

The District Officer's Guide



Grand York Rite Bodies of North Carolina

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Introduction

Congratulations, you have been appointed and accepted as a District Officer! Regardless of which District Office you have accepted, your duties will be basically the same. The District High Priest, District Illustrious Master, and District Commander each serves the same in York Rite as does the District Deputy Grand Master in the Blue Lodge. The District Capitular Lecturer, District Cryptic Lecturer, and District Instructor-Inspector also perform similar duties as the District Deputy Grand Lecturer in the Blue Lodge.

This manual is intended to provide you with the resources necessary to fulfill your duties, as well as provide advice and direction to help you be successful. This is not a comprehensive guide to cover all situations or answer all questions; you will also have at your disposal many companions and sir knights across the state, in local bodies – even in your own – and in the Grand York Rite Bodies, each of whom will always be ready to assist, provide advice, and help you accomplish your goals and be successful. There are York Rite masons all over the state who have walked this path before you and are willing to help you. Never be afraid to ask for help, and don't wait too long to ask either.

Resources

There are several items that you should have available to you as you begin your term as a district officer.

District Organization

The York Rite in North Carolina are organized into nine districts with individual York Rite Bodies assigned to these districts:

NC York Rite Districts and Constituent Bodies (as of March 2024)			
District	Chapter	Council	Commandery
1	Cherokee 14, Elizabeth City Greenville 50, Greenville Moye 53, Washington	Tyrian 19, Elizabeth City Hiram 18, Greenville Washington 17, Washington	Griggs 14, Elizabeth City Bethlehem 29, Greenville Calvary 25, Washington
2	New Bern 46, New Bern Concord 1, Wilmington	New Bern 12, New Bern Munson 4, Wilmington	St. Johns 10, New Bern Plantagenet 1, Wilmington
3	Goldsboro 29, Goldsboro Caswell 38, Kinston Rocky Mount 57, Rocky Mount Mt. Lebanon 27, Wilson	Goldsboro 33, Goldsboro Kinston 11, Kinston Cryptic 26, Rocky Mount Mt. Lebanon 13, Wilson	Goldsboro 26, Goldsboro St. Paul 18, Kinston St. Bernard 21, Rocky Mount Mt. Lebanon 7, Wilson
4	Durham 48, Durham Oxford 8, Oxford	Durham 7, Durham Oxford 30, Oxford	Durham 3, Durham Oxford 39, Oxford
5	Phoenix 2, Fayetteville Raleigh 10, Raleigh	Fayetteville 7, Fayetteville Roanoke 1 & Enoch 5, Raleigh	Palestine 20, Fayetteville Raleigh 4, Raleigh Nazareth 41, Southern Pines
6	Chorazin 13, Greensboro Salisbury 20, Salisbury Winston 24, Winston-Salem	Greensboro 3, Greensboro Adoniram 2, Salisbury Zabud 16, Winston-Salem	Ivanhoe 8, Greensboro Salisbury 13, Salisbury Piedmont 6, Winston-Salem
7	Charlotte 39, Charlotte Monroe 64, Monroe	Charlotte 8, Charlotte Solomon of the Silver Trowel 24, Monroe	Charlotte 2, Charlotte Malta 19, Monroe
8	Catawba 60, Hickory Lenoir 73, Lenoir N. Wilkesboro 78, N. Wilkesboro	Hickory 32, Hickory Lenoir 38, Lenoir Wilkes 35, N. Wilkesboro	Hickory 17, Hickory Lenoir 33, Lenoir Wilkes 40, N. Wilkesboro
9	Asheville 25, Asheville Franklin 95, Franklin Waynesville 69, Waynesville	Ionic 9, Asheville Doric 20, Waynesville	Cyrene 5, Asheville Waynesville 31, Waynesville

Contacts

The names of Officers and mailing addresses for the various York Rite Masonic Bodies are listed in the Grand York Rite Directory. The Directory can be obtained from the Grand Secretary/Recorder. It is very important that you obtain this for mailing addresses and phone numbers so that you can engage with the officers of the local bodies in your district for planning and communication. It is recommended that you have at least the names, phone numbers and emails for the following people:

1. Each local body's Secretary/Recorder
2. Each local Chapter/Council/Commandery presiding officer corresponding to your district appointment
3. Dais officers underneath the presiding officer for each local Chapter/Council/Commandery
4. Other district officers in your district for all three bodies (there are six total including yourself)
5. Grand Line officers for all three Grand York Rite bodies

Calendar

The meeting nights and locations are important to have on hand as well. These can be obtained from the Grand Secretary/Recorder as well, along with the last known contact name, email and phone number of each local body's Secretary/Recorder and the presiding officers of the local Chapter, Council, and Commandery. This will be helpful in planning your visitations throughout the year in your district. One important note: local bodies may select one of the three bodies to be the presiding body for any given stated communication, so it's useful to know in order to plan your visit to correspond the presiding body with your office. It's a good idea to schedule your visit at least one month in advance, by reaching out to the presiding officer and the secretary/recorder. Be sure to account for months when local bodies may elect to go dark – some bodies do this in the summer months when attendance is a challenge.

Regulations

Each of the York Rite Bodies and Grand Bodies is governed and regulated separately with several layers of regulations, rules and laws governing each from the local to the international level:

1. **Local By-Laws:** While this is recommended, it is not required unless you have a need to know or awareness of any issue where the by-laws may be in conflict with the state or national/international regulations. However, it is recommended that District Grand Officers should be familiar with how by-laws should be constructed and maintained and be prepared to assist local bodies with the upkeep of their by-laws to eliminate statutory conflicts.
2. **State Constitutions:** These are as follows:
 - a. Constitutions and By-laws of The Grand Royal Arch Chapter of North Carolina – this can be downloaded at this URL:
<https://mwsite.org/sites/ncgrac/wp-content/uploads/sites/109/2022/08/CONSTITUTION.pdf>
 - b. Constitution, General Regulations, and Standing Resolutions of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters in North Carolina – this can be downloaded at this URL:
<https://mwsite.org/sites/ncgcrsm/wp-content/uploads/sites/83/2022/06/CONSTITUTION-1.pdf>
 - c. Statutes and Regulations of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of North Carolina – This can be downloaded from this URL:
<https://mwsite.org/sites/ncgckt/wp-content/uploads/sites/84/2022/06/CONSTITUTION.pdf>
3. **National/International Constitutions and Regulations:** These are as follows:
 - a. Constitution of the General Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons, International – this can be downloaded from the General Grand Chapter website after registration and approval, using this URL:
<https://www.ggcrami.org/constitution>

