

NEW YORK DEMOLAY COVID-19 REOPENING GUIDELINES

With the reopening of our state and permission of the Grand Lodge, DeMolay chapters have the option to return to in-person meetings as of July 11 provided the guidelines are met. Such return is **voluntary**. These guidelines were developed in reviewing what other youth organizations in New York are doing, what other jurisdictions are doing, and recommendations from New York State Department of Health and the Federal Center for Disease Control.

The COVID-19 situation is very fluid. If there is a spike in cases or new guidance from Federal, State or Local government, or the Grand Lodge changes we will have to revisit this.

In accordance with CDC Guidelines and New York State mandates:

FACE MASKS MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES!

SOCIAL DISTANCING OF AT LEAST 6 FEET

NO PHYSICAL CONTACT- hand shaking, hugs, fist, elbow bumping etc.

If you traveled to one of the restricted States, areas or countries you cannot attend a DeMolay meeting during the mandatory 14-day quarantine.

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>

Government Mandates: local, state or Federal supersede all of these requirements and recommendations.

Until the danger of COVID19 is neutralized, it will take all of us working together to keep each other safe, protected, and healthy. The past few months we have seen that DeMolay continues and we find the opportunities in challenges.

Thank you all of what you have done, thank you in advance for your support and being the best we expect from DeMolay.

Three key things:

1. In person meetings are NOT MANDATORY. Each Chapter should decide what best suits the needs of their members. If attendance needs to be limited, priority must be given to active DeMolays, as it is their organization. Each DeMolay is allowed to have one parent accompany them, and then members of the advisory council. Please discuss attendance policies with your district deputy and the Personal Representative.
2. Participation with in-person events is 100% voluntary. No DeMolay, Advisor, Sweetheart, or other person involved with our program should ever feel the need to compromise their health and safety.
3. In person meetings must adhere to the following guidelines:

Responsibilities of the Advisory Council:

Each Chapter must designate **at least two (2)** advisors as COVID Advisors. At least one (1) COVID Advisor must be present for any in-person activity

The duties of the COVID Advisors include:

- Schedule a meeting with the Personal Representative and their District Deputy to review all requirements.
- Secure the permission of your temple or building association so you comply with their guidelines.
- Ensure proper sanitation of meeting and public access areas.
- Ensure cleaning supplies are on hand if not provided by your building.
- Ensure that seating is marked off or set at 6 foot intervals
- Have Face Masks on hand for members who may need one.
- Ensure that there is hand sanitizer available
- Maintain a list of meeting attendees and their contact information for Contact Tracing purposes.
- Develop a bathroom use policy. This may be one person in the bathroom at a time etc.
- Do a screening of attendees before they enter the building.

At this time, the screening consists of ensuring they are wearing a mask, they have washed their hands, and they do not have symptoms of COVID19

Responsibilities of Attendees

1. Do NOT go to a meeting if
 - you are feeling unwell,
 - have any symptoms of COVID, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
 - Are under quarantine- either mandatory or voluntary
 - Traveled to a restricted state within 14 days of meeting
 - Been exposed to someone with COVID or in quarantine within 14 days of meeting
2. Don a mask before getting within 6 feet of building entrance.
3. Masks **MUST BE WORN** while in the lodge building and attending a meeting.
4. Maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet.
5. Notify the designated COVID advisors for your chapter if you become unwell
6. Cheerfully conform to the policies put in place for your protection.

Responsibilities of Parents

1. Please keep your youth home if
 - they are feeling unwell,
 - have a temperature of 100 degrees or more
 - have any symptoms of COVID.
 - Are under quarantine- either mandatory or voluntary
 - Traveled to a restricted state within 14 days of meeting
 - Been exposed to someone with COVID or in quarantine within 14 days of meeting

2. Discuss with them the importance of wearing a mask, 6 feet social distancing and proper hand sanitization.

3. If they need to go home because they are unwell, please be prepared to pick them up.

FAQs:

What Type of events may we have?

Chapters may have meetings, socials, trips, BBQs and initiatory degrees. At this point, they may **NOT** have public ceremonies and doing an in-person DeMolay degree is not allowed.

How should Advisory Councils meet?

