

# Minute by Minute

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Stated Meeting

There are three primary laws regarding the minutes of a lodge, all under Title II, Chapter 19 of the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas:

- Article 337, “Minutes of Lodge”
- Article 338, “Inspection of Minutes: By Whom”
- Article 338a, “Summary of Minutes Permitted”

The summary of Article 337, “Minutes of Lodge,” is as follows:

- The permanent record of the minutes has to be in a bound book or a locking ring binder.
- You have to write your minutes in a format as close as possible to that provided by Grand Lodge.
- Your minutes have to be accurate and complete (which is kind of a no-brainer).
- The minutes must be signed by the Worshipful Master and Secretary in person at the meeting in which they are approved.
- The minutes must list the officers who were there and the number of members and visitors present, whose names go in the register.

Here’s a summary of Article 338, “Inspection of Minutes: By Whom:”

- Lodge minutes are private records.
- You can’t make any copies of them for anything that’s not masonic.
- The secretary has to keep them secure and preserved.
- They need to be available for inspection at “reasonable times” by officers, members, and appropriate visitors, but never non-masons.

Article 338a, “Summary of Minutes Permitted,” is actually the most detailed out of all three of these articles:

- You're allowed to prepare and publish a summary of the minutes and records of the lodge as long as it doesn't discredit the Fraternity, the lodge, or any of its members past or present.
- The summary must be presented to and approved by the lodge members prior to publication.
- You can use a wide variety of sources to compile this summary, both from the lodge, and the Grand Lodge.
- You have to use the term "Masonic Disciplinary Violation" instead of "Masonic Offense."
- You can't include the names of any petitioners, candidates, Entered Apprentice Masons, or Fellowcraft Masons.
- You can't publish the names of rejected candidates.
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- You can't publish any libel.
- The law provides a suggested outline for the summary.

Additionally, There are two other articles in Chapter 19 that deal with the minutes:

- Article 280 specifies that the Worshipful Master is responsible for the correctness of the minutes.
- Article 333 states that the first order of lodge business should be to read, correct, and approve the minutes.

There are a number of Grand Master's decisions that deal with the minutes:

- Grand Master's Decision № 8, 1978 — The IRS has a right to look at your lodge minutes.
- Grand Master's Decision № 5, 2001 — The minutes of the lodge must be permanently stored at the lodge.
- Grand Master's Decision № 16, 2004 — It is not permissible to give a copy of lodge minutes to the county library, even if the lodge is demised.
- Grand Master's Decision № 3, 2006 — A traveling lodge, or "trunk lodge," may only meet if it and its paraphernalia, including its minutes, are determined to be "masonically secure" by a District Deputy Grand Master.
- Grand Master's Decision № 9, 2011 — Because the charter and minutes must be kept secure at all times, member of the lodge shall be present in the lodge at all times that non-masons have access to the lodge property.