- b. The Constitution and By-Laws of the General Grand Council, Cryptic Masons, International – this can be downloaded using this URL:
https://www.crypticmasons.org/pdf/20210915_Constitution.pdf
- c. The Constitution of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America – this can be downloaded using this URL:
<https://knightstemplar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022-GEKT-Constitution-Statutes-and-decisions.pdf>

Note that this link will be updated over time to present the latest version of the constitution along with recent decisions, edicts, etc. To stay updated, bookmark this link in your browser:
<https://knightstemplar.org/wp/resources-2/>

Leadership Qualities of a Successful District Officer

To lead is to serve. This is a fundamental element necessary for each district officer to possess and understand how to exemplify to be taken seriously by others and have them follow your direction. Before examining the specific duties for each of the district officers of the Chapter, Council, and Commandery, let us review the several characteristics, qualities, values, and principles that an effective leader must possess to be successful:

Characteristics:

- **Humility** – A good leader understands that it's not about him, that he is not a god, that he does not possess perfect knowledge, nor can he attain perfection at all in any of his endeavours. He allows himself to make mistakes and extends this to others as well as an acknowledgement of our shared, flawed humanity. He also humbles himself to his Creator through his faith.
- **Respect** – A good leader shows respect for his office, for the offices of others around him, for himself, and for all others he encounters and interacts with. This is more about commanding respect through proper example than by demanding it outright and unqualified; respect is earned, and so is disrespect. A good leader always gives respect to others first, but also respects himself enough to stand up for himself when disrespected by others.
- **Dignity** – A good leader understands that others are watching him, and in doing so they adjust their behaviours to coincide with those that their leaders exemplify. A good leader will set the example for others that he wishes them to follow, striving to maintain good standards in himself and by extension in those who follow him. Both extremes can be problematic: harsh and overbearing dignity gets perceived as fakery and becomes offensive, while a lack of dignity promotes disrespect and aberrant behaviour.
- **Organization** – A good leader must have a good approach to organizing – for their thoughts, communications, plans, records, and responsibilities. Organization is also preparation: being prepared before communicating by gathering your thoughts and considering what to say and how to say it *before* saying it, as well as keeping your duties, responsibilities, commitments, records, and correspondences compartmentalized to prevent confusion for yourself and others.
- **Empathy** – Closely aligned with humility and respect, empathy is at the core of servant leadership. A good leader is engaged with his head equally as much as with his heart, especially when dealing with others and in challenging situations. Not acting rashly, callously, impulsively, or intemperately builds confidence in you as a person and especially as a leader and makes you more approachable by others. Showing respect for the humanity in others demonstrates that you have their best interests in mind and not just your own.
- **Enthusiasm** – A good leader does not just “phone it in” but rather he is the first to arrive and last to leave. He demonstrates to others that he believes in the organization and the people who are a part of it – both leaders and followers. He is happy to help with the work, happy to teach others, mentor the new members to develop their skills and find their place in the group. Giving is truly getting in this case: enthusiasm is contagious and breeds new energy and success.

Qualities:

- **Communication** – A good leader must be able to communicate with others in a clear and concise manner, providing totality in instruction, direction, and expectations so that others understand what is to be done, how to do it, when to get it done, and who is doing which tasks. Communication is not just speaking outward, it also involves listening, acknowledging, and understanding to ensure not only that others understand you, but more importantly that you understand them as well. It's a two-way street, and if you're not willing and able to listen when others are communicating with you, then you have no right to expect the same when you communicate with others.

- **Collaboration** – A good leader finds the best ways to coordinate their work with others based on their respective job roles and responsibilities as one team with a defined objective. This also includes managing conflict, resolving issues as they arise, and managing expectations. In some cases, this may require negotiating new objectives or expectations based on the situation; after all, no plan however perfectly constructed ever survives day-one execution intact. Flexibility, empathy, and organization are very important contributing factors to a leader's success where collaboration is concerned.
- **Cooperation** – A good leader demonstrated hard work, diligence, attention to detail and coordination with others from the frontline, not from the rear. He understands that the best way to accomplish great things is to work well with others, ensuring that only that “noble contention” exists within the team, which helps to bring out the best in its members. He must be willing to listen to his teammates and understand the changing situation as the team executes their plans, make adjustments, and communicate changes, all while leading by example, not just by talking.
- **Teamwork** – A good leader works well with others, understanding clearly that the team and the objective are of prime importance. He must trust his team, and they in turn must be able to trust him, not only for each member to do their part but also to be there to help when they need it. Every person has a part to play, and a good leader places the right person into the right role based on their skills and capabilities, then trusts them to execute or reach out if they need help.
- **Time Management** – A good leader ensures that no one's time is wasted in low-value work or distractions. This includes his own time, managing tasks towards timely deadlines and eliminating any distractions that may derail his own work. He extends this courtesy to others in efficient use of their time on common tasks as well as to the organization as a whole in not taking up time on irrelevant matters during meetings. He also ensures that he arrives on time with enough time beforehand to prepare and coordinate any activities that must take place before meetings and appointments.
- **Task Management** – A good leader knows how to delegate tasks to others who have the skills, tools and proper direction to complete them in a timely manner and to an acceptable standard of quality. A good leader gathers to him many men of various talents, from diverse backgrounds and points of view, and provides them five essentials when giving them a task: (1) a clear description of what needs to be done, (2) an understanding of what result is expected, (3) the tools to perform the task, (4) a clear deadline when it needs to be done by, and most importantly (5) and invitation to find him if they need help. Without these five essentials, tasks are at risk of not getting done!

Values:

- **Dedication** – A good leader recognizes others who are committed to the cause, and he reflects this in his own work as well. This inspires others to dig deep and work hard towards the common goal or objective even when things go wrong – which they will from time to time. Enduring these adversities in a cheerful manner is what sets excellence apart from mediocrity.
- **Patience** – A good leader understands that human frailty and imperfections are a universal constant, both in himself and in others that he leads. He is first patient with himself, giving himself time and space to make errors, reflect on them, and then correct those errors. He extends this to others as well, applying the Golden Rule judiciously with a great measure of temperance.
- **Demeanor** – A good leader will aspire to lead others by example in all things, but especially with how he behaves in public and how he treats others. If he is presiding over a meeting, he enforces calm and respectful dialogue and exemplifies this by example himself. When communicating with others, he is respectful of them and their positions – whether superior, subordinate or peer – relative to his own.

