



## LEVEL 3: UNIT RESOURCES

Engage > Re-engaging Inactive Members > Recognising signs of dissatisfaction

### Introduction:

Despite diligent and skilled screening of applicants for your Unit, some members may decide early on that the Craft or Royal Arch is not for them and resign. Other resignations may occur due to one or more of the following reasons:

1. Difficulty attending because the Unit does not suit work or family circumstances.
2. Disappointment or dissatisfaction.
3. Difficulties with another member or members.
4. Changes in circumstances such as age, transport, health, family, employment, or financial issues.

Resignations can often be anticipated in advance if the warning signs are recognised. Responding early to these circumstances may avert resignations before they happen. Missing the warning signs or not acting can make persuading a member to reverse their decision very difficult.

### Warning Signs:

- **Reduction in Attendance:** A key indicator of potential resignation is a reduction in attendance or participation.
- **Significant Events:** Changes in attendance patterns often follow events that others may have missed or underestimated, but are significant to the member concerned.
- **Personality Differences:** Personality differences or issues may prompt members to leave their Unit, although they might be content to continue in active membership of another Unit.
- **Changes in Circumstances:** Members experiencing changes in circumstances or difficult times may resign just when the Unit could provide help and support.
- **Relocation:** Those who move home or make other lifestyle changes may consider resigning from the Unit. *See the entire section devoted to this topic (Helping a member relocate).*
- **Additional Warning Signs:** Unwillingness to take office, commit to ritual, or assist with Unit activities; lack of preparation before meetings or events; delays in paying Chapter subscriptions; not responding to calls, emails, or letters.

### Guidance for Units:

#### **Before they are Initiated/Exalted/Join:**

Really explore with the potential member whether the Unit works for them logistically. Are they busy professionals who might struggle with taking time off during the day? Does the Unit meet a long way from their home or place of work/study? Do they have a hobby, such as a sport, that typically clashes with meeting times?

Suppose the Unit does not work logistically for them. In that case, it would likely be much kinder to the individual and more likely to ensure they have an enjoyable Masonic experience to help them find a Unit that works better for them.



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We lose around 15% of new initiates to Freemasonry within three years of initiation, in many cases because they were brought into the wrong lodge by a well-meaning friend who just happened to be a member of it.

## **REMEMBER YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BRING A POTENTIAL CANDIDATE INTO YOUR OWN UNIT!**

**Early Action:** Review and use guidance to respond to declining attendance and encourage all members to be alert to potential resignation warning signs.

**Contact Members:** If warning signs are noticed, ask the appropriate Unit member (e.g., Secretary/Scribe E, Mentor/Almoner, or the member's Personal Mentor or sponsor) to contact the member.

**Addressing Needs:** Take early action to identify and address the needs, concerns, and expectations of any member at risk of resigning. Provide support as far as possible within the Unit (they may, for instance, just need reassurance that they are welcome to spend a period out of office attending and enjoying the meetings from the 'back benches') or refer the matter to the Province if the Unit cannot resolve the issue satisfactorily.

**Resignation Notice:** On receipt of a notice of resignation, report it to the Almoner and the Metropolitan/Provincial/District office immediately.

**Retaining Members:** Do not accept the resignation until the Chapter Almoner and others have contacted the member and the Unit has had the opportunity to invite them to withdraw their resignation, following an offer of support or reassurance.

**Support:** If resignation is due to a decline in circumstances, arrange for the Chapter Almoner to support the member and their family.

**Unattached Freemason:** Inform those who resign that they continue to be a Freemason and may visit Lodges and, if a Royal Arch Mason, Chapters as an "Unattached Freemason," subject to current rules.

**Migration Process:** If a member resigns due to relocation, contact the Provincial/District/Metropolitan office to trigger the migration process and encourage the member to retain their membership until they join a Unit in their new locality.

**Unit Review:** If many members resign within a short period, conduct a Unit review and be willing to adapt to make the Unit more attractive and engaging. This review should include:

- **Examine Historical Data:** Identify any periods when losses accelerated and whether there were any significant events that may have contributed to this decline.
- **Seek Feedback:** Obtain feedback from the Province about exit interviews that have been conducted, accepting that this will be anonymous so as not to identify individual former members.
- **Conduct a Review:** If many members resign in a relatively short period, conduct a review of the Unit and be willing to adapt to make it more attractive and engaging.
- **Update Plan:** Update your Unit plan to address and resolve the root causes behind resignations.



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- **Consider Alternative Futures:** If your Unit is in decline and at risk of closure, consider alternative futures, including approaches to rejuvenation such as “adaptation.”
  - **Special Interest Alignment:** Aligning the Unit to a special interest (such as a school, hobby, youth, or service organization) to attract new members (“adoption” of a special interest).
  - **New Management Team:** Introducing a group of enthusiastic joining members (such as Provincial/District/Metropolitan Stewards) to refresh the Unit’s management (“adoption” by a new management team).
  - **Adopting an Existing Unit:** Rather than founding a new Unit, adopting an existing one and transitioning it to a new membership (“adoption” by a new membership).
- **Plan for Closure:** If the Unit intends to close, plan so that members can investigate and transfer to the new Unit before the Unit votes to return its warrant or charter.