



**THE  
MASONIC INTERNET AND DIGITAL MEDIA  
GUIDELINES**

**THE MOST WORSHIPFUL PRINCE HALL GRAND LODGE OF TENNESSEE  
THE HORORABLE ARVIN W. GLASS, MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND MASTER**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Internet, social media, and other forms of digital media provide an excellent opportunity to inform other brothers and the public of Masonic activities throughout the world. The Grand Master, the Grand Lodge, The Grand Webmaster, and the Committee on Marketing and Information Technology have coordinated the development and maintenance of the official website of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee. Brothers are encouraged to use the technology of the Internet to create lodge websites, social media pages, mobile applications, and other digital media platforms, which complement the Grand Lodge Website and showcase local Masonic activities. This document provides guidelines for the Internet and other digital media (including websites, mobile applications, social media networks, etc.) of Tennessee subordinate lodges/ districts and have been prepared in the interest of protecting the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee (MWPHGLTN) and minimizing potential legal liability. Masonry has time-honored intellectual property interests in its symbols, ceremonies and other materials, which need protection from legal risks, manipulation, and outside influences. Accurate, complete and current information is critical to legal protection and guardianship of our organization.

All information on the Grand Lodge Website is reviewed and approved by the Grand Master. The Grand Lodge will be the sole source of the following topics as they appear on any website. Subordinate Lodges with websites are not permitted to share the following information, but may provide links to the Grand Lodge website (<http://www.mwphgltn.org>).

- History of Prince Hall Masonry
- History of the Tennessee Grand Lodge
- Membership Demographics
- Membership Information
- The Sale of Official Publications/Artifacts
- How to Become a Member

## 2.0 COMPLIANT WEBSITES

**\*\*Lodge websites are required to include all of the items contained in this section. The website will be deemed out of compliance if any items have not been included.\*\***

• **Disclaimer Statement:** Lodge websites **must** contain the following statement, verbatim:

**This website is the sole property and responsibility of the \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_ of The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee.**

• **Link:** Websites must contain a hyperlink to the MWPHGLOfTN website. The links must be provided using one of the following statements, verbatim:

• **For more information, visit the MWPHGLOfTN website at [www.mwphgltn.org](http://www.mwphgltn.org).**

- All compliant websites must be registered with the Grand Lodge.

- The Grand Lodge must, at all times, have ability (with the assistance of the Worshipful Master and Lodge Webmaster) to disable lodge websites if necessary. The Grand Lodge, The Grand Master, and/ or Grand Webmaster must have the following on file:

1) The Worshipful Master's name, personal phone number, e-mail address, and lodge address.

2) The Lodge Webmaster's name, personal phone number, e-mail address, and lodge address.

3) The lodge website's hosting company, along with account password and user name.

- The Worshipful Master will be held responsible for the content of the lodges' website.

- Websites should contain the following statement:

- Lodge websites must contain lodge contact information such as the mailing address, an e-mail address and/or phone number for the lodge or a lodge officer (i.e. Webmaster). This should appear on the main page of the website. Example:

*Stone Rock Lodge #123*

*MWPHGLOf Tennessee*

*PO Box 1000*

*Memphis, TN 38109*

*E-mail: [wmjdoe@stonerocklodge.com](mailto:wmjdoe@stonerocklodge.com)*

- Lodge websites should be kept updated and links checked often.

- If applicable, Internal lodge events and information must be password protected. Access to any password protected area (e.g. Restricted area) of a lodge website must be limited to the **financial membership of that lodge**. The password for the site should be changed every fiscal year (i.e. dues cycle).

- A brother must create and maintain the restricted area content.

- A brother should secure the domain name for the website, instead of using a second party to host and maintain the website. This ensures that lodges can control the domain name and content. The website should be owned and the responsibility by the respective lodges, not by one

individual.

- The lodge should pay for domain and hosting site and should not belong to any one particular member.
- The Grand Lodge Technology Committee will collaborate with the District Deputies for compliance and certification of Lodge Websites.

