



Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks

RITUALISTIC CHANGES APPROVED FOR 2012-13

Delegates to the 148th Grand Lodge Session in Austin, Texas, in July 2012 approved a shortened version of the Ritual to open and close regular Local Lodge meetings. Local Lodges now have the option of using that shortened version, but they first are required to amend their By-Laws in order to do so. In addition, the Lodge By-Laws change must be approved by the Grand Lodge Committee on Judiciary. The shortened Opening and Closing states:

Revised: 1 minute, 30 seconds

Present: 15 minutes

OPENING — LOCAL LODGE

(The shortened form Ritual shall be optional with a By-Law change of the Local Lodge.)

(The Esquire shall examine the members' membership cards at the door(s) of the Lodge.)

(The Altar shall be pre-arranged by the Esquire as prescribed in the general instructions.)

(The Exalted Ruler assumes his/her station and by sound of the gavel calls the Lodge meeting to order. Thereupon the light is turned on the Star.)



ONE RAP

EXALTED RULER: The Lodge meeting will come to order.

(If any member does not have a membership card showing that his/her dues are paid for the current year, it shall be reported to the Exalted Ruler. Thereupon the Exalted Ruler shall ascertain from the Secretary whether or not the member is entitled to remain in the Lodge room and shall direct the examining officer accordingly. If the member is not entitled to remain by reason of nonpayment of current dues, he/she shall be given an opportunity to pay the same, in default of which he/she shall immediately withdraw.)

(If there are no visiting members present, the following portions relative to visitors may be omitted.)

EXALTED RULER: Visiting members will please rise. Each member shall introduce himself/herself by giving his/her name and the name and number of his/her Lodge.

EXALTED RULER: In the name of the Order, and on behalf of this Lodge, I greet you as members. You may be seated.



THREE RAPS

EXALTED RULER: The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: *(from his/her station without advancing to the altar)* Our Father who art in heaven, direct us in all our deliberations with Thy most gracious favor, and further us with Thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy holy name.

Enlighten our minds more and more with the principles of our Order — Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. Let the light of Thy countenance shine upon us even as the light of this Star. Increase in us true benevolence, nourish us with all goodness, keep us faithful to our obligation, and lead us and all Elks beside the still waters of peace, for Thine is the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

ALL: Amen.

EXALTED RULER: Please salute our Flag and recite with me the Pledge of Allegiance.

(The members give the civilian salute)

ALL: I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands; one nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

(After the Pledge of Allegiance, the members shall lower the civilian salute)

EXALTED RULER: I now declare this Lodge meeting regularly opened.



ONE RAP

DELETE:

1. Dialogue between Exalted Ruler and Inner Guard
2. Esteemed Loyal Knight and Esteemed Lecturing Knight examining the membership cards
3. Introduction of visiting Brothers and Sisters before altar
4. Duties of Esquire
5. Duties of Inner Guard
6. Duties of Esteemed Lecturing Knight
7. Duties of Esteemed Loyal Knight
8. Duties of Esteemed Leading Knight
9. Duties of Exalted Ruler
10. Arranging the altar by the Esquire
11. Singing of Opening Ode
12. Hailing sign

Revised: 55 seconds

Present: 5-1/2 minutes

CLOSING — LOCAL LODGE

(When all the business of the session is ended, the Exalted Ruler shall sound the gavel and say:)



ONE RAP

EXALTED RULER: Having passed through our regular order of business and complied with our Laws, I shall now proceed to close the Lodge meeting.



THREE RAPS

EXALTED RULER: The Star of Fidelity continues ever to burn. The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: *(from his/her station without advancing to the Altar)* Our Father, who art in Heaven, we thank Thee for the fellowship and accomplishments of this hour. As we began our session in acknowledgment of Thee and Thy goodness and mercy, may we close by asking Thy benediction. May the principles of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity guide us until we meet again. Amen.

ALL: Amen.

EXALTED RULER: I now declare this Lodge meeting closed.



ONE RAP

DELETE:

1. Remarks and charge of Inner Guard
2. Closing remarks of Exalted Ruler
3. Hailing sign
4. Remarks of Esteemed Lecturing Knight
5. Remarks of Esteemed Loyal Knight
6. Remarks of Esteemed Leading Knight
7. Remarks of Esquire
8. Removing emblems from the altar by the Esquire
9. Singing "God Bless America"

Delegates to the 2012 Grand Lodge Session also adopted a separate resolution authorizing a shortened version of the Initiation Ritual. Local Lodges now have the option of using that shortened version, but they first are required to amend their Lodge by-Laws in order to do so. In addition, the Lodge By-Laws change must be approved by the Grand Lodge Committee on Judiciary. The shortened Initiation Ritual states:

Revised: 15-20 minutes

Present: 45-50 minutes

INITIATION

(Any Local Lodge desiring to do so may utilize the services of a drill team in connection with the ceremony of Initiation, such team to be composed of Members of the Local Lodge or of another Lodge. When the ceremony is performed by the regular Officers of the Lodge, the Exalted Ruler shall preside. If the Exalted Ruler is absent, any one of the following Officers may be invited to preside: any Past Exalted Ruler of the Local Lodge, the Exalted Ruler or any Past Exalted Ruler of another Lodge, the District Deputy, the Grand Exalted Ruler or any other Officer of the Grand Lodge.)