- **Tact** – A good leader find the right way to say what he needs to say. As the old saying goes, it's not what you say but how you say it. This is more than just being respectful of the people with whom you are interacting, but also understanding that your interactions should serve the overall objective or purpose that you are working to achieve in a way that fosters win-win scenarios.
- **Kindness** – It is said that the measure of a man's character is in how he treats others who cannot help him but who are there to serve him. That is only part of the picture, though. Kindness is closely tied with mercy in some ways, and also in putting others before yourself. A good leader knows that kindness cost nothing, but those who cannot pay even this price are truly poor. Kindness goes even further, in that a good leader pays this price for others as well, and in doing so becomes rich in ways that cannot be taken away.
- **Temperance** – A good leader maintains his situational and mental awareness in ways that prevents him from acting rashly or making ill-informed decisions. This is not just about what he puts into his body but also what he puts into his mind: good thoughts and opinions of others help to foster good relationships, which in turn build better teams. Governance of the mind is just as important to a good leader as it is for the body; the one can in fact affect the other. Keeping the mind clear and the body clean are both important.

Principles:

- **Servant Leadership** – To lead is to serve. A man who assumes a leadership role looking to further his own interests is the wrong man for the job. The right man is one who understands that leadership is not about him or his needs, but those of the larger organization that he and others are part of, and whose needs, goals, and objectives are larger than any individual member. Keeping this in mind, a good leader serves the members who put him in that position, who look to him for direction and guidance, who desire mentorship and encouragement, and who are willing to follow directions when reasonably given in a respectful manner. There are countless books written on this subject, but the sum of it is this: To become great is to first be good, and whoever wishes to be first among others must first serve others.
- **Objective Impartiality** – It is important to understand that no man has all the facts, nor is he aware of the whole situation. Perception is nine-tenths of the truth, and every person perceives a part of the story, holds part of the truth, and can teach us a part of the lesson we need to learn. A good leader approaches decisions with the understanding that he does not know everything, rather than with the assumption that he knows anything. Assuming no knowledge is the foundation of the Socratic Method of Inquiry, a powerful tool that leaders can use to assess situations, explore the facts, gather data, and synthesize understandings to support well-formulated, data-driven decisions. The first step on the path to wisdom is knowing that one knows nothing; the second step is to pursue knowledge without pre-conceived assumptions or prejudices.
- **Equality under Law** – This is not only a founding principle of our American Republic, but a critical component of an effective leader's mindset. This principle teaches that no matter what our apparent position is in any organization or in society at large, we are all held accountable to an objective standard of truth, and to a set of laws that are not bound to title, inheritance, influence, or wealth. By this principle, the youngest Entered Apprentice has an equal claim upon the protections of the law, the privileges of citizenship, and the respect for his humanity as the Grand Master presiding in the East. And once the Entered Apprentice has completed his path to becoming a Master Mason, and the Grand Master has completed his term of service, they meet on the level as Brothers. This principle holds perfectly true and square no matter where in the Masonic family tree these Brothers, Companions, and Sir Knights should ever meet, act, and part.
- **Freedom to Respectfully Disagree** – A good leader understands that no two people will ever fully agree on everything. Even among men who agree in principle, disagreements arise on how to put

those principles into action and the decisions that need to be made for an organization to make progress in their work towards their objectives. A good leader knows that there is a time and place for hashing out differences and resolving disagreements, and there is also a proper way and manner to do so. This is tied very closely with the values of demeanor, tact, temperance, and patience, as well as the characteristics of humility, respect, dignity and empathy. Tying these together, a good leader reads the room and works to find common grounds for agreements, and while perfect consensus is impossible to attain, he works towards effective compromises that reinforce the best decisions possible. At this point, all parties are encouraged to accept the “good enough for now” instead of waiting forever for the perfect solution, and simply move forward to executing the plan without any resentments or re-hashing of differences along the way. A good leader serves his team by shepherding them through this process and encouraging free thinking and open, honest dialogue that focuses on facts and solutions, not personalities.

- **Freedom of Dignified Expression** – Another cornerstone of our Republic is the freedom of self-expression, but we as York Rite Masons understand that this requires temperance to avoid inflammation of passions and emotions that can become destructive to any society or organization when left unchecked. However, this tempering of expressive thought can only be accomplished within the individual, not as a regulated activity from those in positions of authority. A good leader encourages others to freely and confidently express their thoughts and opinions, so long as they maintain dignity and decorum, are respectful of others who may disagree, and who are not mistreating others. No one likes a loudmouth or respects a bully, and a good leader ensures that his team refrains from these destructive behaviours without infringing upon the rights of the individuals to be heard, as long as that delicate balance can be maintained. However, he should not be afraid to put a stop to situations or behaviours that are steering towards being out of control and counseling individuals who may need mentoring in how to express themselves in better ways.
- **Self-Reflection for Continual Improvement** – Leaders are neither born nor made. Leadership is not a mantle or title to be bestowed upon an individual, and all the courses and books in the world will not make a man a leader. Leaders become better men and thereby improve their leadership capabilities through experience. This includes making mistakes and then learning from those mistakes. Reflecting on their errors, good leaders strive to constantly improve themselves so that they can avoid making the same mistake again – while also understanding that they will make new mistakes in the future. A good leader is not afraid to make mistakes, so long as he learns from them and makes corrections or even amends when needed. Acknowledging his own humanity and the life journey he is traveling upon helps him to do the same for others and this is what makes him a more effective leader.

This list is by no means exhaustive, but rather a top-tier list of essentials. Leaders are neither made nor born, but rather are developed through education, practice, self-reflection, and experience throughout a lifetime of focused self-improvement. In other words, by learning, subduing their passions, and improving themselves in Masonry!

