

BECOMING GOVERNOR

A GUIDE FOR POTENTIAL CANDIDATES

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Each year over 530 Rotarians take on the responsibility of becoming Governor of their Rotary district. For most it will be the pinnacle of their Rotary career. For a few it will lead to an opportunity to serve at a higher level and to gain an insight into the higher administration of Rotary International. But for all it will be a year they will remember as being of great importance and significance in their life, a year of exceptional "Service Above Self".

Becoming Governor is the aspiration of every dedicated Rotarian. This information has been written for those with that aspiration and who are beginning to think about the possibility of taking on the office in the next few years. It gives an overview of what to expect and covers the three stages to becoming Governor:

- Section 2: Deciding to become a candidate
- Section 3: The selection process
- Section 4: Life as District Governor Nominee.

If after reading this guide you have any unanswered questions, the District Governor, District Governor Elect or any Past District Governor will be delighted to talk to you.

The following abbreviations are used throughout this guide — other abbreviations are defined in context:

DA	District (Training) Assembly	MOP	Manual of Procedure
DG	District Governor	PDG	Past District Governor
DGE	District Governor Elect	PETS	President's Elect Training Seminar
DGN	District Governor Nominee	RI	Rotary International

SECTION 2: SHOULD I STAND?

In this section we shall deal with the questions most potential candidates have about what becoming DG entails.

☐ *What are the qualifications required?*

You must of course be willing and physically capable of doing the job. In addition, you **must**:

- Be a member, other than an honorary member, in good standing in your club
- Have been a Rotarian for at least seven years on taking office as DG
- Served as club president for a full term

□ What does the job involve?

A general description of the role, duties and responsibilities of the DG is set out in the MOP which you should read carefully. The following pages enlarge on some of the more important of those matters and will give you a good idea of what is involved. Bear in mind that:

The DG is an officer of RI and a large part of the task is dictated by RI. The DG will of course appoint chairmen and committees to assist in the task and there are PDGs available for assistance and guidance, but the responsibility and authority for the administration of the clubs in the district rests solely with the DG.

The duties are very extensive and require a substantial commitment for the year of office as DG and during the preceding two years, first as DGN then as DGE.

□ Do I need to be retired?

No! However you will need to be able to work very flexible hours in order to fulfill many of the duties, particularly in the first half of the year, when many of the club visits take place.

Remember that you will have a great deal of freedom in how you organise your year and it is not necessary to follow the precise pattern of your predecessors. For example, while it may be unreasonable to expect a club to change its normal meeting time to suit you, you may choose to ask clubs to hold joint meetings for your visit. Also, if your visit would normally include a meeting with the club Board, that could be held on an earlier occasion, such as a weekend.

In response to the high level of commitment which goes with the office of DG, all districts are now required to have a District Leadership Plan, which reduces the DG's burden by allowing some tasks to be delegated to one or more Assistant Governors. These plans operate differently from district to district and are often varied from year to year in the light of experience. Your current DG or DGE can explain the background to your district's current plan.

□ Can I afford it?

Expense is an ever-present aspect of Rotary and there are popular commentaries that becoming DG costs a fortune. However, whilst it is difficult to put an exact figure on it, the cost is not likely to be prohibitive for Rotarians who have taken an active role in their club and district. It has been said that the main cost is in fact any loss of business/employment income that might arise.

In the year as DG, most travel and office expenses are covered by allowances from RI and your district, which should cover most outlays. At official club meetings, the DG is of course a guest of the club and this may also be the case for many other activities - changeovers, special nights, etc. The DG may have to pay for unofficial visits and meetings and, even when a guest, there can be out-of-pocket expenses, such as drinks, raffles and so on.

It should also be borne in mind that there will be additional expense arising from things like attending the annual Conference (see below), where DGs often choose to add a few days holiday to the official period of the Conference, entertaining VIP visitors at the Conference and elsewhere and general hospitality within the district.

The major part of the cost of being DG will probably arise in your period as DGN/DGE. Most districts provide an allowance to cover the expenses of the DGE and DGN, such as general office and other sundry expenses. As DGN/DGE however you will become involved in many activities throughout the District, which will be entirely at your expense. In particular you will be encouraged to visit as many clubs in your district as you can (as well as keep up your own club attendance) and attend things like GSE welcomes and Presidents' meetings. The extent to which this is an added cost for you will depend on your current level of Rotary activity.

Some DGEs take advantage of the visit to San Diego for the International Assembly to take a holiday in North America and home hosting is offered by several clubs/Districts in the USA so that you can incorporate these side visits into your itinerary before the Assembly, so this cost must be considered. There is also the option as DGN and DGE to combine the annual Zone Conference with a private holiday.

