



Grand Lodge of Canada
In the Province of Ontario

Building Compliance and Life Safety Policy 2021

SECTION 1: Lodge Building Compliance Overview

As the keepers of our Masonic homes, we must ensure that each and every member of each and every Lodge can be assured that when he attends Lodge, his health and physical safety is of the uppermost importance.

2012 Policy

In June 2012, Grand Lodge acted on safety and liability concerns of our Lodge meeting places. The Building Compliance Committee directed all Lodges and Temple Corporations to begin the process of seeking current compliance to all fire, health, safety and municipality code requirements.

The Building Compliance Policy of 2012 mandated all buildings that our Lodges meet in have a valid “Fire and Life Safety Inspection” completed and submitted to the Building Compliance Committee every 3 years.

Since 2012 the Building Compliance Policy has been the tool used to seek compliance with the Ontario Fire Code and the inspections related to it. Much success has been achieved and it is now time to put in place an easily administered policy that ensures sustainable compliance, while protecting the health and safety of our members and other users.

The purpose of the 2021 policy is the next step in the building compliance and life safety process.

2021 Policy

Grand Lodge is aware that when there has been no change made to the Lodge building or its usage, or to the occupancy load, repeat Fire and Life Safety Inspections every 3 years have been costly to our Lodges.

For this reason, Grand Lodge is moving to a revised, simplified process to ensure our Lodges continue to meet the necessary safety requirements to ensure the well-being of all our members. The new Grand Lodge Building Policy will come into effect July 1, 2021.

The new policy requires all Lodges to submit a valid Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report completed no earlier than January 1, 2017. Lodges will then be able to complete a simplified self-directed annual checklist--Building Compliance Form (GL-BCF2021) to remain compliant.

SECTION 2: Grand Lodge Building Compliance Policy 2021 (Effective Date: July 1, 2021)

As with the 2012 Policy, every building in which Lodges of this jurisdiction meet, regardless of whether it is owned, rented or leased, by the Lodge or a group of Lodges as a Temple Corporation, must be compliant with local fire, health, safety and municipality code requirements.

Note on Temple Corporations and Other Owners:

If the building is owned by a third party non-Masonic owner or owned or administered by a Temple Corporation, why are the Lodges responsible for ensuring that the building is in compliance with local fire, health, safety and municipality code requirements?

While Grand Lodge has no power by the Constitution on how third party owned buildings or Temple Corporations are operated and has no power to force a third party owner or Temple Corporation to have an inspection, Grand Lodge does have control over the Lodges meeting in those buildings in so far as safe premises and the safety of our members are concerned.

Step 1: Completion of a Valid Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report

A valid Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report, completed no earlier than **January 1, 2017** by the Office of the Fire Marshal or their representative (in most cases the representative of the Office of the Fire Marshal is the Municipal Fire Service) for each building that our Lodges meet in, must be submitted to the Chairman of the Lodge Building Advisory Committee. **Only one (1) Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report must be completed and submitted per Building.** For example, if two (2) or more Lodges share a building, only one (1) Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report is required to be submitted on behalf of all Lodges meeting in the building. (Please note in your submission to which Lodges the Inspection applies)

What Constitutes a Valid Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report for the Purpose of Grand Lodge Building Compliance?

To be considered valid for the purposes of the Building Compliance and Life Safety Policy 2021, the Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report must have been completed by the Office of the Fire Marshal or their representative. This means that the Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report must be completed by your local Fire Service.

If a Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report was completed by someone other than the Office of the Fire Marshal or their representative*, it is not considered a valid Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report for Grand Lodge Building Compliance.

* As inspections completed by certified companies for sprinkler/heating/fire suppression systems may be necessary for certain buildings, they **do not** replace a valid Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report to be compliant with Grand Lodge.

Note: A Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report can only be requested by the owner of the building. In the event of a rented/leased/Third Party Ownership it is the Lodge's responsibility to contact the building owner and have them request a Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report to be performed by the Office of the Fire Marshal or their representative and shared with the Lodge.

Exception: If the Lodge building can not obtain a Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report due to circumstances out of their control the Lodge must submit documentation from their Local Fire Service that a Fire and Life Safety Inspection has been requested by the Lodge.

Cost: The cost associated with a Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report is the responsibility of the Lodge.

Step 2: Self-Guided Checklist – Building Compliance Form (GL-BCF2021)

Lodges that have submitted a valid Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report that was completed by the Office of the Fire Marshall or their representative dated no earlier than January 1, 2017 are eligible to use Form (GL-BCF2021). This form must be included with the required Lodge Master's/Secretary's Report submitted annually to the DDGM at his Official Visit.

Note: The Chairman of the Lodge Building Advisory Committee will provide to Grand Lodge and each DDGM a list of Lodges that have provided a valid Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report dated no earlier than January 1, 2017.

