

# GUIDE TO PASSPORT CLUBS



Rotary clubs continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of their communities and local professionals. Some new and existing clubs are adopting an innovative passport club model to offer their members more flexibility and a broader experience.

## WHAT IS A PASSPORT CLUB?

A passport club is a Rotary club that gives its members a more flexible club experience by:

- Encouraging its members to visit other clubs and participate in their club activities regularly
- Relaxing the attendance policy
- Offering a variety of meeting formats

New and existing clubs can decide to implement the passport club model. The clubs may adopt all of the options listed above or choose just the ones that work for them. A club's name does not need to include the descriptor "passport club," but the club's bylaws do need to be updated accordingly (see [How Do Club Bylaws Differ for a Passport Club?](#) below).

Because they are Rotary clubs, passport clubs have a club president, board, and committees. The president-elect and other incoming officers attend training seminars like PETS and the district training assembly. And members are encouraged to attend district and international events and to get involved in ways that are meaningful to them.

The term "passport" refers to the ability to move freely from club to club, attending the meetings or participating in the activities of other clubs. Any Rotarian can attend another club when traveling, but passport clubs encourage their members to do so regularly which brings fresh ideas back to their own club.

## HOW DO PASSPORT CLUBS WORK?

Passport clubs determine how they want to operate. Here are some common practices of passport clubs:

- Meeting less frequently
- Focusing meetings on service or social activities
- Setting affordable dues
- Measuring club health by participation rather than attendance

**How do they meet?** Meetings can be social gatherings, service activities, virtual meetings, or fundraisers. As long as something is on the club's calendar twice a

All Rotary clubs, including passport clubs, need to meet at least twice a month in some way. Service and social activities and online meetings count.

month, the club complies with RI policy. Not all members have to attend to make it a valid club meeting, as long as it's open to all members and visitors.

**How do they measure member engagement?** Because members are encouraged to visit other clubs' meetings and take part in their projects and activities, passport clubs use measures other than meeting attendance to gauge club health. For example, some passport clubs require their members to participate or perform service for a minimum number of hours per year, which can include attending meetings of their own club or any other Rotary club, helping other clubs with fundraisers or projects, or participating in a service activity outside of Rotary.

**What about dues?** Because they are members of a Rotary club, passport club members pay club and district dues, as well as RI dues. Club and district dues vary, while RI dues are the same for all active members on your membership roster. Passport clubs are free to set club dues at any reasonable amount. Whatever the amount, it's important to make the breakdown of club, district, and RI dues clear so that everyone understands how much members are expected to pay.

**What is the protocol for visiting other clubs?** Just like anyone who wants to visit another club, passport club members should first contact the club's leaders to make arrangements for visiting. Your club should also discuss how it will host and follow up with guests.

Members of passport clubs visit other clubs because they want to meet other members and have a variety of club experiences. The visits are not meant to make up for a missed meeting or to fulfill an attendance requirement.

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## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A PASSPORT CLUB?

The benefits of a passport club include:

- **Flexibility** — Having different options for getting involved accommodates members' busy schedules, allowing them more choices for fitting Rotary into their lives.
- **Engaging meetings** — Meetings can focus on service and socializing rather than speakers and meals. By visiting other clubs' meetings, members can learn what other clubs are doing and bring new ideas to their club.
- **Broad appeal** — A passport club often appeals to people who wouldn't join a more traditional club and helps keep people who might otherwise leave in Rotary.
- **More connections** — Members quickly build relationships across the district and beyond.
- **Stronger service projects** — Connecting with members of other clubs presents opportunities for clubs to partner on service projects to create greater impact.
- **Affordability** — Costs are kept to a minimum because meetings don't include meals.

Although any club can implement the flexible options discussed here, a passport club sees them as a way of operating, using many of them. These flexible options are appealing to some members while traditional clubs remain appealing to others.

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## HOW DO CLUB BYLAWS DIFFER FOR A PASSPORT CLUB?

If your existing club is considering adopting the flexible options that passport clubs tend to use, discuss the benefits with your club members, make sure the club is in agreement on the changes, and update your club's existing bylaws to reflect your new practices and policies.

If you're forming a new passport club, only a small portion of the recommended Rotary club bylaws need to be adjusted. See the sample bylaws for passport clubs in appendix 1. **Contact your Club and District Support representative** if you'd like any assistance revising your bylaws.

## SAMPLE PASSPORT CLUB BYLAWS

Below is a sample of some of the club bylaws that passport clubs might put in place. You can adapt them to suit your club's preferences.

An editable version of this document is available on [Rotary.org/flexibility](https://www.rotary.org/flexibility).

1. **Qualifications.** Any adult who brings expertise and a desire to serve and otherwise meets the requirements described in the RI Constitution Article 5 is eligible to be a member of the Rotary Club of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. **Method of electing members.** Prospective members are first approved by the board, and then their names are listed in the weekly newsletter. If no member objects within \_\_\_ days, the prospective member is invited to join. Rotarians who are relocating are automatically invited to join unless they were terminated from their previous clubs for a negative reason.
3. **Meetings.** Online board meetings are open to all members and held monthly. In-person meetings are held quarterly, and a social event is scheduled monthly.
4. **Attendance.** Members attend the meetings and events of the Rotary Club of \_\_\_\_\_ when they are able to. They can also attend meetings and events of other clubs, provided that they contact club leaders in advance to arrange their visit. Members are required to attend our own club meetings in person at least once per \_\_\_\_\_.
5. **Service.** Members of the Rotary Club of \_\_\_\_\_ are expected to perform \_\_\_\_\_ hours of service per \_\_\_\_\_.
6. **RI registration.** Official members of the Rotary Club of \_\_\_\_\_ pay club, district, and RI dues, and they are listed as active members in RI's records.
7. **Dues.** Club dues for members of the Rotary Club of \_\_\_\_\_ are \$\_\_\_\_\_ per year (as of \_\_\_\_\_).
8. **Committees.** Club committees coordinate their efforts to achieve the club's annual and long-term goals. The president is an ex officio member of all committees and, as such, has all the privileges of membership. Each committee's chair is responsible for the regular meetings and activities of the committee, supervises and coordinates its work, and reports to the board on all committee activities.
9. **Votes and quorum.** The business of this club shall be transacted by electronic vote. Members of the Rotary Club of \_\_\_\_\_ are not eligible to vote on items proposed by other clubs they visit.
10. **Amendments.** These bylaws may be amended occasionally by an electronic vote of the club's members. Members must be notified of a proposed amendment at least \_\_\_ days before the vote. More than half of the club's members need to vote on the amendment, and two-thirds of those who vote need to approve it in order for the amendment to become part of the bylaws. No amendment or addition to these bylaws that is not in harmony with the constitution and bylaws of RI can be made.