

# 156th Grand Lodge Convention July 4-7, 2021 Tampa, FL

## PLEASE READ THIS INFORMATION AS THINGS WILL BE DIFFERENT THIS YEAR DUE TO COVID

Grand Lodge has advised that attendance at this National Convention is strictly voluntary. All convention attendees will be required to follow Social Distancing when possible. They should wear face masks when in public spaces. At this time the City of Tampa mandates the wearing of face masks. Everyone should keep 6 feet apart to practice social distancing. Everyone is encouraged to wash their hands frequently during the convention, use hand sanitizer and monitor their own health

The 2021 Grand Lodge Convention will be held in Tampa, FL, and the Indiana Elks Association will be housed at **The Westin Tampa Waterside** 725 S. Harbour Island Blvd. Tampa, FL 33602. Telephone 813-229-5000. Other states at this hotel are: Kansas, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. We are 0.6 miles from the convention center and there are 3 other hotels within walking distance. Those hotels are the Tampa Marriott Water Street which is home to the Grand Lodge, Alaska, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming. The JW Marriott Tampa Water Street which is home to Florida. And the Embassy Suites Tampa-Downtown Convention Center which is home to Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Montana. Please note that some states may choose to limit their hospitality suites to certain hours for visitors due to COVID.

This is a non-smoking hotel. They do not offer a shuttle service to or from the airport. There is valet parking available for \$32 per night.

The room rate with tax is \$137.40 per night which is good for up to 4 people per room. Room reservations forms have been emailed to the lodges and are available on the IEA website as well. All Elks planning on attending are urged to send in their reservations as soon as possible as rooms will fill up quickly.

The cutoff date for hotel reservations is **June 1, 2021**. Reservations received after this date will be accepted based on availability of same type rooms at the convention rate if they are available. Once the rooms are filled any overflow will be housed at another hotel by the grand lodge convention department.

The average room will have a coffee maker and a safe. Most have a mini refrigerator and microwave as well. The hotel has a market place for grab and go items as well as Blue Harbor Restaurant which is open for lunch and dinner. There are a few restaurants within walking distance. The hotel has a fitness center onsite and an outdoor pool.

Indiana will have a Hospitality Room. The hours for the hospitality room have yet to be determined at this time. Updates will be posted on the IEA website. The Elks National Convention Commission is asking that all Hospitality space follow Center for Disease Control (CDC) and hotel room capacity guidelines. Some states are only going to allow their own members within their room due to the social distancing rules.

Each Exalted Ruler or Alternate is asked to assist in bartending duties sometime in the hospitality room. Your District Deputy will be assigning you a time to help in the room. In the past, this has worked very well and many ERs find it fun. We will also have greeters at the door to welcome people to the Indiana hospitality room.

Due to the fact that Elks from other states usually visit our hospitality room, we are asking all Indiana Elks to please wear your registration badges when visiting our hospitality room. Some of the other states do require you to wear your registration badge to enter their room.

The Grand Lodge will provide bus shuttles from the hotel to the convention center starting on Saturday and running through Wednesday as well as all Grand Lodge functions. The schedule will be on the Grand Lodge website by the middle of June. This year due to the social distancing they will increase the number of buses to alleviate crowding on the buses.

**Temperatures will be taken at the entrance to the Opening Ceremony, daily business sessions, as well as all seminars and workshops.**

Grand Lodge is considering providing Comfort/Social Wrist Bands for all attendees to wear. A Red band will indicate you want no physical contact and request they stay 6 feet back. The Yellow band states you will do an Elbow greeting. A Green band shows you will do a Hi Five and handshake and wash your hands frequently. This is to prevent people from intruding into another's personal space.

The Sunday afternoon Opening Ceremony, Daily Business Sessions and the Closing session will take place at the Tampa Convention Center, 333 South Franklin Street, Tampa, FL.

The Opening Ceremonies (open to all members and guests) will take place on Sunday afternoon, July 4 from 4pm to 6pm. **You must pre-register for this event to attend.**

A Celebration will immediately follow the Opening Ceremony on Sunday, July 4. This event will offer free Entertainment provided by the "Party Crashers" plus food and drink for purchase.

