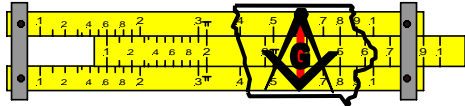


# GRAND LODGE OF IOWA, A.F.& A.M.

## Donald E. Mosier, Grand Master



Iowa Freemasonry ★ Engineer Our Future

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To the Masters and Wardens of All Iowa Lodges,

Having been requested in writing by Brothers Rick N. McCampbell, Worshipful Master of Crest City Lodge No. 522 in Creston and Edward D. Edgerton, Worshipful Master of Osceola Lodge No. 77 in Osceola, to give my official opinion clarifying the requirements of the new proficiency requirements adopted at the annual Grand Lodge Communication on September 22, 2007, I have reviewed said requirements. The specific portion of the Code of the Grand Lodge of Iowa in question is Chapter 29 (Proficiency) of the Laws for Subordinate Lodges. Since Chapter 15 (Communications of Lodges), Sections 8k and 8l, are referenced within Chapter 29, they are also open for review as part of this official opinion.

My official opinion on this matter is:

- The Demonstration of Proficiency on the Modes of Recognition for the Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft Degrees must be performed before, but on the same day of, the conferral of the subsequent degree.
- The Demonstration of Proficiency for the Master Mason Degree may be performed at any time following the conferral of that degree.
- The Masonic Enlightenment Course for each degree must be completed prior to the Demonstration of Proficiency for that degree. (Declaration of such is delayed until Lodge is open for the actual conferral.
- The Lodge must be opened on the same degree as the Demonstration of Proficiency being performed during said Demonstration.
- Successful completion of each Demonstration shall be determined by simple majority vote of all members of the opened lodge who are entitled to vote and are present during the examination.
- Each new member must be examined individually. However a single vote may be taken for determination of successful demonstration for two or more new members.
- The requirement for Demonstration of Proficiency does not hold for candidates advancing to the Fellowcraft or Master Mason degree in a Grand Master's One-Day Class. However, the requirement for Demonstration of Proficiency in the Master Mason degree does hold.

The specific form of performing the demonstration is determined by the Board of Custodians and is not a part of this official opinion, but is included in this document for reference. The rationale for this official opinion is also included on the following pages.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,

Donald E. Mosier  
Grand Master of Masons in Iowa

## Rationale for Official Opinion Concerning the Demonstration of Proficiency Requirements

In reviewing the code, it appears to me that clarifying the requirements of Chapter 29 requires determining answers for six specific questions. These questions are:

1. When must the Demonstration of Proficiency be made?
2. Must there be a vote to determine the acceptability of the Demonstration?
3. Must the Lodge be open during the demonstration and, if so, in what degree?
4. Are these new requirements required during Grand Master's One-Day Classes, and if so, how are they to be applied?
5. Can multiple examinations be performed as a "group examination"?
6. What is the exact form of the Demonstration of Proficiency?

These questions will be answered in turn below.

### When must the Demonstration of Proficiency be made?

Chapter 29, section 3 says that the Demonstration shall be conducted "just prior to the opening of the lodge for the conferral of the next appropriate degree." I believe the intent of this is clear. There must be no appreciable delay between the conclusion of the Demonstration of Proficiency and opening Lodge for the next degree. Prudence would indicate that a break for dinner would be acceptable, as long as the intervening time was kept shorter than an hour or two. However, it is clear that both actions must be on the same day. Since the demonstration is required to be just prior to the conferral of the next degree, it is clear that the Enlightenment Course review must precede the demonstration. The report on completion of the Enlightenment Course, and the report on the success of the Demonstrated Proficiency, is required by Chapter 29, Section 5 to be after lodge is open for the conferral of the next degree.

