

Rotary District 6200

Handbook for Membership Survival During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Rotary 
District 6200 Membership Team



Overview

District 6200 wants to support Rotary Clubs in their efforts to maintain membership during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there has recently been a slight easing of restrictions, there is a real need to proceed with caution in resuming face-to-face meetings or public events and activities.

This handbook is a guide, not a policy book. Always follow the advice of health professionals and your local and federal governments' requirements when considering resuming normal activities. Club leaders are encouraged to consult with their board and club members to determine which approach will most benefit maintaining member engagement during this pandemic.

In times of crisis, such as pandemics, our members need to feel they are still a part of something greater, still connected to their social network, still need to hear the voices of their fellow Rotarians. This is part of the service to our clubs that the club leadership provides. In our communities, many people are looking for a connection. Providing meeting access to community members, even if it is through electronic media, is a way to serve their needs during these difficult times.

Our communities need Rotary now more than ever. If clubs are going to survive, they must continue to meet safely, assess their community needs, engage its members in fundraising and service activities, and project the public image that Rotary is responsive to crises in innovative and exemplary ways. That is our challenge.

Our mission remains unchanged: Unite and Take Action. We still need to promote membership, exhibit Rotary's public image, and "do good in the world" through community service projects and The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International.

While we hope for an early end to this pandemic and a return to normalcy, we suspect that we will remain moderately confined until there is a safe and effective vaccine available for

widespread use. Unfortunately, this may be months away. Maintaining membership is vital to your club's overall health and impact. In the interim, let's resolve to be steadfast in compliance with public health recommendations, support our club members, their families, and our communities in the many ways still possible, and remember that there are those less fortunate across the globe. Know that your District Leadership Team is, as always, ready and eager to guide and assist clubs as we adapt to this new, and hopefully short term, reality.



A New Way of Meeting: Virtual Meetings

Consider using readily available technology to conduct "virtual meeting" until you can resume in-person meetings and events. Below are a few ideas and favorite tools for virtual meetings. Each suggestion includes links to helpful how-to guides and other information to help you navigate these tools.

Highly Interactive Tools

There are many free and paid options for hosting virtual meetings. Chances are someone in your club already has a pro version of one of these for their business, but there are also lots of great no-cost options that include basic features. Many of these programs are offering reduced fees and no-cost extended trials during this time.

Zoom Basic Free: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2pq4l1urXA>

GoTo Meeting Free: <https://support.goto.com/meeting>

Google Hangout Free: <https://bit.ly/2HbLDrT>

FreeConferenceCall: <https://bit.ly/3mFRpCi>

Skype: <https://www.skype.com/en/>

Less Interactive

Other tools are still incredibly useful and could be the perfect fit for your club because they do not require that everyone log in at a specific time, which allows for greater meeting flexibility. The suggestions below range from social media tools to project management and communication tools.

Facebook Live: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/facebook-live-guide>

Instagram TV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaRxgAW9mUY>



Best Practices for Conducting Virtual or Hybrid Meetings

It may be some time until all Rotarians are comfortable with attending "in-person" Rotary meetings. In the meantime, clubs can have Virtual or "Hybrid" meetings. What is a Hybrid meeting? Hybrid meetings are meetings where some members met in in-person and others join virtually via real-time conferencing apps such as Zoom or GoToMeeting. Here are some best practices to help get your club online.