Duties of a District Officer

The duties, qualifications, and responsibilities of each District Officer are stated in their respective constitutions and regulations. They are appointed by their respective incoming Grand Officers, serve one-year terms of office, and can be re-appointed by the next incoming presiding Grand Officer. There is one exception: A District Cryptic Lecturer who has served three consecutive years is not eligible to succeed himself, according to the Constitution of the Grand Council of Royal & Select Masters (*SEC. 6-08.1-2.b*).

The District Officers are:

- Royal Arch:
 - District High Priest
 - District Capitular Lecturer
- Royal & Select Masters:
 - District Illustrious Master
 - District Cryptic Lecturer
- Commandery:
 - District Commander
 - District Instructor-Inspector

District High Priest

The Constitution of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter specifies the duties and responsibilities, and qualifications for District High Priests in Section 10:

***SEC. 10-21.** The Grand High Priest, with the consent of the Grand King and Grand Scribe, shall divide the State into such districts as in their judgment will best serve the interest of the Craft, and over each district there shall be appointed by the Grand High Priest a District High Priest, who shall serve during the will and pleasure of the Grand High Priest.*

***SEC. 10-22.** Every District High Priest shall be skilled in the standard work of Capitular Masonry, and in the customs and usages of the Craft, he shall be a High Priest or a Past High Priest, and a member in good standing of some chapter in the District for which he is appointed, and shall receive a warrant of his appointment, signed by the Grand High Priest and attested by the Grand Secretary. (1931 as amended 1966)*

***SEC 10-23.** Each District High Priest shall have power and it shall be his duty:*

(1) To visit officially every Chapter in his district at least once during his term, if practicable.

(2) To preside in each Chapter upon the occasion of his official visit; to examine its books and records, and see if they are properly kept; to inform himself of the number of members, and the punctuality of their attendance; to ascertain the state and condition of the Chapter in all respects; to point out any errors he may ascertain in their conduct and mode of working; and to instruct them in any particular wherein he shall find they may require or may desire information, and particularly to recommend attention to the moral and benevolent principles of Masonry, and caution in the admission of candidates, and to confer with them concerning nonaffiliated and demitted Companions and if he discovers in his district any Masonic error or evil, to endeavor to immediately correct the same by Masonic means, and if he judge it expedient, to especially report the same to the Grand High Priest.

(3) To take possession of the funds and property of any dormant or extinct Chapter in his district and transfer the same to the Grand Secretary.

(4) To prepare a report as of January 1st, on the general conditions of Capitular Masonry in his district and of his acts therein, with such particulars as he may deem necessary, including the name and numbers of the Chapters in his district, not visited by him, together with the reasons thereof, and transmit such report to the Grand High Priest on or before the first day of March. (1931)

District Illustrious Master

The Constitution of the Grand Council of Royal & Select Masters specifies the duties and responsibilities, and qualifications for District Illustrious Masters in Section 6-07:

SEC. 6-07.1. *The Most Illustrious Grand Master, with the consent of the Deputy Grand Master and the Grand Principal Conductor to the Work, shall divide the State into such districts as in their judgment will best serve the interest of the Craft, and over each district there shall be appointed by the Most Illustrious Grand Master a District Illustrious Master, who shall serve during the will and pleasure of the Most Illustrious Grand Master.*

- a. *a. Every District Illustrious Master shall be skilled in the standard work of Cryptic Masonry, and in the customs and usages of the Craft, he shall be an Illustrious Master or Past Illustrious Master, and a member in good standing of some council in the District for which he is appointed, and shall receive a warrant of his appointment, signed by the Most Illustrious Grand Master and attested by the Grand Recorder.*
- b. *Each District Illustrious Master shall have power and it shall be his duty:*
 - (1) To visit officially every Council in his district at least once during his term, if practicable.*
 - (2) To preside in each Council upon the occasion of his official visit; to examine its books and records, and see if they are properly kept; to inform himself of the number of members, and the punctuality of their attendance; to ascertain the state and condition of the Council in all respects; to point out any errors he may ascertain in their conduct and mode of working; and to instruct them in any particular wherein he shall find they may require or may desire information, and particularly to recommend attention to the moral and benevolent principles of Masonry, and caution in the admission of candidates, and to confer with them concerning nonaffiliated and demitted Companions and if he discovers in his district any Masonic error or evil, to endeavor to immediately correct the same by Masonic means, and if he judge it expedient, to especially report the same to the Most Illustrious Grand Master.*
 - (3) To take possession of the funds and property of any dormant or extinct Council in his district and transfer the same to the Grand Recorder.*
 - (4) To prepare a report as of January 1st, on the general conditions of Cryptic Masonry in his district and of his acts therein, with such particulars as he may deem necessary, including the name and numbers of the Councils in his district, not visited by him, together with the reasons thereof, and transmit such report to the Most Illustrious Grand Master on or before the first day of March. (1931).*

District Commander

The Constitution of the Grand Commandery specifies the duties and responsibilities, and qualifications for District Commanders in Section 7-07-1:

SEC. 7-07-1. *The Grand Commander, with the consent of the Deputy Grand Commander, Grand Generalissimo and the Grand Captain General, shall divide the State into such districts as in their judgment will best serve the interest of the Craft, and over each district there shall be appointed by the Grand Commander a District Commander, who shall serve during the will and pleasure of the Grand Commander.*

c. Every District Commander shall be skilled in the standard work of Chivalric Masonry, and in the customs and usages of the Craft, he shall be a Commander or a Past Commander, and a member in good standing of some commandery in the District for which he is appointed, and shall receive a warrant of his appointment, signed by the Grand Commander and attested by the Grand Recorder.

b. Each District Commander shall have power and it shall be his duty:

(1) To visit officially every Commandery in his district at least once during his term, if practicable.

(2) To preside in each Commandery upon the occasion of his official visit; to examine its books and records, and see if they are properly kept; to inform himself of the number of members, and the punctuality of their attendance; to ascertain the state and condition of the Commandery in all respects; to point out any errors he may ascertain in their conduct and mode of working; and to instruct them in any particular wherein he shall find they may require or may desire information, and particularly to recommend attention to the moral and benevolent principles of Masonry, and caution in the admission of candidates, and to confer with them concerning nonaffiliated and demitted Companions and if he discovers in his district any Masonic error or evil, to endeavor to immediately correct the same by Masonic means, and if he judge it expedient, to especially report the same to the Grand Commander.