SECTION 3: Fire Safety Plan

The Fire Code is a provincial regulation made under Part IV of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. The Fire Code consists of a set of minimum requirements regarding fire safety within and around existing buildings and facilities. The building owner is responsible for complying with the Fire Code.

Section 2.8 of the Fire Code requires any building where assemblies take place to have a **Fire Safety Plan**.

A Fire Safety Plan is an **individually** tailored document that deals with all aspects of fire safety at a specific building or property. It sets out the owner's roles and responsibilities, in the event of an emergency. It is the owner of the building that must create and implement the Fire Safety Plan. After the plan has been prepared, it must be submitted to the Chief Fire Official of the Municipality for approval. Once approved, the owner is responsible for implementing the Fire Safety Plan and training all staff in their respective duties. It is also the owner's responsibility to ensure that all visitors and staff are informed of what to do in case of fire or when the fire

alarm sounds. It likewise covers specific maintenance requirements of the buildings fire and life safety features and in the event of an emergency it provides vital information for the Fire Services such as floor plans, locations of shut offs and equipment, along with contact names and numbers.

Every building in which Lodges of this jurisdiction meet, regardless of whether it is owned, rented or leased, by the Lodge or a group of Lodges as a Temple Corporation, must have a building Fire Safety Plan.

The Fire Code requires the building Fire Safety Plan to be reviewed as often as necessary, but at least every 12 months. Every Lodge will verify on their annual Building Compliance Form (GL-BCF2021) that their Fire Safety Plan has been reviewed and is current.

For more information on completing a Fire Safety Plan please contact your local Fire Service.

SECTION 4: When Does A Lodge Building Require Another Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report?

A new Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report must be completed each time:

- there has been a change of building usage or occupancy
- any building renovations that require a building permit have occurred
- a Lodge changes the building in which they meet (unless that Lodge begins to share a building with another Lodge that currently meets the Grand Lodge Building Compliance Policy 2021)

SECTION 5: When is a Building Permit Required?

In compliance with the Provincial Government regulations, you must obtain a building permit before you:

- construct any new building over ten square meters in area or place another structure on your property
- make renovations or certain repairs or add to a building
- change the use of a building
- excavate or construct a foundation
- undertake work regarding the installation, alteration, extension or repair of an on-site sewage system
- any additions, alterations or deletions to existing fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems or standpipe systems

Contact your municipality if you have any questions about when a building permit may be required.

SECTION 6: Non-Compliance

The Building Compliance Policy is not intended to put any Lodge out of existence. However, we all share in a responsibility to ensure the safety of all our members.

If a *valid* Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report dated no earlier than January 1, 2017 is not provided, then Lodges cannot complete the mandatory annual Building Compliance Form (GL-BCF2021)

If the Building Compliance Form (GL-BCF2021) is not completed, Lodges run the risk of their Warrant being removed as per the Book of Constitution, Section 104 (c) and (d)¹. See below.

Section 104 (c) Should a lodge neglect to complete and/or provide to the District Deputy Grand Master the forms and information as required in, but not limited to, the Lodge Master's/Secretary's report or the Lodge Master's/Treasurer's Report for a period of forty-five (45) days following the date of the Official Visit, the Warrant of the offending Lodge shall be suspended until such time as the information has been completed and/or provided.

Section 104 (d) At the sole discretion of the Grand Master, one forty-five (45) day extension to the grace period noted in Sec 104 (c) may be granted. The Lodge must petition the Grand Master providing additional information for such extension to be granted.

We must continue to impress upon the Brethren the importance of maintaining safe Lodge buildings within our jurisdiction and also ensuring our buildings and grounds have a strong presence and leave a positive impression within our communities.

¹ Subject to ratification at the Annual Communication July 2021

SECTION 7: Accountability

All Lodge Buildings:

Every Masonic building in which Lodges of this jurisdiction meet, regardless of whether it is owned, rented or leased, by the Lodge or a group of Lodges as a Temple Corporation, must submit a valid **Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report** dated no earlier than January 1, 2017 and have a **Fire Safety Plan** in place.

Lodge Master and Secretary:

The Lodge Secretary or designate is accountable for ensuring that a valid **Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report** is submitted to the District Deputy Grand Master.

Form (GL-BCF2021) will be included with the required Lodge Master's/Secretary's Report submitted annually to the DDGM at his Official Visit.

District Deputy Grand Masters:

The District Deputy Grand Master is accountable for receiving the **Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report** from each Lodge in the District and forwarding the report to the Chairman of the Lodge Building Advisory Committee.

Chairman of the Lodge Building Advisory Committee:

The Chairman of the Lodge Building Advisory Committee is accountable for collecting **Fire and Life Safety Inspection Reports** from all District Deputy Grand Masters and reporting to the Deputy Grand Master, the Grand Master, and the Board of General Purposes, a list of Lodges or Temple Corporations that have not submitted a valid **Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report**.