

# Online club meetings

Meeting online is a great way to stay connected when meeting in person isn't feasible or convenient. Clubs can still provide service and fellowship in virtual settings. Clubs all around the world are embracing the flexibility that comes with meeting online. Find tips, resources, and best practices below.

## Best Practices for Conducting Online Meetings

As the organizer:

1. **Choose the best technology for your needs.** Some free services limit the number of participants or the length of your meeting.
2. **Use video but provide an audio dial-in option.** Seeing and interacting with fellow participants via technology – like Zoom, GoToMeeting, Google Hangouts, LINE, Skype, WhatsApp, Tencent, and Microsoft Teams – helps keep everyone connected and engaged. However, not everyone will be able to join your meeting via video. Provide an audio option and consider recording the meeting and sharing it later.
3. **Stick to meeting basics.** Use an agenda, set meeting ground rules, and clearly outline next steps at the end of the meeting. If background information is required, be sure to share it with all participants beforehand.
4. **Rethink your meeting for an online format.** If some parts of an in-person meeting don't work well online, adjust your meeting content to maximize your online format.
5. **Keep it engaging.** Minimize presentation length and maximize discussion. Include polls, open Q&A, best practice sharing—anything that focuses the participants' attention on the content and each other.
6. **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.
7. **Be prepared.** Practice with any presenters so they know how to request control and share their screens. Log on early to test your audio and make sure all presenters are on.

# Best Practices for Participating in Online Meetings

Encourage participants to:

1. **Download and test the technology ahead of the meeting.** Get comfortable with its features. Some good questions to ask are:
  1. Is my audio working? Will I be able to hear the other participants and will they be able to hear me?
  2. Is my camera working? Is my face visible?
  3. Have I eliminated background distractions to the best of my ability? (Rotary backgrounds available in the Brand Center for Zoom meetings)
  4. Is my lighting appropriate?
2. **Optimize the audio.** All participants should mute themselves when they are not speaking. For best sound quality, use a headset or headphones. This will also help minimize background noise.
3. **Participate!** The key to a successful online meeting is engaged, active members.

(Adapted in part from "[What it Takes to Run a Great Virtual Meeting](#)". Bob Frisch and Cary Greene.)

## Tips for Engaging Members in Virtual Settings

Your club provides your members with a feeling of belonging and opportunities for personal growth. Beyond holding online meetings, you can continue to engage them even in a virtual setting by:

- Having virtual social gatherings where you set up video chats to connect on a personal level and recognize members for their efforts, such as online game nights or happy hours
- Seeking opportunities to have a guest speaker or multi-club meetings to make meetings more insightful
- Conducting new member orientations via webinar and online tools
- Encouraging members to take online courses on Rotary's [Learning Center](#) to grow professional skills
- Establishing a mentor program where members are paired to share ideas and experiences and offer support

- Hold online fundraisers or service projects that can be done remotely (see [examples](#) of Covid-19 related projects)
- Post your activities on social media so your community can see that your club is active
- Contact another club and ask if you and some of your members can attend as guests to share ideas

## Resources & reference

- [Meeting Online Learning Topic](#) – Share tips and resources with other members for meeting online
- [Club meetings \(PDF\)](#)
- [Club flexibility FAQ](#)

## Tools

- [Find an online club](#)

## Rotary support

- [Club and District Support representative](#)

## Featured stories

- [How to engage members during the coronavirus pandemic](#)
- [Embracing virtual meetings for your club](#)
- [Let e-clubs help you get online](#)
- [Ideas for staying connected during social distancing](#)

<https://my.rotary.org/en/club-flexibility-faq>

# Club flexibility

## FAQ

Many of the traditional rules and requirements that Rotary clubs have had historically, such as weekly meetings, attendance requirements, morning or lunch meetings, traditional classifications, and high costs, have limited who is able or willing to join. When we join together different perspectives and backgrounds, professions and areas of expertise, talents and resources, we can see challenges in new ways and identify creative solutions.