## **2.1 LODGE WEBSITES MAY INCLUDE (BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO):**

- **Prince Hall:** Please refer to the Grand Lodge Website for the accurate history information.
- **Tennessee Grand Masters:** An authorized picture of the Grand Masters, years in office and their names are appropriate. However, additional information would be considered history, which is provided by the Grand Lodge Website.
- **Calendar of Events:** Including the dates for lodge public service events, fundraisers, Lodge meetings, and committee meetings. Lodges should include a contact name and/or e-mail address for potential members to contact.
- **Photographs:** Websites may include various tasteful photographs depicting brothers participating in lodge activities, public service events or any photographs directly related to the Lodge. Depictions of ceremonies, candidates, (i.e. lodge set up) are not allowed. You must obtain permission from parents of any minors in pictures.

### **Photographs in Poor Taste May NOT Appear on Lodge Websites**

- Pictures of opened Lodge meetings
- Pictures of candidates before or during initiations
- Scantily dressed persons
- Provocative poses
- Pictures of a sexual nature
- Pictures of persons displaying hand signs or wearing the paraphernalia of an organization to which they do not belong
- **Lodge Histories:** Lodge websites may include the chartering date of the lodge, charter members, the location of the chartered lodge, or any significant historical information about the lodge that is newsworthy.
- **Significant Information:** Should include the name and year of awards, stellar programs, and outstanding recognition for service.
- **Lodge Charter Members:** The names of charter members may be included on lodge websites. Charter members organized lodges and are not called Founders. An authorized picture of the Charter members, years in office and their names are appropriate. Also, any accurate family history is appropriate.
- **Current Lodge Officers:** The names of current Lodge officers and their positions. An email address may also be included on Lodge websites. The personal mailing addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of current Lodge officers may not be included on Lodge websites.
- **Online Sales:** Lodges may offer the following items for sale through a Lodge website:

- Event registration
- Ticket sales
- Fundraising donations
- Other Lodge-specific activities requiring payment.

Payment links for public events and/or activities must appear in the public section of the Lodge website. The payment link or Notice of Online Sale may also be posted onto the Lodge's Social Networking Account(s), sent via email, or sent via text messaging.

Lodge's are permitted to sell tickets to internal Lodge events using **EventBrite – Private Event Registration or PayPal.**

The event registration must be password protected.

Payment links for internal Lodge sales must be placed behind the Restricted Area of a Lodge website and may not be posted to any social networking site, sent via email, or sent via text messaging.

**- Restricted Area and/or Documents:** Websites may include a restricted area or password protected documents.

This area, including any items hosted within, must not be accessible to individuals who are not financial brothers. The password must be changed each fiscal year.

A brother must create and maintain the restricted area content. The Lodge will be held responsible for the restricted area content.

The following information must be placed in a restricted area or in a password protected document:

- Internal and Lodge Only events
- Payment links to internal events/items
- Lodge Documents: Lodge meeting minutes, Lodge policies & procedures, committee reports, and agenda.

The following information must be placed in a restricted area and encrypted (password protected).

- Lodge Treasury Reports
- Financial Secretary Reports

### **Best Practices for Document Encryption (Password Protection)**

- Create a backup copy of the file, without a password, in the event the password is forgotten or misplaced.
- For file encryption instructions for Microsoft Office, visit <https://support.office.com>, using the search term "password protection."

Lodge websites may not include Membership Rosters or Membership Directories.

Lodges may distribute these documents via USB or Hard Copy.

- **Links to the Grand Lodge Website and other lodge Websites:** Lodge websites must provide a link to the *Grand Lodge Website*. It may provide links to other websites in the Tennessee Jurisdiction. Websites to other lodges should also be listed appropriately. These website addresses should be provided as hyperlinks, meaning that a user can click on the address and be directly routed to the specified website.

- **Contact information for lodge functions and fundraisers:** Names, mailing addresses, e-mail addresses and/or phone numbers for lodge members responsible for specific lodge functions or fundraisers may be listed under information pertaining to these functions or fundraisers with the **consent** of that lodge member. If lodge members would not like their information published on the website, the lodge's general mailing address, e-mail address and/or telephone number may be provided instead. Lodges are encouraged to use some type of contact information for functions or fundraisers that are open to the public and are listed on the lodge's website.

