

CHAPTER 40

VISITATION AND AVOUCHMENT

VISITATION

Constitutional Provisions

It is a Landmark of Freemasonry that every visitor seeking admission to the Lodge must be examined and prove himself, unless duly and properly avouched for. (Excerpt Art. XIII, Sec. 2(e))

Regulations

40.01 A Worthy Master Mason possesses no absolute right of visiting a Lodge, but he has an inherent right to apply, and the Lodge has the discretion to admit or refuse him admission.

40.02 Visiting Brethren can be admitted only with the unanimous consent of the Lodge.

40.03 Any of the following causes are valid against the admission of a visitor, to-wit:

(a) The Lodge may be engaged in the examination of some private matter which they do not wish to publish to the Masonic world.

(b) The applicant may be an element of discord to the Lodge he wishes to visit.

(c) A member objects, but insists that his objections are such as cannot be properly stated.

40.04 In all cases of doubt, Lodges should require of visitors, before examination, some documentary evidence of good Masonic standing, under the Seal of some regular Masonic body.

40.05 A visiting Brother, before submitting to an examination, has a right to demand sight of the Lodge's Charter, but is not required to do so if satisfied of the regularity of the Lodge by other means. The Worshipful Master may decline to produce the Charter of the Lodge, if the circumstances are such that it is not feasible, in which case the visitor may choose between retiring or submit to examination without sight of the Charter. The right of the visitor to see the Charter must not be arbitrarily denied.

40.06 A man who knowingly visits a clandestine Lodge cannot be permitted to also visit a Regular Lodge in Florida.

40.07 A Brother objecting to the admission of a visitor in his Lodge is not required to prefer charges, nor can he do so in his own Lodge, unless the sojourning Brother be under the territorial jurisdiction of the Lodge.

40.08 An objection may be predicated upon the statement of non-Masons, but should be received with great caution.

40.09 Every Lodge is required to keep a visitor's book and to require each visitor to sign his name therein, with the locality, name, and number of his Lodge.

AVOUCHMENT

Regulations

40.10 Any Brother present may vouch for any visitor, but the Master may inquire and judge of the information upon which the vouching rests, and decide as to its validity.

40.11 Whether or not it is necessary for a voucher to have sat in a Lodge with a visitor, is left with the Master, it being the manifest intention of the Grand Lodge to entrust the sufficiency of such avouchment solely to his sound discretion, and he cannot be too circumspect and careful in the exercise of his authority.

Rulings and Decisions

In case of a visitor who cannot be examined because he has lost his speech, the Worshipful Master may, at his discretion, accept as a proper avouchment a letter received from the visiting Brother's Lodge certifying to his good standing, provided, the visitor is known to be the person he represents himself to be. (1954 Proc. 75)

A petition for the Degrees or visitation of an otherwise duly qualified visiting Mason may not be objected to by a member of a Particular Lodge if the objection is based upon the grounds of race, creed, or color. (1993 Proc. 123)