The Daily Business Sessions will be held Monday and Tuesday from 8:00 am till 12 noon (estimated end time). Wednesday will run from 8:00 am till 11:00 am. **You must pre-register** for this event to attend.

Registration will be at the Tampa Convention Center in the Ballroom. Pre-registration for the Grand Lodge Convention opens on the Grand Lodge Website April 1st with new procedures being implemented. Pre-registration will be the best way to avoid lines and safely receive your credentials and other critical attendee information. Everyone must register for the convention and only registered Elks will be admitted to the business sessions, seminars and workshops. Pre-registration fee is \$50.00. Registration is cash, a good check, credit or debit card are accepted.

**This year for those who pre-register, you will pick up your registration badge at the Indiana hospitality room on Saturday or Sunday.** You will be required to show your current membership card, which will be stamped and you will be issued your credentials. If you do not pre-register, you will be required to go to the convention center to do so. The cost to register at the convention is \$60.00. **ALL are urged to pre-register.**

If your Exalted Ruler IS NOT attending the convention and the duly elected Alternate is attending in his or her place, you MUST notify the Grand Secretary to advise him that the alternate will be attending in place of the Exalted Ruler. You will need to provide the Grand Secretary with the lodge name and number and the alternates name and membership number. IF both are attending, then you do nothing.

**Event Registration will be required this year for ALL EVENTS.** You must pre-register if you plan to attend the Opening Ceremony, the Daily Business Session Monday thru Wednesday as well as any Workshops and Seminars. Registration for these events will open on May 1. You must be pre-registered to register to attend any event. Seating at the Opening Ceremony and the daily business sessions will be limited to 4,500 people. Seating at the Workshops and Seminars will be limited as well. This is all due to the COVID restrictions. You can also register one (1) hour prior to the event if there are spaces available. Even if you are pre-registered you cannot show up at the last minute. 10 minutes prior to each event, if seats are available, they will open it up to anyone waiting. DD designates must register to attend the daily business sessions if they want a seat.

Exalted Ruler packets, which are normally passed out at registration will be mailed directly to each Exalted Ruler this year from the Grand Lodge.

Again, this year Indiana will have assigned seating for the Daily business session Monday thru Wednesday by the Grand Lodge. Your district deputy will have this provided to him or her to share with you and it will be posted in the hospitality room. Seating is based on the state's membership gain or loss. The better we do, the closer we get to the front.

The Elks National Convention Commission is working closely with the Tampa Convention Center and Visit Tampa Bay to plan a safe and healthy Elks National Convention. Safety measures and plans are evolving, but are likely to include social distancing, attendee occupancy management and personal mask use which is currently required in Tampa.

In order to manage attendee occupancy and promote social distancing, there will be NO Exhibit Hall at the 2021 Convention. State Major Projects, Grand Lodge Committees, Elks Headquarters departments and other vendors WILL NOT BE able to exhibit in Tampa. Displays will be restricted to the Local Florida Support Group and possibly (??) a couple of Trademark Licensees. This year the Grand Lodge will have a Digital Marketplace where the Grand Lodge committees as well as the State Major projects can promote their programs.

Ritual Competition will be at the Tampa Convention Center. Audience attendance will be limited due to space capacity guidelines due to COVID.

The Seminar for District Deputies Designates will be held on Monday, July 5, and Tuesday, July 6, both at 12:45 pm. Location to be determined.

The varying committee seminars/workshops will be scheduled starting as early as 9 am and following the General Sessions on Monday and Tuesday. Due to the COVID this year there will be more workshops and seminars. These will be listed on the website after April 2021. PreRegistration for all events will be required to help with social distancing. **Be sure to register for any event you plan to attend.**

Many people enjoy trading pins during the convention. If this interests you and/or your spouse, bring pins from your Lodge to trade.

As time draws closer to the Grand Lodge Convention, members should log into the Grand Lodge website and check the Grand Lodge Convention Section as updates and information will be posted by the Grand Lodge. They will post the schedule of events for the week, the busing schedule, etc.

The city of Tampa has a great website that attendees going to the convention can access to obtain a large amount of information about the city, all in one place. This can be located at <https://visittampa.com>.