### Must there be a vote to determine the acceptability of the Demonstration?

Chapter 29, Section 5 says that "[someone] shall report that the review has been satisfactory". It is silent on how the determination of "satisfactory" is to be made. Later in Section 5 it says "successful Demonstrated Proficiency ... shall be recorded in the minutes." Again, successful is not defined. Section 1 indicates that the Demonstrated Proficiency is to be prepared by the Board of Custodians. It could be argued that this definition delegates the definition of "successful" to the Board of Custodians as well. But such a determination would open the door for the Board to define a meaning for "successful" which would completely abrogate the otherwise obvious intent of this Chapter. Additionally, the Board is responsible for maintaining the ritual, including the modes of recognition, but not responsible for defining how a lodge makes decisions. The only other reference that I could find in the code to a determination of proficiency on the modes of recognition is in Chapter 15, Section 8. This section requires that, during a Grand Master's One-Day class, all members of the class are instructed in the modes of recognition. Following which a "group examination shall be taken ... and proficiency shall be determined by a combined ballot for the entire class. It seems reasonable that if a successful demonstration is required for members receiving the degrees in the traditional manner, the definition of success for those members should be no less stringent than for those receiving the degrees in a One-Day Class. Additionally, a vote is the way that the lodge determines all other matters of importance. In the absence of any specific definition of "successful" for traditional advancement, I hold that the definition for members of a One-Day Class shall hold. Therefore, a vote of all members present is required.

Must the Lodge be open during the demonstration and, if so, in what degree?

Chapter 29, Section 3 declares that for the Master Mason degree, this “Proficiency” is to be performed in the lodge room while open on the Third Degree. However, it does not specifically indicate such a requirement for the other two examinations. However, if the Lodge were not open during the Demonstrated Proficiency and the vote thereon, the members would be operating as a committee of the whole. Such action is expressly forbidden in Chapter 14, Section 3 of the Laws of the Grand Lodge. Although that section of the code is for the operation of the Grand Lodge, it specifically states that the prohibition applies to debate in both Grand Lodge and in Subordinate Lodges. Therefore, in order to legally hold the Demonstration of Proficiency and the vote on its success, the Lodge must be open. And since for the first examination, the brother being examined is only eligible to be present in an open lodge if that lodge is open on the First degree, it is clear that such an examination must be held while the lodge is open on the First degree. For the second examination, it follows that the lodge must be open on the Second Degree. And this requirement is consistent with the specified requirement for the Master Mason Demonstration of Proficiency.

May multiple examinations be performed as a “group examination”?

Chapter 29, Section 2 states that each brother is expected to obtain a determination of proficiency as soon as possible. Section 3 indicates that the examination is to be conducted just prior to the conferral of the next degree. It seems to me that a group examination must be in violation of one or both of these requirements unless the lodge is performing more than one degree on the same night. However, the requirements make no provision for group examination, even in that situation. Therefore, each brother must be examined individually. However, since the details for determining successful completion of the exam are not defined, and since group balloting on candidates is acceptable, I see no reason why it should not also be acceptable to have a single vote to determine successful completion for two or more brothers after they had been individually examined.

Are these new requirements required during Grand Master’s One-Day Classes, and if so, how are they to be applied?

Chapter 29, Section 6 specifically indicates that both the Masonic Enlightenment Course and the Demonstrated Proficiency in the Modes of Recognition are not required for advancement of Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts who are attending a One-Day Class. It provides for the substitution of the Proficiency requirements of Chapter 15, Sections 8k and 8l. However, Section 6 does NOT eliminate the requirement for being found proficient in the Master Mason degree prior to voting, holding office, etc. While Chapter 15, Section 8l does list a number of requirements for being proficient on the Master Mason degree, it does not claim that the list is exhaustive. Therefore, the more complete list of Chapter 29, Section 6 must be held to apply.

Chapter 29, Section 7 further defines the proficiency requirement of all three degrees for candidates attending a One-Day Class with reference to Chapter 15, Section 8. It also refers to a written examination which is supposedly defined in Chapter 15, Section 8, but which is not mentioned anywhere in that section. Since the other requirements of Section 7 are all completely and redundantly defined elsewhere, and since the written examination is not defined in the location specified (or anywhere else), this entire section can be safely determined to be of no effect at the current time. However, prudence would indicate that this section be corrected through appropriate future legislation.

Therefore, the new requirements for a Demonstration of Proficiency in the Modes of Recognition, as well as completion of the Masonic Enlightenment Course, must be adhered to for new Master Masons, regardless of whether they take their work in the traditional fashion or in a Grand Master's One-Day Class. However, advancement of Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts in One-Day Classes may and must be performed as defined in Chapter 15, Section 8k.