You can see then that, whilst becoming DG will not "cost a fortune", there are significant cost involved, even ignoring any loss of business/employment income.

☐ *What is required from my partner?*

Rotarians without partners should not be deterred from trying to be DG. It is not a requirement of the job to have a partner and many have successfully carried out the duties required alone.

The role played by the DG's partner is a matter to be determined solely by the DG and partner. Some partners decide to become fully involved in the year, whilst others decide to take a low profile and attend only a few official functions. There is no doubt however that a willing partner provides great support to a DG and can make a significant contribution to the district.

☐ *What is required from my club?*

In some districts, the answer is "not much"! In others they will be asked to organize your District Conference, although you may either ask another club or district for help, particularly if your own club is small. Organizing the Conference is a big task and, if your club is to organize it, you should be sure that the club understands what it involves before allowing your name to be put forward. Apart from the Conference, you may call upon members of your club to assist you on some of your committees.

During your year as DG, your club will be deprived of the benefit of your attendance at many of the club's regular meetings, social functions and community activities, as your District activities will take precedence.

☐ *What is the Zone Conference?*

Each year in November, an Conference is held for the 21 districts which make up Australia, PNG, the Solomon Islands and Timor Leste. This is intended to enable PDG's to keep abreast of current developments in Rotary at home and overseas whilst providing further training and discussion forums for DG's, DGEs and DGNs. The Conference itself, usually runs from Friday lunchtime to Sunday Lunchtime, with the three previous days allocated for the training/discussion sessions and meetings.

Attendance at the GETS is mandatory for all DGEs. Their partners are strongly encouraged and expected to attend the GETS. All DG's and partners and DGEs and DGNs and partners are also encouraged and expected to attend their respective sessions at the Zone Conference. Your District will pay registration, travel, accommodation and most meal costs for you. RI reimburses the District for the DGEs training costs. There is more detail on the Conference in section 4.

☐ *What about the International Assembly?*

The International Assembly is held each year in January currently at San Diego California. It is a training session for DGEs in the year before taking office and lasts for a week. Attendance is mandatory and failure to attend can result in RI withdrawing your nomination. There is more detail on the international Assembly in section 4.

SECTION 3: THE SELECTION PROCESS

The general procedure for the selection of a DG is set out in the Manual of Procedure, which may be supplemented by District Regulations or resolutions. Generally there are three important stages, the dates of which will be notified by the DG:

1. Ask for nominations
2. Close of nominations
3. Interviews and selection

The selection of the DG will be made by the Nominating committee, which is charged with the duty of finding the best person available to be DG. Committee members may therefore approach people other than those initially nominated by their clubs. Whether your interest arises from such an approach, or simply the result of you own aspirations, if you decide that you would like to be considered for DG, the procedure is as follows:

☐ *Seek your club's nomination*

Your club should pass a resolution along the following lines:

"It is resolved to nominate Past President John Citizen to serve as District Governor in 2022-23 year and to forward his/her name to the District Governor for consideration by the Nominating committee for District Governor."

- The resolution requires a simple majority (50%) but it is clearly preferable for it to be carried unanimously, given the support you may need from the club.
- Advise the DG before the closing date.
- This is a task of your club President or secretary. Notification of the nomination should be accompanied by a letter from you to the DG agreeing to serve if elected.

□ *Submit a CV*

Once the nomination period has closed, the DG who is the Chairman of the nominating committee for District Governor will ask you for a CV, detailing your Rotary and business career. You may also be asked for other information, such as a questionnaire covering various aspects of your approach to the role of DG.

□ *Attend an interview*

The Committee Chairman (DG) will advise you of when and where the interview will take place. You will be interviewed by the Nominating Committee, the composition of which is determined by the District. The exact form of this interview is determined by the Chairman, who will advise you of the format. Whilst the format may vary from district to district and possibly from year to year, you can expect to be asked to elaborate on things in your CV, answer questions about Rotary and your approach to it, convince the committee of your leadership skills and demonstrate your knowledge of Rotary and your speaking and thinking abilities. Some districts also interview partners to make sure that they understand the task ahead.

□ *Selection*

When all the interviews are concluded, the Nominating Committee will reach a decision and advise the DG who has been selected. It should be noted that if no candidate satisfies the Nominating Committee of his/her suitability, a further search for a suitable candidate may be conducted.

□ *Notification*

You will be advised of the outcome as soon after the interview as possible, usually later that day. The successful candidate should take care not to reveal the result until all the unsuccessful candidates have been contacted.