(Prior to the beginning of the ceremony of Initiation, the Secretary shall require each Candidate to sign the Question Book [provided the applications are not kept as a permanent record] and pay the balance of the Initiation fee and dues for the current period.)

(Prior to the beginning of the ceremony of Initiation, the Lodge Esquire shall bring in the Candidate(s) and line them in front of the Altar. All Lodge Officers shall be at their respective stations. In addition, before the Initiation, the candidate(s) shall be instructed to turn and face each speaker.)

(Smoking is positively prohibited during Initiation.)



THREE RAPS

EXALTED RULER: *(at his/her station)* We are about to perform the solemn ceremony of Initiation. You may be proud that the Members of this Lodge have chosen you to join them in the benevolent and charitable work of this Order. Before proceeding further with this ceremony, it is required that you take the solemn and binding obligation of our Order. In this, I assure you, there is nothing which may interfere with your duty to yourself or your family. Are you willing to assume such an obligation?

CANDIDATE: I am.

EXALTED RULER: Do you believe in God?

CANDIDATE: I do.

EXALTED RULER: The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: *(at his/her station)* Our Father Who art in Heaven, we have gathered as Thy children, to renew our Obligation of Brotherhood. Prosper us in this labor of love. Bless this Candidate, and grant that he/she may become a true and loyal Member among us,

exemplifying the virtues of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. In all our endeavors for good, lead us and all Elks into the green pastures of knowledge, and beside the still waters of peace. Amen.

ALL: Amen.

(All the other Officers shall repeat "Amen" in unison. The Chaplain shall not repeat "Amen.")

EXALTED RULER: *(at his/her station)* Each Candidate will place his/her left hand over his/her heart and raise his/her right hand, say "I," pronounce his/her name in full, and repeat after me:

OBLIGATION

I, _____, in the presence of God and this Lodge of Elks, do solemnly promise and swear that I will never reveal any of the confidential matters of this Order which have been, or may hereafter be, committed to my charge and keeping.

I will support the Constitution, and obey the Statutes, rules and regulations of this Order, and the By-Laws of _____ Lodge, No. _____, and those of any other Lodge of which I may hereafter become a Member.

I will uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States of America.

I will propose no one for membership in this Order whom I do not sincerely believe to be worthy thereof.

I will ballot for a worthy candidate and against an unworthy candidate when proposed by another.

I will not permit any political, sectarian or personal prejudice to influence me in the slightest degree in the exercise of my right of franchise in this Order.

I will obey any lawful summons sent me by any competent authority of the Order.

I will never apply to the courts for redress in any matter concerning the Order, without first appealing to the councils of the Order.

I will never reveal to anyone, not an Elk, the name of a Member asking or receiving aid or relief from the Order.

I will not, directly or indirectly, use my membership in this Order, nor any emblem, insignia or sign thereof, for business or commercial purposes.

I will never introduce into the Order anything of a political or sectarian character, nor in any way by my conduct bring reproach upon it.

I will always protect our Members, their good names and their families; and I will always respect and defend the purity and sanctity of their homes and firesides.

If I break this obligation, may I wander through the world forsaken; may I be pointed out as being bereft of decency, unfit to hold communion with true and upright Members. And may God help me, and keep me steadfast in this my solemn and binding obligation in the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America. Amen.

(All seven Officers say "Amen" in unison.)

EXALTED RULER: At ease.

(A Member designated by the Exalted Ruler shall then cause the chimes to strike eleven. After the eleventh stroke, the Esquire then says most impressively:)

ESQUIRE: *(at his/her station)* It is the Hour of Recollection.

EXALTED RULER: *(at his/her station)* You have heard the tolling of eleven strokes. This is to impress upon you that with us the hour of eleven has a tender significance. Wherever Elks may roam, whatever their lot in life may be, when this hour falls upon the dial of night, the great heart of Elkdom swells and throbs. It is the golden hour of recollection, the homecoming of those who wander, the mystic roll call of those who will come no more. Living or dead, Elks are never forgotten, never forsaken. Morning and noon may pass them by, the light of day sink heedlessly in the West, but ere the shadows of midnight shall fall, the chimes of memory will be pealing forth the friendly message: "**To Our Absent Members.**"

(All Members say "To Our Absent Members.")



ONE RAP

(The Lodge Esquire rises and instructs our new Member in the procedures of the Order.)

ESQUIRE: *(at his/her station)* The membership card, which will be presented to you by the Secretary, is a means of identification. It shows that you are a Member in good standing in this Lodge. You should carry it with you at all times. You will be required to present it to gain admission to this or any other Lodge.