- **Best Practices for Event Contact Information**

- Always use Lodge mailing address.
- Use a prepaid and/or disposable cell phone, or an Internet phone service such as Google Voice.
- Lodges are encouraged to include contact information for public events listed on the Lodge website.

## 2.2 WEBSITES MAY NOT INCLUDE:

- The following should not appear on any website in **written, audio, video, or image form**. All of the information listed below is privileged Masonic information and should not be shared with non-Masons without the permission of Grand Lodge.

- **The Grand Lodge Seal** - The Grand Lodge Seal may **not** be displayed on websites to prevent its inappropriate use.

- **Secrets, Passwords, Signs, and Grips:** Secrets, passwords, signs, and grips can only be given in the appropriate Masonic manner.

- **Masonic Obligation:** Masonic obligations are only given to men who have been duly initiated into Prince Hall Masonry and it is not to be displayed on websites.

**Written, audio, video, or image form refers to all types of Internet media (e.g., blogs, podcasts, video broadcast websites, etc.)**

- **Ceremonies, Formal Openings, Membership Initiation Activities:** Ceremonies, formal



openings, and membership initiation activities are closed Masonic assemblies; therefore these events may not be shared with non-Masons. Photos may not be taken of brothers and/ or candidates who are participating in a ceremony or activities. Membership initiation activities are intended only for active Masons not the public.

- **Membership Information:** Any information outside of lodge contact information and general lodge history. Information for prospective members should be provided **only** via links to the Grand Lodge Website.

- **Past Lodge "Lines" or "Lineage":** There should be no listing of the birth names, legal names, or "line names" of brothers initiated into a lodge during a specific year.

- **Any Internal Lodge Information or Lodge Doctrines:** Examples include lodge meeting minutes, lodge bylaws, lodge policies and procedures, committee reports, etc., unless this information is password protected (e.g., Restricted Area) and only viewable by current financial lodge members.

**\*\*The following information cannot be included in the restricted area: lodge treasury report, financial secretary report, and membership directory\*\***

**Past lodge membership information cannot be included on lodge websites.**

- **Links to personal, business, or other lodge websites:** Lodge websites may not include links to any other websites other than the Grand Lodge website ([www.mwphgltm.org](http://www.mwphgltm.org)), or any approved or certified Tennessee Jurisdictional lodge websites. An exception shall be non-fraternal organizations that sponsor lodge public events that are described on the website. Once the event has expired, the link must be removed. Examples are American Heart Association and Breast Cancer Walk. If a lodge website lists businesses, a disclaimer must be included on the web page that it does not endorse any of the businesses listed on the website.

- **Links to other Jurisdictions and appendant bodies:** Lodge websites may include links to other websites in other jurisdictions if they reside in a Prince Hall Affiliated jurisdiction. Also, lodges may have links to appendant and concordant bodies that are Prince Hall Affiliated.

- **Photographs in poor taste:** Lodge websites may not include any material in poor taste. This includes scantily dressed persons, provocative poses, pictures of a sexual nature, or pictures of persons displaying the signs or wearing the paraphernalia of an organization to which they do not belong.

- **Sale of Merchandise:** Lodge websites cannot offer items for sale through their site. Lodges

may advertise fundraisers and other events with links to the e-mail address(es) of contact persons within the lodge, but no direct sales or registrations with credit cards or other means of payment are allowed via the lodge website. Examples are PayPal, Storm Pay, and Google Pay

- **Copyrighted Material or Illegal Material:** This includes works of art, music, and video.

- **Advertisements:** Lodges are prohibited from using free web hosts that provide automatic advertising on websites.

