



**MEC David A. Aponte, Grand High Priest**  
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**Edict No. 2021-01**

**16 May 2021**

The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of F. & A. M. of Washington published a directive on 26 March 2021 regarding in-person Lodge meetings. He also issued a follow-up letter on 13 April 2021 regarding in-person meetings for counties in Phase 2. The Lodges had the option, depending on the wishes of its members to meet in-person or virtually. The only exception to these options were those lodges in Phase 1 counties that would continue to meet virtually only. In addition, the Grand Master indicated in his directive of 26 March 2021 the following:

- A. The building where the Lodge meets needs to comply with all the requirements specified in Healthy Washington Roadmap to Recovery for miscellaneous venues. This means that the Temple Boards of each Masonic building would decide if they would reopen the building for in-person meeting.
- B. Protocols needed to be in place to ensure the meeting to be safe from COVID-19.

The Constituent Chapters in our jurisdiction are dependent on the decision of the Lodge, where they meet, if they will reopen or not. Unfortunately, some have decided not to re-open.

Based on these facts, I have exercised the powers of the office of Grand High Priest to convene Chapters within this jurisdiction, to allow for Capitular business meetings to resume via Zoom. On 16 May 2021, I opened all Constituent Chapters, within this Jurisdiction, in Ample form. We will adhere to the edict of the Grand Master and the State guidelines if a Chapter meets in-person.

Regardless if a Chapter meets via Zoom or in-person, the **High Priest (HP)** of each Constituent Chapter will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. If you meet via Zoom, you may conduct a business meeting. However, a quorum is needed to act on Chapter business.
2. If you meet via Zoom, the HP will open the meeting as **resuming labor** on the Royal Arch degree.
3. If you meet via Zoom, all normal business may be conducted including elections, balloting on candidates, reading of minutes, etc with a few exceptions.
4. If you meet via Zoom, Chapters are **NOT permitted** to confer degrees or perform any portion of the ritual via Zoom.



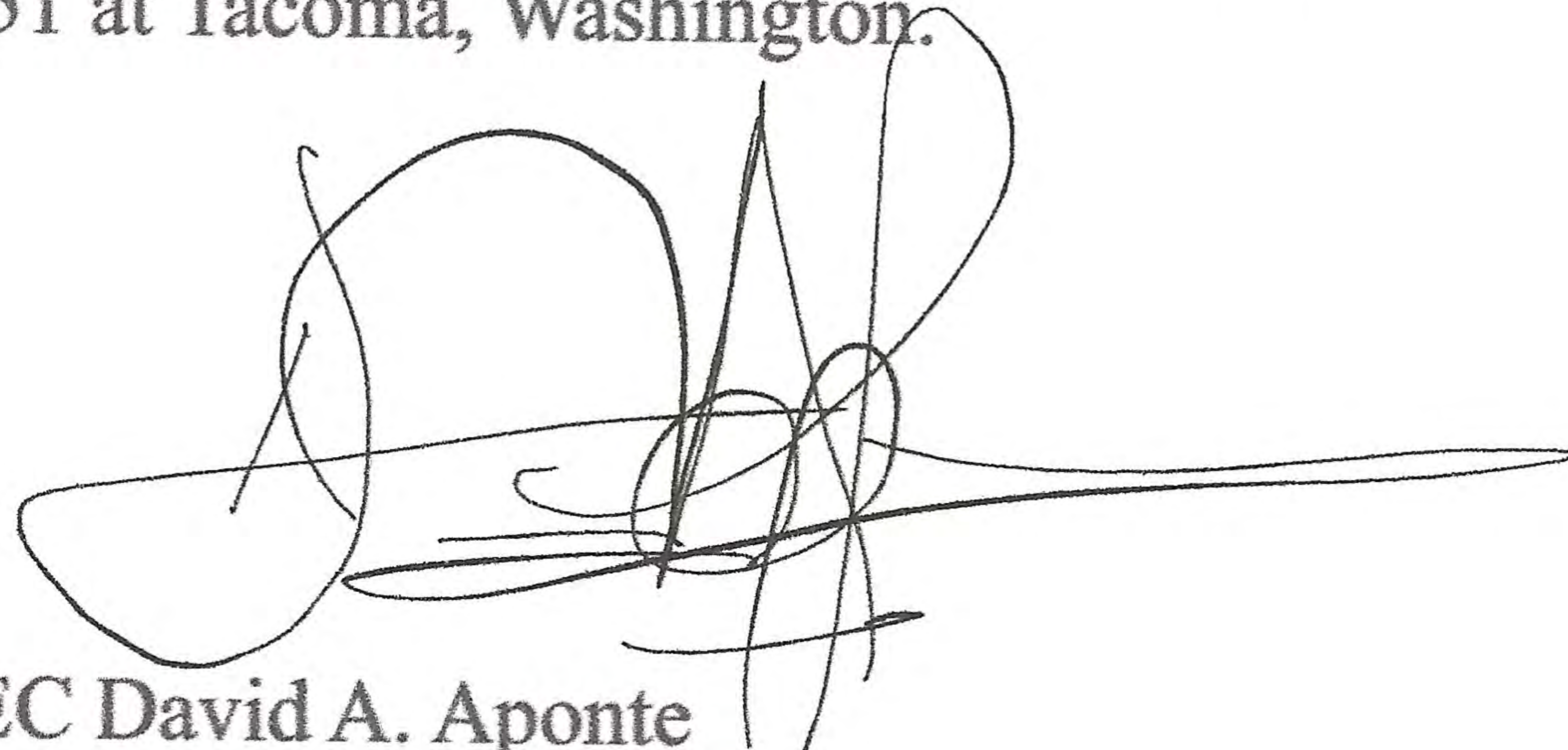
5. If you meet via Zoom Once all business is concluded the HP will **suspend labor until the next stated meeting.**
6. If you meet via Zoom, HP's are not authorized to close meetings by decree or declaration.
7. If you meet via Zoom, it is highly recommended that the HP have a bible opened to Exodus 6, beside him during the meeting.
8. If you meet in-person, the HP will use the ritual to open his Chapter except he will not declare the Chapter opened but **labor resumed** on the Royal Arch degree.
9. If you meet in-person, the HP will close per ritual except when he will not declare the Chapter close but **labor suspended until the next stated meeting.**