The civilian salute to the Flag is made standing erect with the right hand over the heart.

The voting sign is made by uplifting the right hand, palm to the front.

(In explanation, suit the action to the words. The Esquire demonstrates the civilian salute and the voting sign without lowering the baton.)

The gavel in the hand of the Exalted Ruler is the emblem of authority.

One rap (★) calls the Lodge to order, or seats it when standing; two raps (★★) call up the Officers; three raps (★★★) call up the entire Lodge.

(Lodge Esquire is seated.)

(The Esteemed Lecturing Knight rises and gives his/her message.)

ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: *(at his/her station)* This station is dedicated to Brotherly Love which typifies the Golden Rule that governs all mankind. Upon our Altar it is symbolized by the Antlers of Protection.

Brotherly Love is the foundation and ground work of our Order. It is best exemplified by practicing the teachings of our motto: "**The faults of our Members we write upon the sand, their virtues upon the tablets of love and memory.**"

(The Esteemed Lecturing Knight is seated.)

(The Esteemed Loyal Knight rises and gives his/her message.)

ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: *(at his/her station)* Upon the Altar before which you have just assumed the solemn Obligation of our Order, there lies the open Bible. It is the emblem of this station, whose motto is Justice. Even handed Justice is one of the great hallmarks of our Order. This standard reflects our faithful adherence to one of the great teachings of this emblem — “Do unto others as we would they should do unto us.”

(The Esteemed Loyal Knight is seated.)

(The Esteemed Leading Knight rises and gives his/her message.)

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: *(at his/her station)* The emblem of this station is the Flag or our Country; and its motto is Charity, the cornerstone of every Elk structure, the highest virtue of every Elk creed.

The daily gifts we bestow increase our own riches. The help we extend to those in need is added to our own strength. The true value of wealth is not in having, but in sharing. The real benefactor of mankind counts his store in what is given, not in what is saved.

But, as Elks, we teach not alone the charity of giving, but the higher and nobler charity of thought word and deed. Our whole influence in life is determined by the good deeds we do rather than by the emotions we feel. The kindest feeling may vanish, the best resolve may be forgotten; but the influence of a good deed, honestly and properly performed, will continue forever.

(The Esteemed Leading Knight is seated.)

(The Exalted Ruler rises and gives his/her message.)

EXALTED RULER: *(at his/her station)* You may well be proud that the Members of this Lodge have deemed you worthy of their confidence. I know you will continue to merit their approval, and become a true and faithful Member among us.

The cardinal principles of our Order are Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. Each has been adopted as a motto of a station in the Lodge, Fidelity being the motto of this, the principal station. It is symbolized by the Star which shines above the Altar.

Fidelity requires strict adherence to our Obligation and faithfulness in the discharge of our duties as members of society. The Order of Elks is distinctively American. Linking the destiny of our Order with the destiny of our country, we have made its Flag the symbol of the crowning virtue.

(At a convenient point during the phrase “Linking the destiny of our Order with the destiny of our country we have made its Flag the symbol of the crowning virtue,” the Leading Knight rises, picks up the gavel, gives three (★★★) raps of the gavel upon the completion of the words, “the symbol of the crowning virtue” and then lays down the gavel.)

★ ★ ★

THREE RAPS

(After all Members have risen, the Exalted Ruler then looks at the Flag spread on his/her station, with the field of stars to the right-hand side as viewed by him/her, then he/she reverently grasps the two top corners, raises the Flag and then looks at the members and says:)

EXALTED RULER: *(at his/her station)* Please salute our Flag. As this emblem is first in our hearts as loyal Americans, so is it close to our Altar as loyal Elks. The gentle breezes with lingering caress kiss the folds of no flag which can compare with it in beauty. There is no such red in budding rose, in falling leaf or sparkling wine; no such white in April blossom, in crescent moon or mountain snow; no such blue in woman’s eye, in ocean’s depth or heaven’s dome; and no such pageantry of clustering stars and streaming light in all the spectrum of the sea and sky. In the name of this great Brotherhood, and on behalf of this Lodge, I present you with this, our Flag.

(If there are a number of new Members, the Exalted Ruler shall present the Flag to each of the new Members with the assistance of the Esquire. After all Flags have been presented, the Exalted Ruler and the Esquire return to their stations and the Exalted Ruler continues:)

EXALTED RULER: *(at his/her station)* Preserve it as a memento of your full duty in the preservation and defense of all it represents. Finally, strive diligently that the name of Elk as borne by you may be worthy of an American citizen — one who loves his/her fellow man.

EXALTED RULER: *(at his/her station)* By virtue of the authority in me vested, I now declare you to be Member of _____ Lodge, No. _____, of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America, and after signing the Constitution and By-Laws, entitled to all its rights and privileges. You may be seated.

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ONE RAP

(The Esquire then escorts the new Members to a seat and returns to his/her station and is seated.)

(It is the duty of the Secretary to see that each new member signs the Constitution and By-Laws after Initiation and within the Lodge room.)

