

# ***Cornerstone Guide***

*The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge Ancient Free  
and Accepted Masons of the State of Oklahoma*



# The Ceremony of Laying a Cornerstone

The ceremony of laying a cornerstone is distinctly a Grand Lodge ceremony conducted by the Grand Master or a Past Grand Master acting for him and cannot be performed by a constituent lodge. All arrangements and dates must be approved by the Grand Master.

In accordance with Section 701 of the Constitution and Code, no cornerstone shall be laid with Masonic ceremonies except those of acknowledged public structures such as churches, public buildings, monuments, or buildings to be used for Masonic purposes, and then only upon request of proper authorities.

When practicable, the stone should be placed in the northeast corner of the building, otherwise at the most suitable and desirable location. The structure must be of a non-combustible material such as brick, stone, tile, concrete, or other non-combustible material.

Proper detailed planning at the local level and coordination with the Grand Lodge staff is what will assure a successful and meaningful event. Following are some helpful hints, as well as policies.

## **Preparation (See instructions beginning on Page 4):**

- You must contact the Grand Lodge **not less than 6 weeks prior to the contemplated date** and arrange a satisfactory date (coordinated and approved by the Grand Master) before proceeding.
- You should know that the stones are 16-inch squares, approximately 3-4 inches thick (sometimes slightly thinner). It should be proportioned to fit into the brick or stonework of the building, and have a mortar joint around the stone as is used in the masonry of the building. The Grand lodge supplies the standard cornerstone but if an additional companion stone is desired, the host Lodge will be required to pay for it (normally \$180). More than one companion stone is also possible, if desired. The Lodge will be Invoiced for the companion stones by the Grand Lodge.

## **Location of the stone:**

- The cornerstone is symbolically placed in the Northeast corner of the building; however, it is more desirable that it be located in a prominent place where it may be seen by visitors passing by. The hosting Lodge is responsible for coordinating the location with the appropriate local officials.

## **Inscription on the stone:**

- The inscription on the cornerstone changes only in regard to the sitting Grand Master's name and the dates of the ceremony. No other wording is permitted on the Grand Lodge's stone. The date on the stone must be the same as the date of the ceremony (unless approved by the Grand Master).
- The names of Officers, Trustees, Committees, etc., for either the Lodge or the Public Building (or both) may be on an adjacent stone (or stones). This is the stone we refer to as the "Companion Stone."

### Time Capsule:

- The Lodge is required to prepare a "Time Capsule" at their expense. It is sometimes called the "box" or "cask" and is to be deposited under or behind the cornerstone. It may be of copper, just large enough to easily contain all items desired and should be carefully soldered to exclude any possible air or moisture. No iron or steel should be permitted to come in contact with the capsule. Typically, in modern times, most Lodges use a container made of PVC material, usually a 4" diameter section of pipe capped on both ends.
- There is no specified list on the contents to be deposited, but what is placed in the cask will be documented, by the Grand Secretary, and returned to the Grand Lodge for inclusion in the annual proceedings. Typically, the Grand Lodge deposits a current listing of the hosting Lodge's membership, a list of the Grand Lodge Officers attending the ceremony and other items that may be determined by the current Grand Master.
  - If the cornerstone is for a public building the hosting lodge should coordinate with the appropriate building officials for items they would like included in the capsule.
  - If the ceremony is for a Masonic lodge, it may also contain a current copy of the *Oklahoma Mason* magazine, the current list of Lodges for the State of Oklahoma and various Grand Lodge lapel pins, to include the current wives' pin, a widow pin, and card.
  - In addition, the host Lodge should prepare for the capsule a current copy of the local newspaper, a small Bible, one or more coins of the current year, a list of officials, a brief history of the building, and any other items of current interest to the community.

### Publicity:

- The host Lodge should contact all news media in their area—newspapers, radio, television stations, to ensure proper publicity for the event.
- Have a local High School Band perform is a desirable aspect of a successful event.

### Invitations:

- Two to three weeks prior to the ceremony, the host Lodge should be sure to send invitations by mail to the City, County, State and Federal Officials, as well as all applicable school personnel such as Principals and Superintendents, and also the building contractor, architect and engineer. The Lodge needs to be certain the Grand Lodge is aware of who will be in attendance and have a list of those present at the ceremony.
- The Grand Master will call on those dignitaries during the ceremony to spread the cement on top of the stone.
- The Grand Lodge takes care of inviting the Grand Lodge officers, Past Grand Masters, and appropriate District Deputy Grand Masters in the region.

**Accommodations:** It is customary that the host Lodge provides lunch for the Grand Lodge Officers and their ladies.

## *Instructions*

1. Section 701 of the Constitution and Laws covers where a cornerstone may be laid.
2. You must first contact the Grand Lodge to have your date and time coordinated with the Most Worshipful Grand Master for a date and time that is agreeable to his schedule. While coordinating a date/time, request an information packet.
  - a. Phone (405)282-3212
  - b. Fax (405)282-3244
  - c. E-mail: grandsecretary@gloklahoma.com
  - d. Mail to the Grand Lodge at PO Box 1019, Guthrie, OK 73044
3. The Lodge making the request will pay for the Grand Master's *Ceremonial* cornerstone which currently costs \$180.
4. A companion stone, at the Lodge's expense (normally \$180 each unless a different size is required) usually has the Lodge's elected officer's names or some history and dates. Stones for a building, park or school might also have the names of the Architect, Officers, or School Board Officials. You can have more than one companion stone.
5. The Grand Lodge invoices the host Lodge for all companion stones; therefore, if anyone else wishes to pay for the stone, the Lodge should collect the money from them and simply await the invoice from the Grand Lodge.
6. Normal cornerstones are 16" square and vary in thickness from 2.5" to 4" (which allows us to get the excellent price on the stones we have) made of marble or granite. If you require a stone with different dimensions, it may add to the cost of the stone, so plan ahead.
7. Complete the forms at the end of this guide and mail or email to the Grand Lodge as soon as possible.