As the organizer:

- Choose the technology that's right for your club's needs.
- Consider investing in computer equipment. You want remote participants to feel like they are in the same room as you, so you will need to help them create a presence. That means that you should have a reliable high-speed internet connection, a webcam, and excellent conference room equipment (TV/Projector, Remote Mic, Webcam, VGA, or HDMI Cables. Consider Bluetooth to limited wires.
- Use proper videoconferencing equipment and provide an audio option and consider recording the meeting and sharing it later. The ability to see and interact with fellow participants via technology like Zoom, GoToMeeting, and Google Hangouts helps keep everyone connected and engaged.
- Stick to meeting basics. Use an agenda and make sure everyone has access to the agenda before the meeting starts. This helps people both prepare and stay on track.
- Establish your meeting etiquettes ahead of time to get everyone on the same page. How will you know when someone wants to interrupt or speak? Will remote participants be on mute when not speaking? Are webcams expected? Are digital devices allowed in the meeting? Is eating food ok during the meeting?
- Rethink your meeting for an online format. Some parts of an in-person meeting don't work well online. Develop your meeting content to eliminate or reformat activities that are best done face-to-face.

- Keep it engaging. Keep things interesting by minimizing presentation length and maximizing discussion. Include polls, open Q&A, and best practice sharing—anything that focuses on the content and each other.
- Ask for support. Building a team allows people to contribute to the success of your meeting. Ask others to monitor chat boxes, answer questions during the call, and troubleshoot technical issues.
- Be prepared. Do a dry run with any presenters to be sure they know how to request control and share their screens. Log on early to test your audio and make sure all presenters are present.

Successful virtual and hybrid meetings should consider the needs of their participants. Encourage your participants to:

- Encourage members to become familiar and comfortable with the new technology. Currently, Zoom appears to be the solution of choice used by most clubs. Before your club's first Zoom meeting, train members on using both the video conferencing and the call-in options, and post those instructions before each meeting as a reminder. This sort of training and instruction may not be enough to help those who are technically challenged. Consider having two or three club members who are familiar with using Zoom conduct one-on-one instruction sessions before the first meeting. Practicing in advance helps make your meetings successful.
- Test the technology ahead of time. All participants should ensure that they have downloaded the online meeting platform and are comfortable with its features. Some good questions they should ask:
 - Is my audio working? Will I be able to hear the other participants, and will they be able to hear me?
 - Is my camera working? Is my face visible?
 - Have I eliminated background distractions to the best of my ability?
 - Is my lighting appropriate?
- Optimize the audio. All participants should mute themselves when they are not speaking. For best sound quality, use a headset or noise-canceling headphones. This will also help minimize background noise.
- Participate! The key to a successful online meeting is engaged, active members.

Keep participants engaged during your virtual meetings?

- Kick off the meeting with an activity to set the expectation for active participation from the start.

- Check-in with participants using your software's built-in features. If you want to do a quick poll of the room, consider asking participants to use the thumbs up or raise hand reaction.
- Use the built-in poll feature to tailor your presentation, if your software offers it. For example, you can poll your training attendees about whether they are new or continuing in their role.
- Utilize the question pane beyond Q&A. Ask for input or strategies from the audience and read out some of the best ones.
- If you're using Zoom meetings, set up breakout rooms for small group discussions or activities.



Engagement through Social Media

Social Media is an excellent tool for engaging members and the general community every day. Clubs can optimize and concentrate their social media channels as a resource to bolster engagement during the hiatus from in-person contact. Many of these strategies can continue to be used once you return to business as usual.

Fellowship

Use social media prompts to mimic the fellowship your members enjoy during your meetings. Included among the resources are social media assets that you may use to start these online conversations. Here are a few examples:

- What are you reading/Book Clubs?
- Picture Contest: Sunrises /Sunsets
- Kindness is Contagious

Migrating Meeting Activities to Social Media

- " Getting to know you" activities like Hot Seat or Member Profiles
- Happy Bucks or Happy Dollars online
- Does your club have a member with an interesting hobby, like beekeeping? Are any business owners getting creative during the pandemic? Does your club have members who are passionate about particular service projects? Ask them to share a self-recorded video!
 - These can be recorded merely using a cell phone. Try to limit video recordings to 5-6 minutes maximum.
 - Remember to write engaging posts that encourage members and guests to interact with the content.
 - Facebook Live is an excellent tool for short presentations featuring your members with interesting hobbies. The audience can ask questions in real-time that the presenter can answer on the spot.