What is the exact form of the Demonstration of Proficiency?

The exact form of the Demonstration of Proficiency is required in Chapter 29, Section 1 to be determined by the Board of Custodians. Upon consulting with the Custodians of the Work, the exact form to be used is listed on the following pages. Also shown on a following page is a complete recommended procedure for perform the Demonstration in compliance with the Code of the Grand Lodge of Iowa as amended in 2007 and as interpreted in this official opinion.

**Demonstration of Proficiency in the Modes of Recognition  
Established November 2007**

**FIRST DEGREE PROFICIENCY**

To be rehearsed with Lodge open on the 1st degree.

WM has Examiner and Brother to be examined placed west of the altar.

Examiner - Gv m a s. ( *Dg gvn* ) Wh i tt cld?

Brother - Th dg o an E A.

Examiner - Hs it an als?

Brother - It hs, t t psn m hs wr plc in wn l tk t o.

Examiner - Gv m an s. ( *S gvn* ) Wt i tt cld?

Brother - T s o an E A.

Examiner - Hs it an als?

Brother - It hs, t t pn o m o.

Examiner - Wh r tks?

Brother - Cr fr o brl gs whb on M ma kn an i th dk as wl as i t L.

Examiner - Gv m a tkn. ( *Gvn* ) I hl.

Brother - I cn.

Examiner - Wt d u cn?

Brother - Al t ss o Ms i My, ex i b fm h o th t wh th o rt blg.

Examiner - Wh i ths?

Brother - A g.

Examiner - A g o w?

Brother - Of an E A.

Examiner - Hs it a n?

Brother - It hs.

Examiner - Gv i m.

Brother - I dd nt s rc i, n cn l s i i.

Examiner - Hw wl u ds o i?

Brother - L @ h i.

Examiner - L i @ b.

Brother - Bg u.

Examiner - Na u b.

Brother - ( *Bgs ----- wd gvn* )

Examiner - T wd i rt, l grt u Br, B.

**Demonstration of Proficiency in the Modes of Recognition  
Established November 2007**

**SECOND DEGREE PROFICIENCY**

To be rehearsed with Lodge open on the 2nd degree.

WM has Examiner and Brother to be examined placed west of the altar.

Examiner - Gv m t dg o a Fc.

Brother - ( *Gvn* )

Examiner - Hs i a il?

Brother - It h, t t ps m hs w pl i wh l tk t o.

Examiner - Gv m t s o a Fc.

Brother - ( *Gvn* )

Examiner - Hs i a il?

Brother - It h, t t pn o m o.

Examiner - Tk m as l tk u. ( *Done* ) Wl u b o o f?

Brother - F.

Examiner - F w?

Brother - F t g o an E A t t p g o a Fc.

Examiner - P. ( *Done* ) Wt i ths?

Brother - Th p g o a Fc.

Examiner - Hs i a n?

Brother - I h.

Examiner - G i m.

Brother - ( *Gvn* )

Examiner - Wl u b o o f?

Brother - F.

Examiner - F w?

Brother - F t p g o a Fc t t tr g o t s.

Examiner - P. ( *Done* ) Wt i ths?

Brother - Th tr g o a Fc.

Examiner - Hs i a nm?

Brother - It hs.

Examiner - Gv i m.

Brother - I d n s rc i, nth ca l s i i.

Examiner - H wl u dsp o i?

Brother - L @ h i.

Examiner - L i @ b.

Brother - B u.

Examiner - Na, u b.

Brother - ( *Bgs -- w gvn* )

**Demonstration of Proficiency in the Modes of Recognition  
Established November 2007**

**THIRD DEGREE PROFICIENCY**

To be rehearsed with the Lodge open on the third degree.

WM has Examiner and Brother to be examined placed west of the altar.

Examiner - Hv u an ss bg t t d?

Brother - I hv svl.

Examiner - Gv m a s.

Brother - ( *Gvs dg o a M M* )

Examiner - Wt i tt cld?

Brother - Th dg o a M M.