At our last Annual Convocation, a resolution was approved to allow Chapters to have a hybrid meeting while in Lodge using Zoom. Remember the officers and members need to be present to make the quorum for a Chapter meeting. While guidelines are being written for the Chapters, the HP needs to remember the following when doing hybrid meetings:

- A. The Companions in the Zoom room do not count towards the quorum of the Chapter.
- B. The Zoom Room will be close during the ritualistic opening and closing of the Chapter.
- C. Conferral of degrees or any portion of the ritual **is not allowed** on Zoom.
- D. If you need to ballot on candidates, you will use the ballot box at the Lodge and the polling feature of Zoom for members only making sure that the anonymous box is checked when making the poll question.

This edict will take effect immediately for all Chapters within this jurisdiction.

In witness thereof, I have set forth my signature and seal on this 16th day of May, 2021, A. . L. .  
2551 at Tacoma, Washington.



MEC David A. Aponte  
Most Excellent Grand High Priest  
Most Excellent Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons of Washington





Note:

Our York Rite Washington LLC purchased a copy of Zoom Pro account last year and has offered to allow all York Rite bodies in Washington State the use of the software at no charge. Zoom Pro has been tested during 2020-2021. It is recommended for conducting stated meetings as outlined above. All Zoom meetings using the LLC subscription must be coordinated with the LLC because the subscription does not allow for simultaneous meetings. The LLC will centrally manage reservations and provide you with an access name and password, but you are responsible for setting up the meeting and inviting attendees. LLC may assist you if it is your first-time using Zoom.

For Zoom bookings please contact the LLC secretary, VEC Roger Pankey at [pankeypickers@comcast.net](mailto:pankeypickers@comcast.net) or (206) 446-6236 (cell).

Alternatively, Chapters' may purchase their own subscription. Zoom Pro is recommended due to the increased digital security it provides and the increased meeting time.

With this temporary solution we hope to offer an alternative to those Chapter that are not able to meet in-person.

Should you have any questions or concerns about electronic or in-person meetings, please reach out to me directly at [regc2011@live.com](mailto:regc2011@live.com). Any questions directly pertaining to Zoom, please contact the York Rite Washington LLC.