City of Edmonton and other partners across the zone regarding this situation. We must take action to slow the virus's spread in the zone and make sure the health system can continue supporting Albertans with COVID-19, influenza and many other needs.

*That is why, effective today, I am announcing three new **voluntary** public health measures in the Edmonton zone. These measures are voluntary because we still have sufficient hospital beds and capacity to meet the current needs in Edmonton. But we are moving forward with them because it is important to use our current data as a call to action.*

*First, all family and private social gatherings **should** be limited to no more than 15 people. This is the maximum. The fewer people we come into contact with, the lower the risk of exposure, or of us exposing others.*

This does not impact schools or more formal gatherings such as theatres, worship services, or other gatherings where an organizer is ensuring that all COVID guidance is in place. In these other settings, though, it is critical that all COVID guidance be followed carefully.

For wedding receptions and funeral receptions, we recognize that these events in the near term have had a great deal of planning that has gone into them. It may not be possible to reduce these immediately to 15. However, if possible, we would encourage anyone planning these kinds of private social events or parties and family gatherings to reduce numbers as much as possible, aiming for no more than 15.

Second, I am recommending that masks should be worn in all indoor work settings, except when alone in workspaces such as cubicles or offices where you can be safely distanced from others or an appropriate barrier is in place."

Brethren, it is necessary that we as a body be seen to be complying with the intent of the request by AHS and continuing to place manageable limits on our assemblies within the Edmonton Region. While Dr. Hinshaw has stated these are "**voluntary measures**" we must be proactive to protect our membership by ensuring that the protocols we have established previously are followed:

- Sanitizer is available at all contact locations.
- Masks are mandated for assembly in Edmonton.
- Effective "social distancing" or separation will be practiced.
- Contact registration sheets at the Tyler's desk are mandatory.
- Anyone who feels ill, has someone ill at home or is at risk of infection shall not attend lodge functions.
- Attendance at Lodge meetings shall be prioritized to Lodge Members, visitors are by permission of the Worshipful Master.
- Attendance at District Meetings shall comply with the directives stated in the September Covid-19 Update Message.

Anyone wishing to review the full context of Dr. Hinshaw's updates from October 8th can refer to the following link: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus>

If we are fortunate and Covid-19 numbers fall in the weeks ahead these conditions will be repealed by due notice. Our measures that we have in place to protect our members appear to be effective – that said we cannot relax our guard and allow our members to be harmed needlessly. In this I know we are all in agreement.

Fraternally,

Reg Karbonik

Reginald Karbonik, Grand Master