### **Some insight into the pre-ceremony processes...**

- The Lodge will complete the form below with the information concerning the cornerstone/ dedication ceremony (and if you desire a companion stone, the separate form for that as well). Send it to the Grand Lodge via mail, fax or email.

- The stone(s) will be ordered by the Grand Lodge and the monument company will send the Grand Lodge a "proof" of what they will etch on the stones. For the companion stones, the Grand Lodge will endeavor to contact the hosting Lodge's contact person to validate that everything is spelled correctly (last chance to make a correction). It is CRITICAL that your initial submission be 100% accurate because in the absence of being able to make that final contact, the Grand Lodge will use this document for proof comparison and final verification.
- After the stone is cut, the Grand Lodge will arrange to have it picked up and brought to the ceremony itself.
- The Lodge is charged with coordinating and inviting the proper officials. The Grand Lodge will invite the Grand Officers and District Deputies in the region.
- The Lodge should prepare a "time capsule" for the deposit (usually a 4" diameter section of PVC pipe, capped on both ends, works sufficiently) to be sealed and deposited at the ceremony. See the special instructions on the form for what the host Lodge and Grand Lodge are responsible for providing for the deposit.

**RETURN TO GRAND LODGE IMMEDIATELY**  
IMPORTANT INFORMATION NEEDED FOR YOUR CORNERSTONE  
OR DEDICATION CEREMONY

Date of your ceremony: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Ceremony: \_\_\_\_\_

Ceremony will be: Indoor                      Outdoor (weather permitting) \_\_\_\_\_

If planned as an outdoor ceremony, and weather does not permit, the hosting Lodge *shall* have an Indoor alternate location planned.

Hosting Lodge Name: \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Primary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (if available): \_\_\_\_\_ Alt Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name of Structure: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical address: \_\_\_\_\_

Companion Stone: **No**\_\_ **Yes**\_\_ (Attach Companion Stone Information Sheet)  
(If more than 1 companion stone is desired, indicate the total number and provide separate sheet for each)

Will there be a meal: No            Yes            Time/Location: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Grand Lodge Opening: Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the Hosting Lodge providing a speaker for the event: **Yes**\_\_ **No**\_\_

If so, Name & title of speaker: \_\_\_\_\_

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:**

- \*The hosting Lodge should secure and prepare for the capsule/deposit (i.e., a small Bible, list of current City, County & School officials, current local newspaper, list of other Masonic Bodies in the community, coins of the current year, etc.)
- \* The hosting Lodge is responsible for contacting officials (Mayor, City Council/Manager, Fire/Police Chief, School Officials, etc.). Invitations should be sent 2--3 weeks prior to the ceremony.

<i>For Grand Lodge Use Only</i>	
Date received _____	
Date Stone ordered _____	Date Companion Stone(s) ordered. _____
Date Stone(s) Picked up _____	Date "capsule deposit" prepared _____
Date Invitations sent to Grand Lodge Officers _____	



### Division of Responsibilities for Masonic Cornerstone Ceremonies

ITEM	Action	Responsibility
<b>Facility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordinate with local officials</li> <li>- Coordinate with Grand Master</li> <li>- Personal follow-up &amp; contact</li> </ul>	Host Lodge
<b>Information Flow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Obtain forms &amp; appropriate cornerstone packet from Grand Lodge</li> </ul>	Host Lodge
<b>Publicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepare news release</li> <li>- Contact local organization for help</li> </ul>	Host Lodge
<b>Cornerstone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Obtain &amp; select site</li> </ul>	Grand Lodge
<b>Companion Stone(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inscription</li> <li>- Procurement</li> </ul>	Host lodge coordinate with Grand Lodge
<b>Time Capsule</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Procure and prepare</li> <li>- Content determination</li> <li>- Grand Lodge items</li> <li>- Local items</li> </ul>	Host lodge Grand Lodge Local officials
<b>Costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cornerstone</li> <li>- Companion Stone</li> </ul>	Host lodge (invoiced)
<b>Ceremony</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grand Lodge</li> <li>- Date Selection</li> <li>- Agenda prep</li> </ul>	Grand Master Coordinated with all parties
<b>Invitations</b>	Public Officials	Host Lodge
<b>Ceremonial</b>	Corn, wine, oil, stands, etc	Grand Marshal
<b>Spreaders of Cement</b>	Names of officials	Host lodge provides list

Additional Grand Lodge set-up & ceremonial responsibilities shall be detailed internally, to include all basic items, such as who is responsible for picking up stones at the monument company to who ensures the proper paraphernalia is on site for the event and in the proper position in time for the ceremony.