### 3.0 GENERAL E-MAIL

- Confidential information should not be sent in an electronic message.
- When sending e-mails to multiple people or to groups including members of the lodge and non-members, use the 'bcc' (blind carbon copy) option to specify addresses. This will allow each recipient of the message to see only his or her own e-mail address.
- Do not forward e-mail that includes the previous recipients' e-mail address.
- The e-mail addresses of brothers, lodges, or officers should not be given out without the explicit permission of those individuals. Addresses should not be sold and the addresses should be used for official Masonic business only.
- Brothers should use a personal e-mail account, not their professional/work e-mail account, to receive Masonic information. This personal account should not be shared with non-lodge members, such as spouses, relatives, or friends.

#### 3.1 Lodge E-mail Account

- Should be checked **at least once a week.**
- All lodges should have a lodge account to communicate with the Grand Lodge.
- The specific e-mail addresses for the lodges or addresses reserved for lodge officers should be passed on to the new officers at the end of each Masonic year. The current username and passwords, access information, and any other information pertaining to the account should be provided to the new officer(s).
- The following officers should have access to the lodge e-mail account: Worshipful Master and whomever he deems necessary, and lodge Webmaster. If the e-mail account is associated with the lodge website account, create a separate user password for the lodge Webmaster.
- Passwords should be changed whenever officers change (during election cycles, resignations, or impeachment).
- The lodge mailing lists should be checked regularly for accuracy, especially during dues cycles and when brothers relocate or leave a lodge.
- Do not forward e-mail that presents inappropriate content and media (e.g., pictures, images, video). If the content violates any part of the Constitution, any obligations, and and/ or may create embarrassment for the MWPHGLTN, then it should be forwarded to Grand Lodge.



- E-mails containing Masonic information are not to be forwarded outside the intended recipients. If there is a question about recipients of e-mail messages, the lodge Webmaster should be contacted and the corresponding person should be verified and subsequently added to the list.

Brothers cannot send documents listed in Section 2.2.

### **Best Practices for Email Address Formats**

Examples: Chapter Officers

- worshipfulmaster@xxxlodge.org
- seniorwarden@xxxlodge.org
- [juniorwarden@xxxlodge.org](mailto:juniorwarden@xxxlodge.org)
- treasurer@xxxlodge.org
- secretary@xxxlodge.org

## **4.0 SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.)**

Lodges and brothers increasingly use social media networks to communicate with each other, the public, and for a variety of other purposes. As usage grows, more Lodges and brothers are utilizing the Grand Lodge's name, as well as its subordinate Lodge's name, and other property in their exchanges. In some instances, their use infringes on the Grand Lodge's rights and harms its interests.

These guidelines are for the express purpose of protecting the interests of The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee and apply equally to Lodges, Districts, and individual brothers.

New social media networks are created frequently, and existing social media networks often update their features. As a result, this document is unable to explicitly list all social media networks or provide guidelines for each of their features. However, these guidelines apply to any social media networks.

**Note: Your Lodge must inform the DDGM that it has an official page on a social media. The Worshipful Master and Lodge Officers will be held responsible for the content of the chapter social media accounts.**

- Online social communities are Internet social or business networks that allow individuals to create websites, add friends, post messages to discussion forums, list services or chat rooms, sell merchandise, etc. Examples of online communities but are not limited to: Facebook, Snapchat,

Twitter, GroupMe, YouTube, Instagram, etc.

- **Contact Information:** When available, social media accounts should include contact information for the Lodge such as: mailing address, email address, and/or phone number for the Lodge (if applicable).
- **Event Information:** Lodges may use social media networks to promote public Lodge programs and events. - Brothers can advertise programs and showcase the various outcomes via photos and videos. The Worshipful Master must approve the planned promotion.