You should regard your nomination the same way as you would apply for a significant top management job. Your personal presentation, your personality, the quality and content of your CV and your general demeanor will all influence the outcome. The committee is looking for a person who can lead the district and further its success. They will of course also take into account your Rotary experience, particularly at district level, and your commitment to the principles and programs of Rotary.

Bear in mind that previous candidates, successful and unsuccessful, may be happy to discuss the procedure with you and offer advice. Beware however of compromising the independence of any member of the Nominating Committee and remember that canvassing support for your nomination is strictly prohibited by RI (see MOP).

SECTION 4: LIFE AS A DISTRICT GOVERNOR NOMINEE!

The phone rings and the DG tells you that you have been selected! After breaking out the champagne and receiving the congratulatory messages, what next?

First, spare a thought for the unsuccessful candidates, if known. They will be very disappointed. So why not commiserate with them for a moment, encourage them to have a go next year and consider giving them a significant job in your team when you start putting it together?

Remember, there is a short period during which clubs can object to the Committee's decision, but don't worry too much, as it is very rarely invoked!

You are now a DGN and from now on it is all action! You will get plenty of advice from your predecessors, but how you manage your appointment is largely up to you and you should not allow anyone to "cramp your style".

The following are some of the things you need to get to work on:

☐ *Your Team*

Do not rush into appointing your team - there is plenty of time. You need to consider any changes you want to make to the district organisation and to have a good look at all the talent available in the district before committing yourself. As a general rule, it is wise to wait until you have attended the DGN Training Seminar (see below) before appointing anyone other than perhaps your personal aide/adviser (usually a PDG or someone with considerable Rotary knowledge). This seminar will help you to make good and timely team selections.

The team is usually finalised in the December of your year as DG Elect. It is preferred to discuss the appointment of longer-term positions (Foundation chair, International chair, Assistant Governors) with the DGN as the appointments will carry into their year as well.

The early appointment of your District Trainer (after discussion with your advisor) is essential because the expertise of this person is required to train the presenting teams. Your District Trainer would benefit from being appointed in sufficient time to allow him/her to make arrangements to attend the District Trainers Session at the Zone Conference Week when you are DGE and you are attending GETS [In D9800, the District Trainer attends Zone Conference in the DGN year]. If you can have the senior leaders of your team in place in time, they may wish to attend the PETS and Assembly of your predecessor to learn how the current team handles those important training sessions.

You will also need to select clubs to host your PETS, DA and the District Changeover and a Conference Chairman. It is wise to make these appointments before the corresponding events of your predecessor's year, so that your appointees can gain experience of how to organise them.

☐ *Club Visits*

It is important that you become as widely known as possible in the district before you become DG and that you gain as much knowledge of the district as you can. You are therefore advised to visit as many clubs as you can whilst you are a DGN/DGE, particularly those you have never visited before.

☐ *District Meetings*

The current DG and DGE should both invite you to join their team. You should endeavour to attend all important team and committee meetings to enhance your knowledge and experience. District meetings are held at the discretion of the DG and DGE respectively.

In addition, there will be many district functions (Group Study Exchange, Presidents Meetings, etc.) which will provide valuable opportunities for you to build your reputation with the Rotarians of the district and help prepare you for office.

□ *Council of Governors*

On your election to DGN you will receive an invitation to join the Council of Governors [Called the College of Governors in some Districts]. In some districts, this is a formal dinner meeting of past, present and incoming governors and partners from this district, which gathers together to be kept informed of the happenings of Rotary. In other districts it is less formal, but whatever the structure, a wise incoming governor will use the members of the Council to seek advice and direction in preparing for the important years ahead.

□ *Rotary Business Cards*

You will need to obtain contact cards. They are perhaps not essential until you become DGE, but you will probably find them useful earlier (e.g. at the Zone Conference). The current DG or DGE will give you details of where they obtained their cards and who did the photography, if you elect to use photographic cards. There are several styles of card available and several suppliers - the choice is yours. Have them made out for your year of office as DG, so that they remain useable for several years. The cost of producing them, including photography, will usually be borne by the district out of your DGN/DGE allowances. Note however that the printing cost is reimbursable by RI as part of your Governor allowance.

□ *Team Building*

Once your team is selected, it is important to build them into an effective district team under your leadership. There are several ways of achieving this. One which has proved successful in some districts, is a weekend away with partners, when the team can get to know one another in a relaxed atmosphere and spend time discussing strategies for your year of office. In organising such a weekend, care needs to be taken that the cost does not prohibit any member of your team participating.