(3) To take possession of the funds and property of any dormant or extinct Commandery in his district and transfer the same to the Grand Recorder.

(4) To prepare a report as of January 1st, on the general conditions of Chivalric Masonry in his district and of his acts therein, with such particulars as he may deem necessary, including the name and numbers of the Commanderies in his district, not visited by him, together with the reasons thereof, and transmit such report to the Grand Commander on or before the first day of March.

(5) To collect and have in his possession a current copy of the NC Grand Commandery Statutes and Regulations, and the current by-laws of the constituent Commanderies within his District. Furthermore, to review those by-laws and to see that they are properly executed, remain current, comply with the NC Grand Commandery Statutes and Regulations and abide with Templar law. (2016)

(6) To see that all current Commanders and Recorders have and maintain accurate contact information, electronic mail addresses.

As can be seen from the Constitution of each respective Grand Body, each District High Priest, District Illustrious Master, and District Commander appointed to his respective office is expected to bring these essential elements to the position himself:

1. Prior service as a presiding officer of their local body (High Priest, Illustrious Master, or Commander, respectively), either currently serving in that office or having completed service. This is essential to being a leader of leaders in that you must have served in the capacity to which you are leading others and providing direction and advice. This lends credibility to you as a District Officer – lends, not gives, because you must demonstrate competence to support that credibility through your own leadership and communication.
2. Maintain membership in good standing with a local body within the district he is appointed to lead.

3. Possess a working knowledge of the standard work of the ritual including customs and usages of the Craft, as well as courtesies that are extended from one Companion/Sir Knight to another, and a working familiarity with protocols and ceremonies used by the Grand Chapter, Grand Council, or Grand Commandery and subordinate bodies for which he represents.
4. A measure of leadership capabilities, communications skills, and a sense of propriety that preserves the dignity of the office and respect for its holders and also for other Companions/Sir Knights.

District Officers have several essential duties common across all three bodies, which can be categorized as follows:

1. **Visitation:** He should visit each local body under his jurisdiction when they are open as the presiding body and preside in the East with the local dais officers.
 - a. It is important to plan out this visit ahead of time. The Grand York Rite website maintains a list of the meeting dates and times for the local bodies in each district, as well as the last known contact information for the Secretary. The District Officer should contact the secretary, find out when the local body will preside and who the presiding officer is, and coordinate with them to determine the best date to schedule his visit. Try not to schedule visitations on meeting nights where the agenda is full or when there is degree work going on, as this would be disruptive to the body's operations and make for a long night that would not be appreciated by the members in attendance. That said, it is a good idea to be present at the conferring of the degrees/orders to assist the local degree teams and to give a few words of welcome to the new members after the conclusion of the degrees and orders.
 - b. Once a visit is planned, the District Officer must prepare for his visit. If he has something to communicate from the Grand Chapter, Council, and/or Commandery, he should take time to understand the message and determine the best way to convey it, while also preparing for any questions that members may have for him to answer. If there is something important that he personally wants to communicate, he should also be prepared in the same way. Finally, he should be prepared to dress for the part with his apron and jewel, dress coat and clothes, or his uniform, sword, and chapeau, to properly represent the Grand Chapter, Council, or Commandery in a dignified manner.
 - c. It is a good idea to coordinate visitations with the District Lecturer or Instructor-Inspector so that both can be received at one time and perform their respective duties in tandem.
 - d. On visitation day, arrive early. If dinner is served, eat with the members if possible. Get to know everyone and give them a chance to meet you. Meet up with the presiding officer and his dais officers and the secretary to review the meeting's agenda – sometimes things come up unexpectedly that may require you to cut your visitation short and return another night. Be flexible and understanding when things go sideways.
 - e. When being received and then presiding in the East with the presiding officers, be brief in delivering your message to the members. If questions are asked, answer as best as you can but if you need to table them to find the answer, don't be afraid to do so and don't forget to follow-up with the answer once you get it.
2. **Evaluation:** He should ensure that each local body under his jurisdiction is operating well and that there are no issues of concern that may require addressing at a higher level.
 - a. Examine the books and records of the local body to ensure that the financial operations are occurring legally and transparently. Talk over trends in revenue with the treasurer and secretary to determine if the chapter's long-term health is secure or if there are issues present where they may need assistance. Verify that the reports to the Grand Chapter, Grand Council, or Grand Commandery are accurate and complete. This includes membership rosters; make sure they have up-to-date contact information for each member.

- b. When examining membership rosters, evaluate the rate of NPDs to determine if attention is being spent towards membership retention. Also inquire as to whether there are members in health or financial distress and if there is someone who is reaching out to them. Finally, find out how many candidates from degree/order conferrals are returning to participate as members.
 - c. Observe how the presiding officer and the other officers interact with the members, how they run their meetings and degrees (if degree work is ongoing), and ensure that the officers are in compliance with all laws, rules, and regulations from the Grand Chapter and General Grand Chapter, Grand Council and General Grand Council, and the Grand Commandery and Grand Encampment, respectively.
 - d. If fundraising for our charities is planned and scheduled, examine the plans and reports to ensure transparency in fundraising and compliance with regulations.
3. **Correction:** If issues arise that require attention, the District Officer may be required to assist in their resolution. This may involve disciplinary matters, in which case the Grand Chapter, Grand Council, or Grand Commandery may need to get involved. Or, in matters of a lesser nature, educating, mentoring, and coaching may be all that is required to correct the situation. The District Officer should take care in these situations to ensure that the proper solution is applied in the right way. A good way to determine the right path to a mutually agreeable solution is as follows:
 - a. Gather the facts. It is important to approach any situation with an open mind, especially one that may require discipline or corrective action. Try to avoid pre-conceived notions or assumption and prejudices at the beginning. Just get the facts as they are, and this may require input from many points of view to reveal the whole truth of the matter. In most cases acting correctly is more important than acting quickly so take the time to get facts straight and to test all assumptions.
 - b. Understand the whole situation. The facts will help explain the situation but you may need to take a step back from the facts and see the bigger picture. Also, facts do not explain motivations and can also make simple mistakes look more sinister without taking a pause for due reflection. It's important to understand the why behind the what/where/when.
 - c. Seek guidance wherever possible. Ask questions, seek advice when the path forward is not clear. This includes conferring with Grand Officers, and may even include Grand Lodge Officers in some cases. You may not have the answer, but with enough of the right support, an answer or a resolution can be found. Do not be afraid to reach out and ask for help.
 - d. Propose a solution and gain acceptance. If there is an amicable resolution to be achieved, that is obviously the best approach to take. In your best judgment, what is the solution that resolves the underlying issue with the least disruption or disturbance to the members involved? Start with that and work up in scale or severity if necessary. Discipline or corrective action in many cases can be resolved through a simple conversation: coaching, teaching, and mentoring people who may not have realized what they were doing wrong or how it affected others is a lot better than reprimanding. However, if the situation calls for more severe action, this must be coordinated with the Grand Officers, and if necessary, include the Grand Lodge's Judge Advocate General.
4. **Communication:** The District Officer is expected to prepare an annual report on the year to cover the goings and doings of his district. The following items should be included as appropriate:
 - a. Summary of the state of the local bodies in his district.
 - b. Any local bodies not visited and why.
 - c. Any events and actions he participated in – fundraisers, degree work, and any matters requiring special attention.
 - d. Any items of special interest, positive and negative, that the Grand York Rite needs to know, especially where decisions and future planning are concerned.
 - e. This report covers the calendar year (January through December) and must be sent to the Grand High Priest / Most Illustrious Grand Master / Grand Commander and the Grand Secretary before March 1. Electronic submissions are acceptable.

