



20 September, 2025

My Brother,

Congratulations on your election as a Warden of your lodge. You have been selected by the Brothers of your lodge to fill an important position. I was once in the same situation. Though I felt ready to take on the challenges of helping to lead the lodge, there were still some things that surprised me about my Masonic labor as a Warden, and it turns out that many lodges have “unwritten rules” about the Wardens’ roles, or things that you may be simply expected to know... even though you may never explicitly be told them. It is my hope that writing down some of these “unwritten rules” and sharing them with you may be helpful to you in your Masonic journey.

You might not know me, but I am Brother Chris Bolster. I am a member of Village Lodge #29 in Collinsville. Currently, I am also serving as Associate Grand Marshal of District 5A. In my life outside of Masonry, I am a father, a husband, and an educator who holds a PhD in English and has over 15 years of experience teaching at both the high school and at the university levels.

As part of my work with the Grand Lodge’s Committee for Masonic Education, I was tasked with giving you a brief overview of some aspects of Wardens’ roles that are typically NOT written down. So what are some things that you should really know about being a Warden, but that you might not read anywhere else?

1. **Once you’re a Warden, it’s kind of a big deal if you “step out of line” and thus don’t progress to the East.** When I say “it’s kind of a big deal,” I mean that it can negatively impact your lodge in a significant way. Continuity of leadership is important in any institution, but more especially in a volunteer organization where strong leadership is needed to maintain institutional stability.

If you are elected as a JW, you should be prepared to serve as SW in the next year and WM in the year after that. Your brothers in the lodge are counting on you, now more than ever before. It’s okay if this thought of wearing that hat is a little scary to you. It’s *appropriate* to be at least a little nervous. The responsibilities of the Worshipful Master shouldn’t be undertaken lightly, and though you are not (yet) undertaking them, you will be soon.

2. **Now, it's really time to deepen your engagement with the lodge.** Out of all of the Brothers of the lodge, you should be going to the MOST activities. If the lodge has an event of any kind, you should probably be there. (Now, no one expects perfection. I know you probably won't be able to go to every single event, but your absence should be a notable exception to your otherwise regular attendance.) The most important thing you can do to support your lodge is to physically show up. Pretty much everything else will flow from there.
3. Here's another thing no one is going to tell you about being a Warden: because of everything in #1 and #2, **you must communicate with your spouse/partner or other close family members regarding the next few years of your Masonic journey.** This is not a topic that I hear talked about too much at lodge, but if you have a wife/spouse/partner, that person's support of your work in the lodge is absolutely crucial. Recruit that partner's support. Listen to any concerns that they might have and seek to address those concerns however possible. I'm especially thinking here of Brothers who have children, but this goes for anyone who lives with someone who depends on you in any way: if you want to be a successful leader of your lodge, **you must find a way to satisfy the needs of your family first**, then your lodge Brothers.

It may help if you explain to your family what Masonry means to you. If they know *why* you go to lodge, they will probably be more understanding during those difficult moments, like when you rush out to a lodge meeting right after getting home from work.

4. **Pay attention—more attention than you ever have before—to what the Master of the lodge does.** Pay attention, because the Master is probably doing more than you have noticed previously. A good Worshipful Master not only labors in a way that is visible to the Craft, but he is also involved in behind-the-scenes Masonic labor that you may not notice unless you're really looking. There's the ritual, of course, which is visible enough, but what about the organization of the ritual? The assigning of roles? The calling of Brothers to fill those roles? Not only the Masonic education that he delivers, but the research and labor that went into preparing that education? Even if a guest from another lodge gives a presentation, most likely it was the Worshipful Master who contacted that guest and arranged for his presentation. Consider also the administration of the lodge generally. Consider the fundraising, not to mention fund-spending. And consider the delicate work that he is likely doing to maintain harmony in the lodge.

It's also possible that you will watch the Master carefully and spot one or two things (hopefully not more) that you are determined to do differently. This is

perfectly reasonable and to be expected. Sometimes we learn by imitation, and sometimes we learn by watching others make mistakes. None of us are perfect, and your mistakes, too, may be some else's lesson.

5. **You represent your lodge to the other lodges in Connecticut, including the Grand Lodge.** When I say this, I am mostly talking about the importance of your physical presence at events that bring together the leaders of multiple lodges. There are two such events that it is particularly important for you to attend. The first, and most important, are the regular meetings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the State of Connecticut, which happen twice a year—in October and in April. You must attend both meetings—or you must find someone else to go in your place as a “proxy.” If you don't, your lodge will be fined. Secondly, you should go to every (or almost every) Blue Lodge Council meeting, which brings together the lodges in your Masonic District.

These events offer excellent opportunities to meet Brothers from other lodges as well as to further our Masonic education. But I do want to emphasize that whether you personally find these events to be meaningful and stimulating or quite dull is not important. While you are a Warden or a Worshipful Master, you have a responsibility to attend these events—and do so with a cheerful disposition.

