

Receiving and Referring Petitions

This document is intended to help subordinate chapter Secretaries better understand the business of receiving and referring petitions. The Manual and Code of the Grand Chapter of Georgia is your best source of information for petitions and related forms. Forms can be found in the back of the Manual and Code pages A-1 to A-26.1, the Secretaries' area of the Georgia OES Website (www.georgiaoes.org/) and the Grand Secretary's office.

Processing petitions is a key responsibility of subordinate chapter Secretaries. Petitions are addressed under Order of Business #10 (M&C Section 263. ORDER OF BUSINESS). Petitions involve members moving into or out of a chapter.

During a chapter meeting, when the Worthy Matron says "Receiving and Referring Petitions", the Secretary will read any pending petitions in the following order: Affiliation, Dual Membership, Initiation, and Restoration (M&C Section 280. RECEIVING AND REFERRING PETITIONS).

Let's take a look at petitions in general. Petitions for Affiliation, Dual Membership, Initiation, and Restoration, should be made in writing, signed by the petitioner, include name and address, be recommended by two members of the chapter, and should be presented at a stated meeting. Petitions must lie over until the next stated meeting (M&C ARTICLE VI – PETITIONS).

When membership transfers occur, primary and secondary (dual) chapter Secretaries must notify the Grand Secretary on their monthly report the month in which the membership transfers are approved.

In Georgia, members of the Order may belong to two subordinate chapters at the same time. Membership in more than two chapters at the same time is not allowed. A Petition for Dual Membership must be accompanied by a Certificate of Good Standing issued by the chapter in which the petitioner is already a member. A current dues card is considered the equivalent of a Certificate of Good Standing (M&C Section 120 DUAL MEMBERSHIP and section 53D. DUAL MEMBERSHIP-SUBORDINATE CHAPTERS IN GEORGIA).

Dual membership in Georgia and another grand jurisdiction at the same time is permissible if the petitioner belongs to a grand jurisdiction that allows dual membership or a subordinate chapter under General Grand Chapter that allows dual membership (M&C section 53C. DUAL MEMBERSHIP-OTHER GRAND JURISDICTIONS).

When a chapter in Georgia wishes to obtain a waiver of jurisdiction from a subordinate chapter in a border line state, the request must be forwarded to the Worthy Grand Matron of Georgia. She will send the request to the Worthy Grand Matron of the state holding jurisdiction. A request for waiver must give the name of petitioner, home address, and the name of the chapter asking for the waiver. If a waiver is granted, the Worthy Grand Matron of the border line state will inform the Worthy Grand Matron of Georgia. The Worthy Grand Matron of Georgia will in turn notify the chapter requesting the waiver (M&C Section 156. JURISDICTION, HOW TO REQUEST WAIVER FROM BORDER LINE CHAPTERS).

When a chapter in a border line state wishes to obtain a waiver of jurisdiction from Georgia, the request must be forwarded to the Worthy Grand Matron of that state. She will send the request to the Worthy Grand Matron of Georgia. The request must include the name and address of the petitioner and the name of the chapter from which the waiver is sought. The Worthy Grand Matron will refer the request to the chapter holding jurisdiction. A chapter may waive or refuse to waive jurisdiction to another chapter by a show of hands vote. If the chapter votes to grant the waiver, the results will be sent to the Worthy Grand Matron of Georgia. She will record the nature of the waiver and send it to the Worthy Grand Matron making the request. If a chapter refuses to grant a waiver, it stops further proceedings. The reason cannot be investigated or questioned. If a request for a waiver of jurisdiction on behalf of a petitioner for the degrees is refused, it may be renewed at any stated meeting (M&C Section 157. JURISDICTION, GRANTING WAIVER TO BORDER LINE CHAPTER).