Engagement From Afar

Of course, the BEST way to engage members is the same in-person or online! Get creative with ways to keep the spirit of service alive with your members!

Communicate

- Assign someone to be your Clubs Communications Director. Let them be in charge of essential member notifications and reminders
- Try using the "Remind Me App" to keep club members up-to-date <https://www.remind.com/>
- Enhance your electronic communications club newsletter or bulletin. Inject some fun items, not just jokes but stories about members, recipes, travel stories, etc.
- Updating your club website or Facebook Page

Assess Your Community Needs & Learn

- Review and refresh your club strategic plan
- Carry out a needs analysis in your local community by phoning and talking with people – what are your community's real needs?
- Identify community partners, both for now and the future - which other groups might you partner with?
- Start planning for recovery – How do we want our club to look after this is over? What projects could you pick up?
- Do some learning through the many learning modules in the Learning Center - <https://learn.rotary.org/members/learn/catalog>.
- Run a webinar - <https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/webinars/on-demand>

Spread Goodwill

- Choose a local charity and ask all members to highlight it using their social media. Choose a new charity each week! This is a great way to leverage Rotarian leaders' influence to elevate causes that matter to your local community (and it might even sprout a future project collaboration!).

- Coordinate with local hospitals or nursing homes for members to send cards or letters to combat loneliness from isolation in facilities that have limited visitors.
- Challenge members to look through their homes and sort items that can be donated to charity. Once it is safe to do so, hold a group donation day to a local charity thrift store (remember to take pictures!).
- Ask members to record themselves reading children's books and post through your club's social channels for parents to share with their children during school closures.
- Start a gift card drive. Ask members to purchase gifts cards (bonus points if it's a local small business) and then mail them along with a note from the Rotarian to organizations that would be able to put them to good use.
- Become virtual mentors for young people, especially Rotaractors
- Within the CDC guidelines, volunteer to run errands for those who need it.
- Engage with other community organizations, e.g., Meals on Wheels.

Donate

Encourage members to donate to The Rotary Foundation (hint: use the array of Rotary assets, including videos to promote; all available on My Rotary).

Initiate a "friendly competition" with other clubs to see which can raise the most money for a particular focus area or fund to earn "bragging rights" (or maybe the "losing" club has to provide the manual labor for the winning club's future project). Get creative and use this opportunity to encourage opportunities for Rotarians to give.



Creative Engagement Strategies

- Start a Walking or Biking Group - Outdoor activities are good for you and a great way to maintain your social connections. Just follow the current rules -i.e., don't shake hands, stay 6 feet apart, and don't participate if you have a cough or cold symptoms. This doesn't mean that you can enjoy conversation while staying fit and enjoying some fresh air. It is also great to maintain your mental health and a great way to maintain contact with both Rotarians and members of your community. Use social media and/or emails to update members on times and locations for walks or rides.
- Pen Pals - Develop a relationship with another club near or far to start "Rotary Pen Pals." See the sample invitation letter. This is a great way to strike up a relationship with someone you've met at an International Convention or a District Conference. Invite the partnering club to share mailing addresses for their members and then assign each one to a member of your club to start exchanging letters.
- "Crash" an E-Club - Share information about e-clubs with your members. Some e-clubs hold "virtual meetings," and some include online content. Anyone can peruse the websites of e-clubs and get inspired for other ways to maintain engagement without in-person meetings (they are the experts, after all!) *Online meeting offer from E-Club Caribbean plus Meeting invite: <https://bit.ly/32CflhZ>*
- Start a Book Club – Reading is an adventure. It promotes literacy, stimulates your brain, decreases stress, boosts teamwork skills, and has the potential to get the community and youth involved.

Do you have a new strategy that's working for you? Why not share your success with others? Send details to Pamela Trahan, D6200 Membership Chair, at pam@facts-5.com.