The following events may not be promoted or discussed on social media networks:

- Initiation Activities
- Closed meetings
- Important documentation from the Most Worshipful Grand Master and/ or the Grand Lodge
  
- Mason-only social media networks should only be created by a lodge or at the district level. The Mason-only groups should refrain from using any membership numbers as verification and identification in online social communities.
- Brothers should adhere to content restrictions as defined in the "Websites May Not Include" section described earlier.
- Inappropriate behavior and content is not allowed in these communities. If the behavior or content violates code of conduct and/or may create embarrassment for the MWPHGLTN, then it should be forwarded to Grand Lodge for immediate action.
- The sale of official Grand Lodge items or events is prohibited in online communities or websites. These include but are not limited to the following:
  - Convention or conference registration
  - Masonic rituals
  - Administrative handbooks or documents
  - Grand Lodge lapel pins or cufflinks
  - Masonic Regalia and materials
- Brothers should not discuss official Lodge or Grand Lodge business in online communities not managed by a lodge, district or Grand Lodge. This includes information disseminated in lodge meetings, district conferences, and Grand Lodge Convention.

### **Photographs in Poor Taste May NOT Appear on Lodge/ District Social Media Networks**

- Pictures of opened Lodge meetings
- Pictures of candidates before or during initiations
- Scantily dressed persons
- Provocative poses
- Pictures of a sexual nature

- Pictures of persons displaying hand signs or wearing the paraphernalia of an organization to which they do not belong

## **ACCOUNT SETUP**

**FACEBOOK Account Creation:** Lodges and Districts may create a Facebook Page as a “Company, Organization or Institution.” The following information should be used:

- Category: Non-Profit Organization
- Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge/ District of The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee
- Description: The official page of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge/ District of The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee

**INSTAGRAM Account Creation:** Lodges and Districts may create an Instagram account. The following information should be used:

- Name: The Lodge/ District name should be used.
- Email: An email address owned by the Lodge/ District should be used.
- Username: The username is limited to 30 characters. An abbreviated form of the Lodge/ District name may be used.
- Bio: The Official Instagram account of the \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge/ District of The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee. - [www.mwphgltn.org](http://www.mwphgltn.org)

**\*Adhere to the above formats for any social media networks.**

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

**Code of Conduct:** The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee’s Constitution and by-laws, the Tenets and Landmarks of Freemasonry are applicable to both online and offline activities.

Congress and states are regularly codifying laws that criminalize or penalize certain online conduct and communications. Being sanctioned pursuant to The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee will not protect an individual from being punished under applicable State or Federal laws for engaging in conduct online that is illegal.

**Social Media Groups:** Social Media Groups created outside of Lodge or District levels are not within the guidance of this document. However, individual members must still adhere to all of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee’s Constitution and by-laws and its adopted policies.

**Good Judgment:** Use good judgment to ensure social media posts, hashtags, videos, photos, or

blog posts always reflect the highest standards of conduct and portray positive representation of yourself, individual members, and The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee.

Remember that the Internet is public accessible worldwide and the security of Masonic properties are our responsibility. When the names of Brothers appear on websites, use caution in providing identifying information such as telephone numbers, addresses and place of employment. Protect the privacy of Brothers at all times against such fraudulent and potentially criminal activities and unauthorized credit card and ATM usage and robbery.

Any questions regarding guidelines and creation of websites should be e-mailed to the Grand Lodge Marketing and Technology Director ([marketingdir@mwphgltm.org](mailto:marketingdir@mwphgltm.org)) and the Grand Webmaster ([grandwebmaster@mwphgltm.org](mailto:grandwebmaster@mwphgltm.org)).

If any of the Internet Guidelines are violated, the website and/or persons associated with the violation should be reported to the Grand Lodge and the Grand Master. Upon further review, a decision will be made as to how the violations will be resolved.

## **6.0 LEGAL NOTICES**

The contents of all material available on the Grand Lodge website are property the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee unless otherwise indicated. All rights are reserved by the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee, and content may not be reproduced, downloaded, disseminated, published or transferred in any form or by any means, except with prior written permission of the Grand Lodge and Grand Master or as indicated. Members of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee and subordinate lodges may download pages or other content for their own use, consistent with the mission and purpose of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee. However, no part or such content may be otherwise or subsequently reproduced, downloaded, disseminated, published or transferred, in any form or by any means, except with the prior written permission of an with express attribution to the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee. Copyright infringement is a violation of federal law subject to criminal and civil penalties. Lodges and/or Brothers should also refer to the Constitution for other guidelines.