Once a petition has been read, if there is no objection to it being received, the Worthy Matron, without a motion being made will refer it to an Investigating Committee made up of three members, one of which must be a brother. The Investigating Committee will inquire into the moral character and standing of the petitioner. If the petitioner is a man, the brother on the Investigating Committee will verify that he is a Mason in good standing. If the petitioner is a woman, the brother on the Investigating Committee will verify that the Master Mason through whom she claims membership is, or was at the time of his death, a Mason in good standing. The committee will make their report in writing. No action can be taken on a petition until the report of the Investigating Committee has been made.

Balloting will be held on petitions for Affiliation, Dual Membership, Initiation, and Restoration regardless of the nature of the report of the Investigating Committee (M&C Section 283. BALLOTING UPON PETITIONS). Only members of the chapter may vote on petitions. The outcome of the ballot is not recorded in the minutes.

Once a petition for the degrees has been referred to an Investigating Committee, it cannot be withdrawn. A petition for Affiliation or Dual Membership can be withdrawn by written request any time prior to the ballot.

PETITION FEES:

No chapter may confer degrees or accept dual members for less than five dollars (\$5.00). More can be charged at the discretion of the chapter and the fee must accompany the petition. An Affiliation fee should be no less than one dollar (\$1.00) if the demit is more than three months old (M&C Section 129. AFFILIATION FEES).

Let's take a closer look at each type of petition in the order they are read.

AFFILIATION:

(M&C ARTICLE VI PETITIONS and Section 58. AFFILIATION, PETITION)

A member wishing to affiliate with a secondary chapter should obtain a Demit or Certificate of Good Standing from their original chapter. The Demit or Certificate of Good Standing must bear the seal of the original chapter. The member should get a Petition for Affiliation from the secondary chapter; fill in all required information (M&C Section 59. AFFILIATION

REQUIREMENTS) and return it to the Secretary of the secondary chapter along with the Demit or Certificate of Good Standing and required Petition Fee. A member holding a demit may petition for affiliation regardless of the age of the demit (M&C Section 117. DEMIT, NO AFFILIATION AGE LIMIT).

A petition for Affiliation from a member of another Grand Jurisdiction must be accompanied by a demit rather than a Certificate of Good Standing.

Before a petition can be read, two members of the secondary chapter who are acquainted with the petitioner must sign the petition thereby recommending him/her for membership in their chapter. The secondary chapter Secretary reads the petition at a Stated Meeting under the Order of Business, "Receiving and Referring Petitions." If no objection is made to receiving the petition, the Worthy Matron assigns a Committee on Character consisting of three members, one of whom must be a brother. Signers recommending the petitioner may not be assigned to the Committee on Character. It is the Committee's responsibility to personally visit the petitioner when the spouse and family are at home to ascertain his/her character and standing. (M&C Section 141. INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE, DUTIES OF).

No ballot should be taken for Affiliation without satisfactory evidence of membership in the Order. The petition must lie over until the next Stated Meeting. Members received by affiliation should sign the Bylaws, however failure to sign the Bylaws does not void membership (M&C Section 57. AFFILIATE SIGNS BYLAWS).

DUAL MEMBERSHIP:

(M&C Section 53C and Section 58. AFFILIATION, PETITION)

Handling Dual Membership petitions is the most confusing of all petitions because Dual Membership is permitted within two chapters in Georgia or within a chapter in Georgia and a chapter in another state that allows Dual Membership (For border line state petitions, refer to waiver of jurisdiction explained above). Also, there are six different forms related to Dual Membership:

1. Petition for Dual Membership
2. Certificate of Membership for Dual Membership
3. Notice to Primary Chapter of Dual Membership
4. Demit to Terminate Dual membership (Chapter Copy)
5. Demit to Terminate Dual Membership (Member Copy)
6. Request for Primary Chapter Transfer and Termination of Dual Membership

1. Petition for Dual Membership - In accordance with Section 53D, a Petition for Dual Membership must be accompanied by a Certificate of Good Standing issued by the chapter in which the applicant already holds membership. A current dues card is considered the equivalent of a Certificate of Good Standing (Refer to M&C SECTION 53D. DUAL MEMBERSHIP – SUBORDINATE CHAPTERS IN GEORGIA).