Service

- The Match Game - Designate some portion of club fundraising that has been raised so far this year, e.g., 50/50, drawdown, happy dollars, fines, etc. to a pool that will match club donations for charities. You may want to allow club members to direct where the money will go. Engagement!
- Auction/Service - Interact/Rotaract/Rotary club members are auctioned off for a half-day of yard work, washing cars, professional services, etc. Choose those kinds of skills to auction that keep within COVID-19 restrictions.
- Service above Self-a-Thon - Solicit donations for every hour of service a club member works. Again, choose those kinds of skills to auction that keep within COVID-19 restrictions.
- Facebook - Post your service project on Facebook and ask for contributions.
- Shredding - How do you get rid of sensitive documents? Several Rotary clubs have created a shredding fundraiser. As an extra incentive, clubs will recycle the paper. *For a guide to running a paper-shredding event, email Arthur Klein of the Rotary Club of New Milford, Connecticut, at shredfest@nmrotary. This can be done within COVID-19 restrictions.*
- Read-a-Thon or Book-a-Thon - The participant asks their friends and family to support them by the book or by the minute. Choose a library or school for the recipient.

Special Days

- Holiday Cards Denoting - "A gift has been made on your behalf to" The Rotary Foundation, your club, etc. Create and sell cards that can be used for one special holiday or create cards that can be used throughout the year.
- Birthday - Do a Facebook fundraiser on your birthday. Have the club change the birthday celebrant throughout the year and have the celebrant share with all their friends.
- Easter - The Rotary Club of Youngsville raised money while bringing smiles to children's faces on Easter morning with their "Egg My Yard" Fundraiser. Rotarians delivered Easter eggs filled with candy and scattered them across the front yard. Donations: 20 eggs - \$10.00; 40 eggs - \$20.00; 100 eggs - \$50.00. Contact [Maggie Lackie](#) for more information.
- Calendar - The Rotary Club of (RCO) Carpinteria Morning produces a yearly calendar. Twelve featured pictures are acquired each year by having a public photo contest.

Many local businesses buy 100 or more of them each year and give them out for PR. The Club prints their business name on them etc. if they buy more than a 100.

- Flag Lease Project - The RCO McKinney, TX, leases flags to families and businesses for Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Labor Day/Patriots Day, and Veteran's Day. They partner with groups to deliver, set up, and pick-up the flags and charge \$45 for the service.

Sports

- A Virtual Charity Run - Can't run in groups outside? No problem! The idea here is for supporters to pledge to run or walk any number of KMs or several consecutive days, whether by themselves outdoors, with their family or their dog, or on a treadmill at home. You can substitute another activity in the place of running or walking. Consider yoga, crafts, meditation, jump rope, or cycling, for example.

The Arts

- Jazzy Jars - Local individuals and groups pay \$5/canning jars and decorate them with the jazz theme. They are auctioned off online. This can also be done without a jazz theme with stools, chairs, Christmas trees, etc. Contact [Wendy Taylor](#), RCO Decatur Daybreak, AL. for more information.
- Sweaters - Have an online contest for Ugly Sweaters. To enter, you have to donate a sweater – not the ugly one - to a charity.

Gambling

- Reverse Raffle - Do this in a virtual meeting format. Every ticket in the raffle pool is drawn, and the winner of the raffle is the individual whose ticket number corresponds with the final ticket drawn from the pool. After each ticket is pulled, players can buy tickets from other players with half the price going to the pool.
- Bingo - Sell cards for \$5 each. Send the cards out before the event. Use the proceeds for winnings. It is done in a virtual meeting format.
- Pony Poop, Dog Poop, whatever - The RCO of St. Thomas, Ontario, has a unique lottery. You may need a gambling/lottery license, depending on where you hold the event. You find a pen in which to hold three horses. The pen is divided into imaginary squares; the squares' size depends on how many tickets are sold. The first sold square that is pooped on wins \$1,000; the second square pooped on, \$500; the third square, \$250. Tickets sell for \$5.00 each. Net revenues go to the Children's Hospital. They

usually sell between 1000 - 1200 tickets with squares about 1 X 1 foot. *This can be done within COVID-19 restrictions.*

