

THE INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE

One of the most important jobs a master of a lodge will have is the appointing of his members to represent the lodge by investigating petitioners. The importance of choosing brothers who will project the precepts we as masons are dedicated to cannot be overemphasized. The first impression of the lodges fraternalism is made by the brothers who officially represent it and project the scope of masonry practiced by you and your lodge. The petitioners masonic future will be permanently affected by the manner in which the investigators conduct themselves and the investigation. The image left with the petitioner must be above reproach, the investigators deportment, cultural bearing, and friendliness must leave the best of impressions on the petitioner and his family.

First impressions are seldom if ever forgotten, so the brothers who carry out this important duty should keep in mind that when they are investigating the petitioner, the petitioner and his family are also observing him. Investigators should be aware that they are representing the best a lodge has to offer "its members" and what is said and done could greatly influence the petitioner's active involvement.

CHOOSING AN INVESTIGATING TEAM

Care should be exercised to select brothers who;

1. Are active in attendance and involvement in lodge meetings and functions.
2. Have displayed a knowledge of freemasonry. (The number of years a brother has been a member doesn't insure masonic awareness)
3. Are enthusiastically involved in improving masonry through excellence within and without the lodge.
4. Are able to express themselves in an expeditious manner.
5. Are known to be prudent in their everyday dealings with others.
6. Are known to be truthful when relating personal observations.
7. Are known to be thorough when doing a job.
8. Will most likely be there when the petitioner is balloted on and is receiving his degrees.

9. Have attended a training session for investigators
10. Do not select a relation or close friend to be sent as an investigator.

You should choose at least three of your brothers to perform this most important duty, thus insuring that you receive a variety of reports as to the character of the man being investigated.

The team should work independently of each other, making their own appointments to meet at the convenience of the petitioner.

PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEW

Each member of the team should prepare for the interview by;

1. Becoming familiar with the information supplied on the application.
 - (1) The petitioners employment (place and number of years)
 - (2) Marital status
 - (3) Number of children
 - (4) Hobbies
 - (5) House of worship

- (6) Memberships in other organizations
 - (7) Personal references
 - (8) Credit references
2. A Package of masonic information should be made up to be left with the petitioner containing the following, if available;
- (1) Copy of Rhode Island Freemason
 - (2) History of the lodge
 - (3) Copy of Should I Ask
 - (4) Copy of Freemasonry, A Better Way of Life
3. Final preparations to be made prior to visit
- (1) Call for appointment well in advance of desired meeting date and place, which should be at his home
 - (2) Have at least two dates available in case your first choice cannot be met by the petitioner
 - (3) Make the appointment at a time which is convenient for the petitioner and his family
 - (4) Request that as many of the family be present as possible
 - (5) You should wear a jacket and tie
 - (6) Remember you only have one chance to make a first impression
 - (7) You are representing your entire lodge and what you say and do will influence this man's future in freemasonry

4. The interview
 - (1) Call the night before to confirm the appointment
 - (2) Make sure that you arrive on time, being early is just as bad as being late
 - (3) Introduce yourself and give position held in lodge
 - (4) Refuse a drink if it is offered, you aren't making a social call
 - (5) Present package of information, giving a very brief explanation of each pamphlet
 - (6) Make sure that the petitioner understands the following;
 - a. lodge meeting dates
 - b. cost of the three degrees
 - c. cost of yearly dues and assessments
 - d. time commitment when going through degrees
 - e. memory work required
 - f. attendance required at educational forums
 - g. insure that none of the above will be a hardship for the petitioner or his family
 - (7) Ask what the petitioner expects to gain by joining masonry
 - (8) Find out petitioners involvement in his church to confirm that he isn't an aethist

- (9) Be attentive to wife's and family's reactions and questions
- (10) Cover the other organizations which also meet in the local area and who in the family may (if desired) join
 - a. Rainbow for girls
 - b. DeMolay for boys
 - c. Order of Eastern Star for both man and wife
- (11) Meeting must be as brief as possible, don't overstay your welcome but make sure all questions are answered satisfactorily before you leave

If you don't know the answer to a question, be big enough to admit it and write it down so you may find out the answer and call the petitioner.

If possible, invite the petitioner to a lodge function in order to introduce him to the master and other members of the lodge (this could be accomplished during a lodge rehearsal, or a dinner prior to a lodge meeting)

5. After the interview
 - (1) Fill out the investigators form, **do not do this during the interview**

- (2) Have the courage to make a report recommending rejection if you would not take this petitioner by the hand as a brother
- (3) Be prepared to make a verbal report in open lodge if asked by the master
- (4) Give the brothers who signed the petition the courtesy of an explanation if your findings aren't favorable
- (5) You should join the petition signers in attending the meetings when the candidate is receiving his degrees
- (6) You should insure that the candidate feels welcome by introducing him to the membership of the lodge
- (7) You should stand ready to assist the candidate in any way you can