Advisory councils should consult their membership, if 100% of their members agree to an in-person meeting, an in-person meeting may be had. However, several of our advisors may be in high risk categories, in which case virtual meetings or teleconferences should be used.

What type of sports or athletics may we play?

Chapters may play games that minimize physical contact. For example: croquet, miniature golf, tennis, bowling, Frisbee golf, Paintball. Make sure to sanitize any shared object. Pool events are permitted provided social distancing happens around the pool.

Softball is permitted provided each DeMolay has their own glove and bats are sanitized before each hitter. This requires supplies be on hand for this purpose.

Soccer is permitted provided there is no heading or throwing the ball in.

At this point chapters may not play football, basketball, water polo, ultimate Frisbee, or hand ball.

This list may change as more information becomes available.

Board games: Please use common sense, perhaps rather than rolling dice you use Google's random number generator, and rather than exchanging paper money you record it on a piece of paper.

Who may attend Chapter events?

Everyone attending a DeMolay meeting or event must provide current address and phone to the COVID Advisor and wear a face mask:

- Active DeMolays of the chapter.
- Parents/Guardians of Active DeMolays of the chapter.
- Prospective Members of DeMolay of the chapter.
- Parents/Guardians of Prospective Members of the chapter.
- Chapter Sweetheart.
- Parents/Guardians of the Chapter Sweetheart.
- Advisors of that chapter.
- Members of the Masonic Fraternity in Good Standing known to the advisory council.
- Members of the Eastern Star and Amaranth in Good Standing known to the advisory council.
- A guest speaker is permitted if decided by the advisory council.

*The Advisory Council **must** have current address and phone numbers for each. If we have to do contact tracing.

New York State currently limits indoor gatherings to 50% of the legal occupancy of a space. Therefore, Chapters may need to limit attendance. New York State Permits outdoor gatherings up to 100. people, however, CDC currently recommends 50.

What is the policy on masks?

A mask is required to be worn at **ALL** times when in a meeting, doing sports, or around people outside your "Isolation bubble." If a person has an issue and is unable to wear a mask they are not able to participate in a meeting. A tee shirt over one's nose and mouth is **not** acceptable. There are numerous links on the web for making or buying a facemask.

What is an "isolation bubble?"

An isolation bubble are the people who live in your home, for example, if since March you've been living with your parents, your siblings and your grandparent, that's your isolation bubble.

What about handshakes and hugs?

There will be no physical contact between people. This includes: hand shaking, hugging, embracing and elbows or fist bumps.

What about carpools?

At this time carpools are discouraged, but are sometimes necessary. Carpools are complicated because we need to balance our youth protection requirements with health and safety requirements. If a carpool is necessary, facemasks must be worn and proper social distance must be maintained between people in different isolation bubbles, roughly one isolation bubble per row of seats. Parental permission needs to be given for the youth in the carpool and notified who will be in the carpool.

If “Dad” Solo is driving himself, and his son Br. Solo to a meeting, they can pick up Br. Skywalker provided that Br. Skywalker sits in the backseat and the Solos sit in the front seat. If Br. Skywalker has a younger brother that lives with him, he is also permitted provided the Skywalkers are in the back and the Solos are in front. While people who are not in your isolation bubble are in the car masks must be worn.

If a mini-van, they can also pick up Br. Kenobi provided each is in their own row.

One on ones remain prohibited.

What if a person feels unwell or is injured during the meeting?

If a person is injured during a meeting, please notify the parents/guardians or if an advisor their emergency contact. Common sense must be used here.

If a person feels unwell during the course of the meeting that person must be isolated from the group and plans must be made to have that person picked up as soon as possible.

If they were part of a carpool, they must not return in the same carpool. If they were the driver of the carpool the COVID Advisor must find alternate transportation home for others in that vehicle.

What about sharing papers and rituals?

Faith communities have been told not to pass out worship aids, or community bulletins because of concerns of virus transmission via paper. Every DeMolay should have their own red book ritual and should not share. If a young man does not have the right ritual, let us know. Agendas and minutes should be sent out electronically.

What about dress code?

During the summer months we are relaxing dress code and dress standards. Polo shirts and shorts are fine for meetings. Please avoid A shirts. **DeMolay Capes are NOT to be worn until further notice.**

What about food?

Growing up we said DeMolay had 3 Fs: Fun, Fellowship, and Food. We know that food is an important part of what we do.

