

## Visiting Other Lodges

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A Mason may seek to visit any other lodge which is recognized by his Grand Lodge. He usually will be welcomed if he comes in peace and a spirit of fraternalism. If the lodge is involved in a discussion of sensitive business, such as Masonic discipline, visitors might be unwelcome at that time.

One may visit lodges that are part of the same Grand Lodge and any other Grand Lodges that are recognized as regular by it. Usually practices will be pretty much the same in other lodges of the same Grand Lodge. In Illinois that usually means that business suits might be expected, but not tuxedos. A few lodges are more formal and a few are less. The signs and words for recognition are the same throughout a Grand Lodge jurisdiction, but might vary elsewhere.

Some evidence of membership, such as a membership card, is usually expected. The membership card should not be sealed in plastic to preserve it. There is usually a raised seal on the card, which disappears when the card is sealed in plastic. The card and the visitor can be rejected if this raised seal is missing.

Unless someone who is a member or otherwise known to the membership of the host lodge vouches for the visiting brother, there will be an examination. Illinois Masons are not expected to know the third degree examination, but could legitimately be asked for grips and signs of lower degrees. The examination could also be much simpler, but will usually be on something that a Mason is expected to know.

During the meeting the signs are given and passwords are collected. These words and signs can differ from one grand jurisdiction to another, but are pretty much the same throughout the United States of America. In some places, only the sign of the degree is given. In other jurisdictions, all signs up to and including that of the degree on which the lodge is open are given in rapid succession.

A visitor signs the register as such. There are separate areas of the page for members and for visitors. He will probably be introduced during the meeting.

The ritual may differ from one grand jurisdiction to another; although it should be about the same throughout Illinois. The ritual will be recognizable as Masonic even if quite different. Illinois is pretty unique in the amount that the rods are used so that one should not expect to see as much use of rods elsewhere.

Many lodges have some food either before or after lodge. Frequently a visitor is treated as a guest and not expected to pay. Not all lodges provide food. They might only have coffee and cake or something similar. The members of many lodges go out for refreshments after meetings. Since this can vary, it is best to check beforehand.