5. **Closure:** In the lamentable case where a local body goes dormant or extinct, the District Officer will need to meet with the last presiding officer, secretary, and treasurer to collect the following items:
 - a. Seal and the Charter of the local body, including any copies or facsimiles.
 - b. All financial records from all accounts held by the treasurer for the local body.
 - c. All records from the secretary including membership rosters and any reports needed by the Grand York Rite for annual reporting.
 - d. All properties owned by the local body including costumes, props and materials, historical artifacts, rituals and essentials, furniture, jewels, and awards.
 - e. All past Grand Officer portraits not already distributed to their respective home lodges.
 - f. Passwords and rights to any email accounts and websites owned by the local body, including data storage devices and backups.

District Capitular Lecturer

The Constitution of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter specifies the duties and responsibilities, and qualifications for District Capitular Lecturers in Section 12:

SEC. 12-04.5. District Capitular Lecturer:

- a. *The District Capitular Lecturer shall be a Companion well versed in the Laws, Ritual and Customs of a Grand Chapter, an appointee not already a Certified Capitular Lecturer, shall be required to become "certified" by the date of the next Annual Convocation of this Grand Chapter. (1963)*
- b. *He shall be nominated by the Grand Capitular Lecturer and appointed by the Board of Capitular Lectureship, but he shall not become a member or an officer of Grand Chapter by virtue of his appointment hereunder; and provided no appointment shall extend beyond the next annual convocation of Grand Chapter. No such District Capitular lecturer shall be installed or compensated for his services.*
- c. *Not more than two Grand Chapter Districts shall be assigned to a District Capitular Lecturer. He need not reside in any District assigned to him.*
- d. *Duties of the District Capitular Lecturer:*
 - (1) *To promote qualification as Certified Capitular Lecturers by the members of the Chapters in his District. As an initial effort it is recommended that he urge each Chapter to provide:*
 - a. *A member to qualify as a lecturer in the Mark Master Degree.*
 - b. *A member to qualify as a lecturer in the Past Master Degree.*
 - c. *A member to qualify as a lecturer in the Most Excellent Master Degree.*
 - d. *A member to qualify as a lecturer in the Royal Arch Degree, with the idea that each will eventually become a Certified Capitular Lecturer.*
 - (2) *To visit the Subordinate Chapters, inspect their ritualistic work, advise and instruct them therein, see that they properly practice the Authorized Work of Grand Chapter, correct their errors, and generally supervise, direct, advance and promote qualifications as Certified Capitular Lecturers among the members of his District.*
 - (3) *To arrange for and conduct District Schools of Instruction in the ritualistic work in his District as may be prescribed by the Board of Capitular Lectureship. In a School of Instruction each Chapter in the District must be required to exemplify a part of the ritualistic work. Each Chapter in the District must participate in at least two such schools each year. The work should be equally divided as far as possible among the Chapters participating in the School of Instruction. Ritualistic work done in or by one Chapter only shall not constitute a School of Instruction.*
 - (4) *To cooperate fully with the District High Priest of any District assigned to him.*

- (5) *To file a written report with the Grand Capitular Lecturer and with the District High Priest on the ritualistic work of each Chapter in his District, with such recommendations as he may consider proper. This report shall be filed before January 15th of each year.*
- (6) *Upon a proposal by the Board of Capitular Lectureship, approved by the Grand High Priest, Grand Chapter, by a majority vote, may grant the honorary title Past Capitular Lecturer to a Companion who has heretofore served, or may hereafter serve, three appointments as District Capitular Lecturer. (1961)*

As a note of interest, the following section covers the Grand Capitular Lecturer:

SEC. 12-04.4. Grand Capitular Lecturer:

- A. *The Grand Capitular Lecturer shall be a Certified Capitular Lecturer well versed in the Law, Ritual and Customs of Grand Chapter.*
- B. *He shall be nominated by the Board of Capitular Lectureship and appointed by the Grand High Priest, but he need not be installed; his term of office shall expire with that of the Grand High Priest appointing him.*
- C. *Duties of the Grand Capitular Lecturer:*
 - (1) *He shall visit the Subordinate Chapters, inspect their ritualistic work and shall, or through designated representatives, advise and instruct them therein, and see that they properly practice the Authorized Work of Grand Chapter, correct their errors, and generally supervise and direct, advance and promote qualifications as Certified Capitular Lecturers among the members in this jurisdiction.*
 - (2) *He shall be subject to such directions as the Board of Capitular Lectureship may from time to time promulgate. (1961)*

As evidenced by the above section 12-04.4, The District Capitular Lecturer (DCL) essentially operates as the district agent on behalf of the Grand Capitular Lecturer, as per the clause “*through his designated representatives.*”

District Cryptic Lecturer

The Constitution of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters specifies the duties and responsibilities, and qualifications for District Cryptic Lecturers in Section 6-08:

SEC. 6-08.1-2

(a) A District Cryptic Lecturer shall be a Certified Cryptic Lecturer well versed in the Laws, Ritual and Customs of Grand Council.