Other Rotary-Related

- Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner with the Official/Celebrity - Invite Government official(s) celebrity/author to be the focus of a fundraiser. Get sponsors and charge for attendance. Talk about Rotary topics. All done in a virtual meeting format.
- Giving Circles - Get a group of members to each contribute an equal amount to generate \$1,000. One of the donors is chosen by chance to receive a Paul Harris Fellowship.
- Website Sponsorship - Seek sponsors for the club website giving a discount to members' companies.
- Direct Mail - Do a direct mail solicitation to friends of club members for a service project. Have club members sign the letters personally.
- Celebrity Phone Greeting - Get a local celebrity to agree to record a phone greeting for home phones for a donation.
- Rotary Jeopardy - Celebrate the Rotary Foundation with Rotary Jeopardy. Have teams enter to answer questions about Rotary. Have entrance fees and sponsors. Challenge all the clubs in the District. This is done within a virtual meeting format.

Miscellaneous

- Cutest Dog Contest - Plus, other awards, e.g., best costume. This can be done via email submissions with an entry fee. Get sponsors. Proceeds go to the local SPCA, Humane Society, etc.
- Online sales - Online sales may be the right idea for small clubs as well as large clubs. Some clubs use Rotary-themed items. Partner with other clubs. Some clubs work with groups or businesses already online and get a percentage of sales coming from referrals. It's very easy to promote a (Club- supported) business and link, rather than having to receive, sort, and distribute stock. It's a matter of encouraging them to make it part of their routine.
- Percentage of Sales - Work with a Rotarian's business and ask for a percentage of sales related to a special Rotary day, e.g., Paul Harris's birthday, the anniversary of the club's founding, etc.
- Trivia Night - It's a lot of fun and could bring a community together. All done virtually. Sponsorships and entrance fees. Choose a non-profit to which the proceeds go.

- Boom - The RCO Cadiz, Kentucky, used the explosive demolition of a bridge as a fundraising opportunity. They auctioned off the chance to push a plunger and set off the detonation.
- Go Fund Me - Clubs have found success in raising money through this online fundraiser.
- Spelling Bee - Many clubs have spelling bees to raise funds. Turn the spelling bee into a Zoom event. Have sponsors, entrance fees, betting on the winning team.
- East Coast Kitchen Party - In the Ontario, Canada portion of District 6330, 18 Rotary clubs partnered on a COVID-19 re-engineered fundraiser. The gala was live-streamed with entertainment and, in this case, with no charge, although an option was given to make a donation. It became much like a telethon. Restaurants were encouraged to do themed take-out meals with a number selling-out. The budget included \$1,000 (Canadian) to buy gift certificates from local businesses used as "door prizes.". There was no active solicitation of sponsorships or auction items, although a small auction was held. Specifically named charities were recipients. A third-party provided the ticket/donation platform and website. The event was transmitted via Zoom webinar and Facebook Live. With an estimated 1,600 viewers, they raised \$60,000.

USEFUL LINKS

Rotary Membership resources

<https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/learn-topic/membership>

Rotary Online Meeting guidance

<https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/learn-topic/online-club-meetings>

Rotary - Taking your Club online - Story/Guidance

<https://www.rotary.org/en/how-take-your-club-online>

YouTube Zoom Meeting Guidance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2pq4l1urXA>

GoToMeeting assistance

<https://support.goto.com/meeting>

Rotary Learning Center - your online learning and personal growth tool

<https://www.rotary.org/learn>

Using Zoom for Rotary Meetings

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9z2D9qn_AE4

Public Image Resources (Rotary Brand Center)

<https://brandcenter.rotary.org/en-GB>