The member should obtain a Certificate of Good Standing from his/her primary chapter. Next, he/she gets a petition for Dual Membership from the secondary chapter; fills in all

required information and returns it to the Secretary of the secondary chapter along with a Certificate of Good Standing and required Petition Fee.

Before a petition can be read, two members of the receiving chapter who are acquainted with the petitioner must sign the petition thereby recommending him/her for membership in their chapter. The receiving chapter Secretary reads the petition at a Stated Meeting under the Order of Business "Receiving and Referring Petitions." If no objection is made to receiving the petition, the Worthy Matron assigns a Committee on Character consisting of three members, one of whom must be a brother. Signers recommending the petitioner may not be assigned to the Committee on Character. It is the Committee's responsibility to personally visit the petitioner when the spouse and family are at home and to ascertain the character and standing of the petitioner (M&C Section 141. INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE, DUTIES OF).

No ballot should be taken for Dual Membership without satisfactory evidence of membership in the Order. The petition must lie over until the next Stated Meeting. Members received as Dual Members must sign the Bylaws; however failure to sign the Bylaws does not void membership.

2. Certificate of Membership for Dual Membership – A member petitioning to become a Dual Member in a secondary chapter must obtain this Certificate from his/her primary chapter Secretary. The Certificate of Membership for Dual Membership accompanies the Petition for Dual Membership. It certifies that the petitioner is a member in good standing in his primary chapter and it must bear the chapter seal.

3. Notice to Primary Chapter of Dual Membership – Once a petitioner has been elected as a Dual Member, the Secretary of the secondary chapter sends this notice, under the seal of the chapter, to the Secretary of the primary chapter.

4. Demit to Terminate Dual Membership (Chapter Copy) - This form is sent to the applicant and the Secretary of primary chapter and it must bear the chapter seal. Dual Members who wish to terminate membership in the secondary chapter must request a demit in writing from the secondary chapter. This request will be noted in the minutes and the Secretary of the primary chapter will be notified. A "Demit to Terminate Dual Membership" will be granted to the dual member.

5. Demit to Terminate Dual Membership (Member Copy) – This form is sent to the applicant by the Secretary of the secondary chapter once termination has been granted. It must bear the chapter seal.

6. Request for Primary Chapter Transfer and Termination of Dual Membership – This form enables any dual member, except the top four officers, to transfer their membership from their primary chapter to their secondary chapter and terminate dual membership in their secondary chapter once the transfer is complete. The member completes and signs the form and gives it to the Secretary of the secondary chapter. The Secretary of the secondary chapter reads the request as information under Order of Business #7, "Reading Communications and Bills". No vote is required. The Secretary of the secondary chapter completes the bottom part of the form, affixes the chapter seal, and sends the form to the Secretary of the primary chapter. The primary chapter must vote on the request for

transfer. Note the member must be clear on the books, have no charges pending against him/her, and no objection is made. The members of the primary chapter vote by show of hands. If the members present do not vote unanimously to grant the transfer, it must be held over to the next Stated Meeting. If no charge is brought against the member at the next Stated Meeting, the transfer is granted and a Request/Notification of Primary Chapter Transfer Form is issued by the former primary chapter Secretary without further discussion.

Notification of Primary Chapter Transfer and Termination of Membership in Chapter - Once the former primary chapter approves the transfer of membership, the Secretary completes, signs and affixes the chapter seal on a Notification of Primary Chapter Transfer and Termination of Membership in Chapter form and sends it to the Secretary of the former secondary chapter. A copy is also sent to the Grand Secretary. On the date the request is granted, dues will cease. When the secondary chapter receives the completed form, that chapter becomes the primary chapter and dual membership ceases.

PETITION FOR MEMBERSHIP U.D. CHAPTER – This form is for members wishing to become charter members of a newly organized Chapter Under Dispensation. The petition should be completed and presented to the Secretary of the U.D. Chapter (M&C Section 203. NEW AND U.D. CHAPTERS).