[...]

(d) Duties of the District Cryptic Lecturer:

1. *To promote qualifications as Certified Cryptic Lecturers by the Companions of the Councils in his District(s).*
2. *To visit Subordinate Councils in his District(s) when required, inspect their ritualistic work, advise and instruct them therein, to see that they properly practice the authorized work of Grand Council, correct their errors, and generally supervise, direct, advance and promote qualifications as a Certified Cryptic Lecturer among the Companions of his District(s).*
3. *To cooperate fully with the District Master of any District assigned him.*

4. *To file a written report with the Grand Cryptic Lecturer and the District Master of the District on the ritualistic work of each Council in his District, with such recommendations as he may consider proper, on or before January 15th each year.*
5. *Upon recommendation of the Board of Cryptic Lectureship and approval of the Most Illustrious Grand Master, Grand Council by a majority vote, may grant the honorary title, "Past District Cryptic Lecturer," to a Companion who has served three appointments as District Cryptic Lecturer. (1972)*

District Instructor-Inspector

The Constitution of the Grand Commandery specifies the duties and responsibilities, and qualifications for District Instructor-Inspectors in Section 4-03:

SEC. 4-03.3 B. *The District Instructor-Inspector shall be a Certified Instructor-Inspector or a Sir Knight well versed in the Laws, Rituals, and Customs of the Grand Commandery, provided that any appointee not already a Certified Instructor-Inspector, shall be required to become "certified" by the date of the next Annual Conclave of this "Grand Commandery.*

1. *He shall be nominated by the Chief Instructor-Inspector and appointed by the Committee on Ritual and Tactics, but shall not become a member or an officer of the Grand Commandery by virtue of his appointment hereunder, and provided no appointment shall extend beyond the next annual conclave of the Grand Commandery. No such District Instructor-Inspector shall be installed or compensated for his services.*
2. *A District Instructor-Inspector who has served three consecutive years will not be eligible to succeed himself.*
3. *No more than two Grand Commandery Districts shall be assigned to a District Instructor-Inspector. He need not reside in any District assigned to him.*
4. *Duties of the District Instructor-Inspector will be:*
 - a. *To promote qualifications as Certified Instructor-Inspectors by the members of the Commanderies in his District. As an initial effort, it is recommended that he urge each Commandery to provide:*
 - 1) *A member to qualify as a lecturer in the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross.*
 - 2) *A member to qualify as a lecturer in the Order of Malta.*
 - 3) *A member to qualify as a lecturer in the Order of the Temple, with the idea that each will eventually become a Certified Instructor-Inspector; with all work passed being attested by one (1) Certified Instructor-Inspector.*
 - b. *To visit the Subordinate Commanderies when required, inspect their ritualistic work, advise and instruct them therein, see that they properly practice the Authorized Work of the Grand Commandery, correct their errors, and generally supervise, direct, advance and promote qualifications as certified Instructor-Inspector among the members of his District(s).*
 - c. *To assist the Chief Instructor-Inspector in arranging and conducting Area Schools of Instruction in the ritualistic work in his Area as may be prescribed by the Committee on Ritual and Tactics.*
 - d. *To cooperate fully with the District Commander of any District assigned to him.*
 - e. *To file a written report with the Chief Instructor-Inspector and with the District Commander on the ritualistic work of each Commandery in his District, with such recommendations, as he may consider proper. This report shall be filed before January 15 annually.*
 - f. *Upon a proposal by the Committee on Ritual and Tactics, approved by the Grand Commander, by a majority vote, may grant the honorary title of Past Instructor-Inspector to a Sir Knight who has heretofore serve, or may hereafter serve, three appointments as District Instructor-Inspector. (2000)*

- g. To collect and have in his possession a current copy of the NC Grand Commandery Statutes and Regulations, and the current By-Laws of the constituent Commanderies within his District. Furthermore, to review those By-Laws and to see that they are properly executed, remain current, comply with the NC Grand Commandery Statutes and Regulations and abide with Templar law. (2016)*
- h. To see that all Commanders and Recorders have and maintain accurate contact information, electronic mail (email) addresses and phone numbers, that is reflected in the Grand Commandery directory. (2016)*

As can be seen from Constitution of each respective Grand Body, each District Capitular Lecturer, District Cryptic Lecturer, and District Instructor-Inspector appointed to his respective office is expected to bring these essential elements to the position himself:

1. Possess a working knowledge of the Laws, Ritual and Customs of the work including the degree work. In the Council, he must be a Certified Cryptic Lecturer, but in the Chapter and Commandery, he is not initially required be Certified as a Lecturer/Instructor to be appointed. However, if he is not already certified, he will be expected to complete his certification before his term expires at the next Annual Convocation of the Grand York Rite.
2. The energy and enthusiasm to help local bodies improve their ritualistic work and inspire other companions to become Certified Lecturers/Instructors.
3. A measure of leadership capabilities, communications skills, and a sense of propriety that preserves the dignity of the office and respect for its holders and also for other members.

District Lecturers / Instructor-Inspectors have several essential duties common across all three bodies, which can be categorized as follows:

1. **Visitation:** He should visit each local body under his jurisdiction when they are open as the presiding body and if possible, to visit when degree work is being performed.
 - a. It is important to plan out this visit ahead of time. The Grand York Rite website maintains a list of the meeting dates and times for the local bodies in each district, as well as the last known contact information for the Secretary. The District Lecturer / Instructor-Inspector should contact the secretary, find out when the local body will preside and who the presiding officer is, and coordinate with them to determine the best date to schedule his visit. It is a good idea to be present at the conferring of the degrees/orders to assist the degree teams and to give a few words of welcome to the new members after the conclusion of the degrees and orders.
 - b. Once a visit is planned, the District Lecturer / Instructor-Inspector must prepare for his visit. If he has something to communicate from his Grand Lecturer / Chief Instructor-Inspector, he should take time to understand the message and determine the best way to convey it, while also preparing for any questions that members may have for him to answer. If there is something important that he personally wants to communicate, he should also be prepared in the same way. Finally, he should be prepared to dress for the part to properly represent his Grand York Rite Body in a dignified manner.
 - c. It is a good idea to coordinate visitations with his District Officer counterpart so that both can be received at one time and perform their respective duties in tandem.
 - d. On visitation day, arrive early. If dinner is served, eat with the members if possible. Get to know everyone and give them a chance to meet you. If there is degree work, introduce yourself to the candidates and make sure they feel welcome.
2. **Education:** He should make himself available to assist in promoting the ritual work of the local body and in promoting the Certified Lecturer/Instructor programs. Each local body should be encouraged to follow these three programs:

- a. Regularly planned and scheduled education programs of interest to the local bodies for meeting nights. These should be planned in advance by the presiding officers of each local body, and the District Lecturer / Instructor-Inspector should make himself available to assist with planning topics of interest and sharing presentations from other Lecturers and Instructors.
 - b. Encouraging other York Rite Masons to consider studying to become Certified Lecturers / Instructors. The process for certifying is not as difficult compared to the Blue Lodge and can be accomplished gradually in stages by a candidate. The District Lecturer / Instructor-Inspector can examine candidates as they progress and signoff once all areas have been completed. This is important for helping local bodies to maintain their proficiency, engaging new members with a worthy challenge, encouraging better attendance, and helping to spread the load of degree work on many shoulders. It is also advantageous for the District Lecturer / Instructor-Inspector to have a good-sized talent pool to pull from for district-wide degree events as well as succession planning for himself for future District Lecturers / Instructor-Inspectors.
 - c. Participation in District Schools of Instruction and Schools of the Knight, wherever practicable. The District Lecturer / Instructor-Inspector should find a good time on the calendar where he can schedule an ingathering of local officers into a convenient location to review the degrees/orders as a learning workshop. At a minimum, the following is an outline for a Saturday morning or an evening program (modify as appropriate based on local needs):
 - i. Introduction & Welcoming Remarks.
 - ii. News and Updates from the Board of Lectureship or Ritual & Tactics.
 - iii. Floor work in the degrees/orders.
 - iv. Signs, passwords, and grips in the degrees/orders.
 - v. Pronunciation of words in the degrees/orders.
 - vi. Best practices for optimal candidate experience.
 - vii. Qualifications and process for certifying as a Lecturer / Instructor.
 - viii. Roundtable discussion: what works, what doesn't work, what can be improved.
 - ix. Other topics as required – ask your local bodies what they need help with.
3. **Coordination:** He should be knowledgeable about the workings in his district in terms of events, festivals and fundraisers. He should offer assistance in filling open degree parts for local bodies that may need help, offering topics or presentations from other local bodies or his own works for educational programs, and spreading the word about fundraisers and other events that the local bodies have scheduled. Many bodies around the state struggle with filling degree/order parts, especially the larger parts. The District Lecturer / Instructor-Inspector should keep a list of available Companion/Sir Knights from other bodies in his district and in neighboring districts in coordination with his fellow District Officers so that bodies who need assistance have a ready resource handy to help make their degrees and orders a success. The District Lecturer / Instructor-Inspector should also keep a store of presentations for educational programs that he can make available to the bodies in his district and in other districts as well to help them with making meeting nights interesting and meaningful. Finally, the District Lecturer / Instructor-Inspector should be aware of events in his district including fundraisers so that he can help spread the word and assist in making their events successful.
4. **Communication:** He should be in regular contact with the officers of the bodies in his district as well as his Grand York Rite Officers to ensure quick responses to questions and issues that may arise in his district and the state. He should be in regular contact with his District Officer counterpart as well, to coordinate visitations to local bodies. Finally, at the end of the calendar year, he must compile and submit his annual report, due by January 15, to the Grand Lecturer / Chief Instructor-Inspector and his District Officer counterpart, detailing the year's ritualistic work in the district, including any recommendations he may have for improvements. It is recommended that this report be submitted electronically, copying the Grand High Priest / Most Illustrious Grand Master / Grand Commander and Grand Secretary for review and inclusion into the proceedings for the upcoming Annual Convocation of the Grand York Rite.

Success Strategies for District Officers

Serving as a District Officer should not only be seen as an honor, but also be a pleasant experience for yourself and others who will be working with you. You have a distinct opportunity to be a leader and make a difference. You are in a position to motivate and inspire others in your local bodies. A good leader is a servant leader. He does not lead to fulfill his own wishes, but rather to help others achieve the common goals of their group.

A Servant Leader:

1. Teaches others what he knows, that they may become better.
2. Admonishes with love and humility, to correct without creating resentment.
3. Learns from others, that he may avoid repeating their mistakes.
4. Learns from himself, that he may improve daily.
5. Displays confidence, but not arrogance or aloofness.
6. Exemplifies the highest standards and principles, to inspire the same in others.
7. Demonstrates patience in himself and others, that each may grow and prosper.
8. Knows his subject, to teach others correctly and with confidence.
9. Listens more than he speaks, but is always thinking.
10. Never hesitates to do the right thing, even if it is unpopular.
11. Considers others before himself.
12. Is led by principles, not ego.

Thus, when a District Officer approaches his appointment from the correct mindset, he finds that being a leader can be enjoyable for others as well as for himself. It is also important to remember that when serving as a District Officer, you are not alone. There are plenty of Companions and Sir Knights who can help you; some have been in your position before and have wisdom to impart. Above all, every Companion/Sir Knight has a unique perspective, and their insight may be the key to resolving whatever issue may be puzzling you. Don't be afraid to ask for help!

Final Thoughts

1. Prepare yourself. Know your duties and be prepared to serve others, not yourself. Adopt a servant leadership mindset so that you approach your appointed office with dignity and respect. Learn from your predecessors wherever possible, so you don't repeat past mistakes and also so their knowledge and wisdom can help you be more successful.
2. Plan ahead. It's a good idea to plan out which bodies to visit and when so that you can prepare yourself ahead of time. Prepare your agenda and speaking topics and practice so that you know what you are going to say and more importantly, how long you will need to speak.
3. Communicate early and often. Let the local bodies know well in advance, at least a month, before you plan to visit. If something comes up and you find that you are unable to show up, let the presiding officer know as soon as you can, so he can adjust his plans accordingly. Stay in constant communication with your local bodies, your fellow District Officers, and your Grand Officers. Reach out and ask for help if you need it, and also offer your assistance to others.
4. Lead from both the head and the heart. Both are equally important in getting leadership right.
5. Enjoy yourself! You earned this honor, take advantage of the opportunity to make a difference.