- Hands must be washed before consuming food because masks will be off.
- Communal food is not currently allowed. You cannot put out a container of dip and chips and have people share it, or a two-liter of soda that everyone shares. If you are having condiments, they must be the small packets and not a shared bottle.
- Ideally food is pre-packaged and individually wrapped. For example, if your chapter wants to have chips and soda after a meeting, they can buy the fun size bag of chips and individual cans of soda, or if everyone wants a Peanut Butter & Jelly and they were pre-packaged in bags.
- We know this is BBQ season. If you wish to have a BBQ there needs to be one advisor doing the cooking and one person doing the serving and putting things on plates.
- What about pizza? Pizza is permitted if an advisor using latex gloves puts a slice of pizza on a disposable plate and each member gets their own plate. The same is true if you have a tray of cookies or slicing a pie and plating it.
- Food can be enjoyed safely outside or in the dining hall provided everyone maintains a six-foot social distance. Social Distancing is even more important as people may not have masks on.

What about camping?

New York State has specific rules that apply to camping. This will be handled on a case by case basis. If a chapter wishes to undertake a camping trip, they must consult with their District Deputy and the Personal Representative and have their plans approved.

Are inter-chapter visitations permitted?

For the month of July, inter-chapter visitations are not permitted. We will revisit this in August. If a chapter has a specific request please contact the Personal Representative.

Are State Officers or State Advisors Permitted to Visit Chapters other than their own?

At this point, State Officers may only attend in-person meetings of their own chapter. There is no visitation to other Chapters. Exceptions to this may only be done in writing by New York DeMolay.

Ritual Changes:

In general

- 1) There is no forming of the triangle. Officers shall start at their seats.
- 2) The Marshal will not conduct or escort any person.
- 3) Everyone sitting in the Chapter Room must maintain six feet distance in all directions. The chapter shall rearrange officers to allow them to sit in positions that approximate

where they generally are.

4) Avoid grouping in the chapter supply closet. The person who brought the object out should also be the person who brings it back in. I.e. one person sets up the candles, that person takes them down. The stewards should be the only ones to grab the Bible or School Books.

5) Modifications to accommodate safety requirements may be required for your space. The healthy and safety of our members, advisors, and families takes precedence over the ritual.

Opening:

The lodge room doors should be left open. This is to avoid having to touch the door handles or other objects

The word of the day and the password of a DeMolay are no longer to be collected.

Per earlier instructions no grips, handshakes or other physical contact is permitted.

The Standard Bearer will not present the flag. Rather the flag shall be saluted and pledged to from its position in the east. The National Anthem may still be sung.

The Chaplain shall offer the prayer from his station. This is to avoid him having to touch the Bible, which the Senior Steward had just touched.

For opening on the DeMolay Degree: The deacons shall not approach the Senior Councilor

Business:

Ballot boxes may not be used at this time. A written ballot shall be used for the election of candidates for membership. Each DeMolay should have their own pen or pencil and write down a “yes” or a “no” and place the ballot in a basket on the altar one at a time. An advisor with gloves on will read the ballots aloud.

Introductions, if any, shall be made from seats.

Closing:

The same changes that are in place for the opening remain for the closing.

Degree Work:

Virtual Degree work remains an option.

If a short form obligation ceremony is done:

The candidate will place his right hand over his heart rather than the Holy Bible.

Sealing the vows shall be symbolic.

The Master Councilor shall refrain from shaking hands with candidates

The Deacons will mimic the secret work.

If a long form Initiatory Degree is done:

After Marshal's questions are asked and candidates are escorted into the chapter room they shall remain at the altar, six feet apart. There should be some type of marker (duct tape, painters' tape) to indicate where they should stand. All parts, Master Councilor, Senior Councilor, Junior Councilor and Preceptors shall be given inside the candles talking to the candidates across the altar remaining six feet apart. The officers shall not be called to line.

Short Form DeMolay Degree:

The same provisions provided for in the short form obligation ceremony shall apply, or use of the video.

Full Form DeMolay Degree:

At this time we are not convinced, that an in-person DeMolay Degree would meet the health requirements and the standards we have set for this degree. If a chapter wishes to undertake one they need to develop a plan for approval by the Director of Ritual and the Personal Representative.