



As COVID-19 infections begin to level and government shelter-in-place and similar orders expire, Rotary Districts and Clubs are confronted with the complexities of determining how and when to resume in-person gatherings.

We must base our decisions on the health and safety of our members, while maintaining compliance with government and health regulations. COVID-19 will be part of our Rotary planning until a proper prevention or vaccine is readily available.

**Challenges** - Our Rotary organization is a compilation of autonomous clubs with cultural, social, and community-based values that preclude a “one size fits all” approach for club decisions about resuming in-person meetings.

This document is developed to help our Rotary clubs and leadership with considerations and resources for the discussions and decisions they undertake at this difficult time.

*The primary goal of this document is to help Rotarians consider the safety and health of our members.*



#### Additional Resources

Rotary looks for guidance from reputable organizations focused on health and safety. It’s important to keep up to date on the latest

information from trusted sources, such as these, and incorporate their resources, tools, guidelines into your club leadership discussions regarding in-person meetings:

#### Global Resources:

- **World Health Organization (WHO)**  
<https://www.who.int>
- **Center for Disease Control (CDC)**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/summary.html>
- **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**  
<https://www.fda.gov/home>
- **Rotary International**  
<https://www.rotary.org/en/rotary-and-coronavirus-impact-frequently-asked-questions>
- **Health Canada**  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health>

**Local Resources:** Your local and state governments and health departments are authorities best placed to advise about what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves. Review these resources so you are sure your club is in compliance for any in-person Rotary gathering.



#### Action Steps

- **Survey Your Members**
- **Develop a Decision Tree**
- **Write & Communicate a Plan**

- I. Survey Your Members** - *This is a time of evolution where we could make changes to our club format and focus.*
- *How are our current virtual gatherings working?*
  - *Would it work to continue virtual meetings for a time?*
  - *What club business would require in-person gathering?*
  - *How can we best serve our communities going forward?*

If the survey supports not resuming in-person meetings at this time, leadership may still develop recommendations for the proper time to move forward.

#### Leadership Discussion following the survey-



- *Have we reviewed all relevant resources for health & safety information?*
- *What restrictions apply to or are applied by our regular venue?*
- *Will food & beverage change due to health & safety concerns?*
- *What health & safety protocols should be instituted (e.g., temperature taking, hand sanitizer, masks, social distancing, no handshakes, hugs or other touching, alerting leadership & membership when a member becomes ill, refraining from singing, passing items including for Happy Dollars, liability waivers, etc.)*
- *How will protocols be communicated? (e.g., emails, phone calls, greeters, etc.)*
- *How can we make sure our protocols are inclusive of all members? (e.g. making all meetings voluntary, providing online & in-person meetings simultaneously, offering both ‘in-person’ or virtual meetings & clarifying the distinction in communications, etc.)*
- *Will we ask members to report to leadership if they become ill or someone becomes ill in their contact circle? Will it be club policy to notify meeting attendees in such cases?*

**II. Develop a Decision Tree**

As leadership considers these questions, they can develop club specific recommendations tailored for their membership and specific local government requirements.



1. **Carefully review the reasons for, and risks associated with in-person meetings.**
  - If virtual meetings are working for all concerned, it may not be necessary to resume in-person meetings at this time.
2. **Establish ground rules for in-person meetings based on state and local guidelines, the questions and links provided in this document.**
  - Proceed when leadership is in agreement about suggested procedures.
  - Proceed when leadership has decided how to be inclusive of members who are not in agreement with suggested procedures.
3. **Seek a venue that will allow appropriate physical distancing, exposure time and ventilation.**

This may mean that your traditional venue is not appropriate. Consider outside venues.

- a. **If meeting inside:** For your club or the venue;
  - Will surfaces be sanitized before and after the meeting?
  - Will food and beverages be part of the meeting? Buffets and shared food/beverage can increase the risk of disease spread.
- b. **If meeting outside:**
  - Can members bring their own camp chairs, food and/or beverages? That procedure may lessen disease spread.
- c. **Whether meeting inside or outside:**
  - Will the space fit all members with physical distancing? For large clubs, members may have to meet in smaller groups until local guidelines change, or members feel safe.
  - How will leadership address the fact that handshakes, hugs, kisses, singing, passing items will increase the chances of disease spread?

**Considerations before resuming in-person meetings**

- Is there a way for members to use meeting software (such as Zoom or Facebook Live) to attend or view later as an option during in-person meetings?

**When venue/s and questions above are decided:**

4. **Ask your members to be proactive:**
  - a. Stay home if they are ill or have been around someone who is ill.
  - b. Take their temperature before coming to an in-person meeting, and if elevated, stay home.
  - c. Use whatever personal protective equipment they feel will make them more comfortable if attending an in-person meeting. This might include face masks, disposable gloves, hand sanitizer.
  - d. Notify club leadership if they become ill, or anyone in their circle of contacts becomes ill. Club leadership should notify members in this instance so others can monitor their own health, obtain testing, etc.

**III. Write & Communicate a Plan**

It's vital that leadership develop a formal written plan for in-person meetings that is provided for all members and prospective members, addresses their concerns, incorporates their input so they fully support the action plan.



- Include suggested procedures and inclusive measures so that members know the board has a plan.
- Make sure members understand that all in-person meetings are completely voluntary.
- Consider any liability issues or concerns.
- Establish follow-up discussions to adjust your plan based upon new information and feedback.



**Remember** - It is important during this difficult time that we take care of our Rotary Club members and effectively serve our communities. *We are confident with the ingenuity of Rotarians, together we can do this!*