Examiner - Hs tt an alsn?

Brother - It hs, t t psn m hds wr plc in wn l tk t o @ whn ou anc bn rprd t t gr o our GM HA, thy fnd thr hns invl plcd in ths psn ( *Gvs dg* ), to gd thr nstrls fm t dsdbl eflv tt ars thr fm t gr.

Examiner - Gv m anthr s.

Brother - ( *Gvs s* )

Examiner - Wt i tt cld?

Brother - Th s o a M M.

Examiner - Hs tt an al?

Brother - It hs, t t p o m o.

Examiner - Gv m anth s.

Brother - ( *Gvs GHS o D* )

Examiner - Wt is tt cld?

Brother - Th GHS o D.

Examiner - Hs tt an alsn?

Brother - It hs, at t rsg o t b o ou GM HA, ou an bn in tkn o thr sor, ths rsd th hds a thr hds @ xc ( *Gvs GHS o D* ) O L, M G, l fr t ms wd is f ls.

Examiner - Wn sld tt s b g?

Brother - Nv!, xc in cs o t ms mnt dn, or wn sufrg in th cs o noc @ vr, or in a js @ lfl cnst L or a L o ins.

Examiner - Wt r t wds usd wn t s cntt b s?

Brother - O L, M G, i t n h f t w s?

Examiner - Gv m a tk. ( *Gvn* ) Wt i tt cl?

Brother - T p g f a Fc t a M M.

Examiner - Wt i it n?

Brother - T.

Examiner - W w T?

Brother - Th ft kn artf or cng w i mts.

Examiner - Ps tt. ( *Dn* ) Wt i tt cld?

Brother - T s g o a M M o L P.

Examiner - Hs i a nm?

Brother - It hs.

Examiner - Gv i m.

Brother - I cntt, nth cn i b gn, xc on th f ps o fls @ tn i a lo b.

Examiner - Advc @ gv i. ( *Gvn* ) Th wd is rt. Th wd wch u hv rc @ gvn is an hrbc phra @ mns, wt, the b?

## **Recommended Procedure for Demonstrating Proficiency in the Modes of Recognition**

### **For 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Proficiency and Conferral of 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree**

Open Lodge of EA  
Conduct new brother West of Altar  
Conduct First Degree Demonstration of Proficiency as defined by the Board of Custodians  
Escort new brother out of the room. (Optional but recommended.)  
Discuss if necessary.  
Vote on proficiency (simple majority required)  
Bring the new brother back into the room to let him know the results. (Optional but recommended.)  
Call to refreshment  
Open Lodge of FC  
Announce completion of enlightenment course and the results of Proficiency Examination.  
Confer FC degree  
Close

### **For 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Proficiency and Conferral of 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree**

Open Lodge of FC  
Conduct new brother West of Altar  
Conduct Second Degree Demonstration of Proficiency as defined by the Board of Custodians  
Escort new brother out of the room. (Optional but recommended.)  
Discuss if necessary.  
Vote on proficiency (simple majority required)  
Bring the new brother back into the room to let him know the results. (Optional but recommended.)  
Call to refreshment  
Open Lodge of MM  
Announce completion of enlightenment course and the results of Proficiency Examination.  
Confer MM degree  
Close

### **For 3rd Degree Proficiency**

Open Lodge of MM (This may be performed at a stated communication or any other time that the Lodge is open on the MM degree.)  
Conduct new brother W of Altar  
Conduct Third Degree Demonstration of Proficiency as defined by the Board of Custodians  
Escort new brother out of the room. (Optional but recommended.)  
Discuss if necessary.  
Vote on proficiency (simple majority required)  
Bring the new brother back into the room. (Optional but recommended.)  
Announce completion of enlightenment course and the results of Proficiency Examination.  
Close

### **Commentary**

With the exception of the substitute word, all other words and names should be given by the new brother loud enough that the brethren present can hear. In the case of the substitute word, since it is only to be whispered in the ear, the examining brother will need to ensure that the proper word is given prior to saying "The word is right."

As noted in the code, the Masonic Enlightenment Course must also be completed prior to performing each Demonstration of Proficiency.