



Graham J. Wrigley

GRAND MASTER



22 September 2021

Brethren

Our Covid-19 Operating Guidelines were prepared last year in the early days of the pandemic and have been updated as the Government made changes to each Alert Level or updated restrictions and limitations. Today, the requirements are quite different to those agreed 12 months ago.

Our position has not changed, and it is acceptable for our Lodges to hold meetings under Alert Levels 1 & 2 provided the Lodge has an approved Risk Mitigation Plan in place and the Brethren of the Lodge have agreed to meet.

Any Lodge that decides to remain closed during Alert Level 2 (and those closed under Alert Levels 3 & 4) **MUST** seek a Dispensation from the Divisional Grand Master. It is the sole decision of a Lodge to decide if they will open in Alert Level 2 or not.

Much has changed in the new Government requirements with the focus being on the community to reduce the spread of Covid-19, and there is also a provision for the wearing of facemasks in public places. There are also new provisions that allow more flexibility in non-public places or when eating in restaurants along with a change on the size of gatherings.

The new Government requirements for Alert Level 2 have now been published and are effective from today. You can read these by clicking [HERE](#). Please read these and discuss with your Lodge Brethren and review these against your Risk Mitigation Plan.

Your attention is drawn to the section headed “**Life and Activities at Alert Level 2**”. There is clearly a difference between locations that are public facing (i.e. open to the public) and those that are a closed private gathering. As our Lodge meetings are not open to the public and are exclusive to our members, we are able to follow the rules that are applicable to “**Private Social Gathering**”. This is based on the knowledge that we are non-public and that we are known to each other.

There are some important parts that are applicable:

The gathering can host up to 100 people in any indoor or outdoor defined space. Facemasks are not required, but they are encouraged. Social distancing is not required (stay 1 metre away from people that you do not know). Provide hand sanitisers and clean shared items before and after use.

The venue for a Lodge meeting falls into the category of ‘hiring a venue for a social gathering’. Brethren must stay within the confines of the Lodge and must not interact with other non-members (public).

Please do not confuse the requirements for Public Events with Private Social Gatherings as they are quite different. It is essential that you read the current requirements (in the link above) and avoid defaulting to the requirements of 2020 – they are quite different.

FREEMASONS NEW ZEALAND

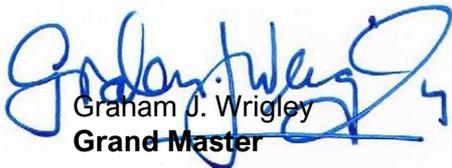
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On this basis, Lodge meetings can proceed as normal in **Alert Level 2** from 22 September 2021 if the Lodge has decided that they wish to open. If the Lodge is to open, follow these rules:

1. The Lodge must collectively agree that they wish to meet and have an approved Risk Mitigation Plan in place. The plan must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it contains the latest requirements.
2. If a Brother is unwell, do not attend any Lodge meeting.
3. Ensure that those attending scan in with the Covid Tracing App or sign the Covid Register in addition to the Lodge Attendance Register.
4. Attendance must be limited to members and visiting Masonic Brethren as this is a 'Private Social Gathering'. Social distancing is not required, but if you do not know a Brother, then follow the 1 metre distancing rule. The maximum number permitted is 100. Do not mix with spaces occupied by non-members or the public.
5. Facemasks do not need to be worn but wearing is encouraged.
6. Keep physical contact to a minimum. Personal contact is allowed but should be restricted where possible. Clean with sanitisers any shared items (Gavels, Batons, Wands etc.)
7. Ceremonies may proceed. Whilst a Candidate for Initiation is not technically a 'member', he is 'invited' to the meeting and is recorded as a member 'subject to his Initiation'.
8. There is no restriction on Refectory. Those serving food must wear a facemask, and if contracted, are not included in the 100 attending numbers.
9. Single serve food rather than using shared platters.

Attached as Annex 1 is the Government Requirement for Brethren to read and for further clarification. This is verbatim from the Covid-19 website.

Yours fraternally,


Graham J. Wrigley
Grand Master

Private social gatherings at Alert Level 2

At Alert Level 2, you can host or attend a gathering of up to 100 people in any defined indoor or outdoor space.

The 100 person limit does not include workers providing services to a gathering.

You do not have to wear a face covering when going to a party or private social gathering, but we encourage you to wear one.

Hosting a social gathering

- Remind your guests to stay home if they are sick.
- If you are hosting a gathering at your own home, you do not need to keep contact tracing records if everyone at the gathering knows each other. But it is a good idea to keep a guest list to help with contact tracing if it is needed.
- Your guests do not need to physically distance.
- Provide hand sanitizer or soap so guests can wash their hands.
- Serve food and drinks individually rather than having shared platters.
- Try to avoid shared utensils. If possible, limit the number of people handling or serving food.
- Let your guests know what steps you are taking to make sure your gathering is as safe as possible.

Hiring a venue for a social gathering

- You can hire a venue — for example a bar or restaurant for a private event. You can only have 100 guests indoors or outdoors. Staff are not included in the guest limit.
- You can have guests in both indoor and outdoor spaces, but you need to make sure the two groups do not mix. This means making sure the venue has separate entrances for shared areas — for example bathrooms or counters where people go up to order or pay.
- You must have ways for guests to record their visit, such as a QR code poster for them to scan, or another safe and secure way to manually record their contact details.
- If you have hired the entire venue for your gathering, your guests can move freely and they do not need to be seated or served at tables.
- If you have only hired a room or space at a venue, then your guests will need to keep 1 metre apart from other guests at the venue.
- Staff at the venue will need to wear face coverings if food and drink is being served.

Attending a social gathering

- Stay home if you are unwell or if you have been asked to isolate.
- Try to keep 1 metre away from people you do not know.
- Avoid congregating or gathering at entrances or in small shared spaces such as the bathroom.
- If you need to pay for your food or drinks, use contactless payment options if possible.
- Limit physical contact with people who are not your close whānau or friends
- If you are attending a gathering at a public venue, scan in using the NZ COVID Tracer app.
- Avoid sharing food and drinks with people you do not know.