6. **The most important job the senior Warden has is preparing for serving as WM in the upcoming year.** This may mean studying the Master's role in opening and closing lodge as well as the three degrees. It will definitely mean planning your year. What events does your lodge do every year, which it will soon be your responsibility to organize and lead? And what is one new event, plan, or idea that you might want to bring to life as Master? It may feel early to begin this kind of planning but trust me: many Masters who only begin their planning once they are installed end up wishing they had started sooner.
7. **You are both powerful and powerless.** You are one of the elected leaders of the lodge, and yet you serve at the will and pleasure of the Worshipful Master. You have a responsibility to support him and his agenda for the year, even if you don't see eye-to-eye on everything, just as you deserve to have two Wardens who will support you once you are in the East. Especially if you are a Junior Warden, and especially if dinner together is a regular activity of your lodge, your actions as a leader are important—your Brothers trust you with their bellies! You may be trusted with a Junior Warden's account or other budget, and you may also have the assistance of a Steward in the lodge's kitchen. Do not abuse the privilege of your access to either one.

8. **You are also one of the only people who can initiate the opening of the lodge in case the WM isn't there for some reason.** The list of people who can “congregate” a Masonic lodge is not long: just the Master, the two Wardens, or the Grand Master (or his representative).

Since you have made it this far in your Masonic journey, I know that you take it seriously. During the coming year, may you help to bring Masonic light to all of the Brothers in your lodge—and beyond.

Sincerely and Fraternally,



WB Christopher Bolster

Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the State of Connecticut—Committee For Masonic Education

Past Master of Village Lodge #29

Associate Grand Marshal for Masonic District 5A

P.S. I invite you to view the presentation I delivered on September 20, 2025 at the Grand Lodge of CT's Master's and Warden's Seminar (Meridian Lodge #77):

To open the presentation, use the QR code or this URL: <https://tinyurl.com/2tcxkh9d>



P.P.S. As a sort of Appendix, I am including the text that will be read when you are installed as a Junior or Senior Warden. You have probably heard this text read every year that you have attended a ceremony to install the officers of a lodge. But we can take our time when reading in a way that we can't when listening, so I encourage you to take your time. Read through the duties described by the installing officer and really let them soak in. This is now your role, your responsibility.

Senior Warden

You have been elected Senior Warden of this Lodge for the ensuing year and I will invest you with the jewel of your office—The Level.

The Level demonstrates that we are descended from the same stock, partake of the same nature, and share the same hope. Although distinctions among men are necessary to preserve subordination, yet no eminence of station should make us forget that we are brothers. For a time will come, and the wisest know not how soon when all distinction save that of goodness will cease; and Death, the grand leveler of human greatness, will reduce us to the same state.

The office to which you have been elected is one of responsibility. It will require exemplary conduct on your part. Its duties will demand your assiduous attention. You are to second and support your Master in all of the requirements of his office and should casualty at any time prevent his attendance, you will succeed him in the performance of his duties.

Your regular and punctual attendance at the meetings of your Lodge is essentially necessary as in the absence of the Master, you will govern the Lodge. I firmly rely on your knowledge of Masonry and your attachment to this Lodge for a faithful discharge of your important trust. Look well to the West.

Junior Warden

You have been elected Junior Warden of this Lodge for the ensuing year and I will invest you with the jewel of your office—The Plumb.

The Plumb admonishes us to walk uprightly in our several stations, to hold the scale of justice in equal poise, to observe a just medium between intemperance and pleasure and to make our passions and prejudices coincide with the line of our duty.

The office to which you have been elected is important and respected. In the absence of your superiors, you are bound to succeed them in performing their duties. The ideals of our institution ought never to suffer from the lack of intelligence among its officers. You will therefore perceive the necessity of your being able to perform not only the duties of your station but also those which may occasionally devolve upon you by the absence of your superiors.

To you specifically is entrusted the superintendence of the craft during the hour of refreshment. It is therefore indispensably necessary that you be not only temperate and discreet in the indulgence of your own inclinations, but careful to observe that none of the Craft be permitted to convert the purposes of refreshment into intemperance or excess. Your regular attendance at the meetings of the Lodge is particularly requested and I have no doubt you will give to your duties all the attention and study their importance demands. Look well to the South.

To the Wardens

Brother Wardens, you are too well acquainted with the principles of Masonry to warrant any fear that you will be neglectful of your duties. Suffice it to say that what you

have seen praiseworthy in others, you should carefully imitate, and what, in them, may have appeared defective, you are in yourselves to amend.

You are to be examples of good order and regularity, for it is only by a due observance of the laws in your own conduct that you can expect obedience to them from others. You are assiduously to assist the Master in the discharge of his duties, diffusing light and imparting knowledge to all whom he shall place under your care. In the absence of the Master, you will succeed to higher duties and your acquirements of Masonic Law and custom therefore should be such that the Craft may never suffer from the lack of proper instruction. From the spirit you hitherto have evinced I have no doubt your future conduct will be such as to merit the applause and esteem of your brethren and the testimony of a good conscience.