□ *Zone Conference*

The broad format of the annual Zone Conference was covered in Section 2. For your first Conference, you (and your partner) will be expected to arrive on or before Tuesday morning for the DGN Training Seminar ("DGNTS"), which starts after lunch that day. It is important to understand that while several people from your district will be at the Conference, including the DG and DGE, you will spend most of the time with your fellow DGNs and their partners. The Conference is your first opportunity to get to know them and build the friendships which will last for many years.

You will be contacted by the Conference organisers with details of the program well in advance. Your hotel will be designated by the organisers, but it is your responsibility to organise your travel and you may of course build your own pre/post-Conference itinerary onto it. Your district will pay for your travel to the Conference, the hotel for the duration of the DGNTS/Conference and official meals and functions. All other costs are for your personal account. You will need to check with your district what procedures are to be followed for reimbursing any recoverable expenses not paid by the district direct.

You will also be required to attend the Conference and attendant activities in each of the years when you are DGE and DG on the same basis as the first one. Attendance at subsequent Conferences as a PDG is entirely voluntary and at your own expense.

□ *Diary*

You may find it advantageous for both you and your partner to keep diaries which you mutually up-to-date. Your diary will rapidly start to fill up and it is up to you how you manage it. There are however a number of events, which you will have to attend and you should ensure that these are included in your diary from the outset:

District training activities - which you will need to attend to learn from your predecessor's Team. Make sure you know when and where they are to be held:

- **Assistant Governors' Training Day**
- **Presidents-Elect Orientation Meeting** (if held)
- **Presidents-Elect Training Seminar**
- **District Assembly**
- **District Leadership Training**

Other important activities - you must also be aware of the date/venue of the following:

- **DGN Training Seminar/Conference** - September after your selection (see above).
- **District Conference** — This is the occasion on which you are officially introduced to the district, usually towards the end of proceedings, when you may be required to make a brief speech. You should attend all sessions, including any resolutions session, as resolutions submitted may well have a significant impact on your year of office.
- **International Convention** — Usually held in June. Attendance is not mandatory, but a great experience.
- **District Changeover** - This is when you cease to be a DGN and become a DGE!

Activities in DGE year - The following will not happen until your year as DGE, but you can establish the dates soon after your selection:

- **Governor-Elect Training Seminar (GETS)/Conference** - November in your year as DGE. A second opportunity to meet your contemporaries and the same rules as those of your first Conference apply.
- **International Assembly** — see below
- **Your District Training Activities** - The precise timing and format of the district training activities is for you to decide. You will need to bear in mind the timing of the International Assembly and any travel you plan to build around it and the District Conference.
- **District Conference** - Similar comments apply as for the previous Conference.
- **International Convention** — Held in June. Again, attendance is not mandatory, but not only is it a great experience, but this year is when your appointment as DG is voted on.
- **District Changeover** - The time you take over the reins of the district, although you will officially be DG on 1st July. The venue and program for the changeover is for you to decide, in consultation with the incumbent DG.

□ *International Assembly*

Currently held in the January before you take office as DG, in San Diego, California, USA. Attendance is mandatory and failure to attend any of the sessions may result in your appointment as DG being withdrawn by RI. You are advised to arrive in San Diego before the Assembly starts, as you will need time to find your way around. It is also preferable to leave the day after it finishes however these additional costs are at your expense. You may of course build your own personal itinerary around the Assembly and there are opportunities for home hosting. RI provides transport from and to the airport only on opening and closing days.

The Airfares to the International Assembly for you and your partner and your hotel and meal costs for the duration of the Assembly will be paid for by RI. Flights must be arranged through the Rotary International Travel Service (RITS) who will sometimes place restrictions on which airline(s) you may use. You will receive contact details for RITS in your pre Conference Training information,

Full details of the Assembly, including a DG's manual, will be sent to you by RI well in advance. The manual requires you to do some preparatory work prior to the Assembly.

At the Assembly, it has been customary to exchange small gifts with your fellow DGsE and you may wish to take a number of items, plus a few more expensive gifts for special occasions. In recent years the RIPE has encouraged personal donations to The Rotary Foundation in lieu of gifts. District pins and Kangaroo pins are appropriate to hand out. The DG and your fellow DGsE will both discuss the Assembly with you in detail at the appropriate time, including what to do about gifts. Advice will also be given at the DGNTS (District Governor Nominee Training Seminar) and GETS Governor Elect Training Seminar.

Being a DG and an Officer of Rotary International is one of the most rewarding positions in Rotary; it is an experience that will remain with you for the rest of your life.

Redrafted December 2007, updated September 2019