Any Rotary club wishing to try a new approach can do so by amending its bylaws as permitted by the [Standard Rotary Club Constitution](#). But clubs can also continue to follow their current requirements for meetings, attendance, structure, and categories of membership. Have a conversation with your club members to determine whether flexible options can help to address your club's membership needs.

### **Meeting format**

[In what ways are clubs changing their meeting format?](#)

Clubs are demonstrating innovation and flexibility by replacing the traditional speaker and meal meeting format with a variety of new formats. Some clubs are rotating where they meet by holding gatherings in a member's home, a local restaurant, or other "offsite" locations such as a local business. Some clubs are meeting virtually or allowing some of their members to call into the in-person meeting. Many clubs are using meetings to plan and conduct their service projects and fundraisers, and having social events to get to know other members better. Consider surveying your members to see what new formats they would be interested in.

[What are the advantages of changing the meeting format?](#)

Changing the meeting format not only gives members a variety of club experiences, but also keeps them engaged and active in the club. It can also be more appealing to guests to have hands-on, fun, productive meetings that connect with Rotary's values and mission. This form of flexibility also makes it easier for some members to attend meetings virtually when they would not have been able to attend in person. We recommend asking current and prospective members what they hope for in a club meeting experience.

## Meeting frequency and attendance

### [How frequently should clubs meet?](#)

Clubs should offer opportunities to meet twice per month at minimum. Those meetings could be traditional meetings, social outings, service projects, etc. Clubs that wish to meet more often can do so.

### [Are clubs allowed to remove attendance requirements?](#)

Yes. Clubs are encouraged to relax attendance expectations or not have them at all. Our research shows that rigid rules and policies are a barrier to attracting new members and engaging current ones. Further, it excludes younger professionals who have developing careers and young families. Attending meetings is an opportunity, not an obligation.

### [Does our club secretary still need to send monthly attendance reports to the district governor?](#)

Rotary International does not collect attendance reports, which were originally thought of as a way to gauge how engaged members are and how healthy the club is. Some districts continue to follow this method. However, we can measure club health in other ways – for example, by how many members are involved in a project, club leadership role, or by how many beneficiaries have benefitted from your club's service. Ask your district governor what is preferred, and whether a report is needed or whether the information can be captured and shared using Rotary Club Central.

## Membership types

### [What membership types exist?](#)

There can be as many types of membership as are created by clubs. Some popular examples are corporate, family, or younger professional membership. However, a club is free to design different membership types that attract diverse members, as long as it's documented how they differ from traditional membership in their club bylaws. The Rotary International database does not track membership types – only whether a member is active or honorary.

### [What's the difference between active and honorary members?](#)

Rotary International defines active members as those who meet the requirements for membership, pay RI dues, are eligible to vote on club and district matters, are eligible to hold a club officer position and count in the club's membership numbers in Rotary's database. Honorary membership is used to recognize people who have distinguished themselves by meritorious service and embody Rotary ideals, or those considered friends of Rotary for their support of Rotary's causes. They are exempt from paying RI dues, have no vote in Rotary matters, are not eligible to hold any club office, and are not included in a club's membership numbers in Rotary's database. Active members are called Rotarians, while honorary members are called honorary Rotarians.

Honorary membership should not be confused with Rotarians whose excused absence is approved by a club's board. In order to count in a club's membership numbers in Rotary's database, one must be reported as an active, RI-dues paying member. An active member can be an honorary member of another club, but cannot be an active member of another club.

### [How do corporate memberships work?](#)

Your club is free to offer alternative membership types of any kind, as long as new members are counted as individuals — corporate members in this case — rather than the corporations that sponsor their membership. If the members pay RI dues, they will be included in your club's official membership count and receive all the benefits that other active, dues-paying members enjoy.

Your club can have different policies for these members' other financial obligations (club and district dues, meal costs, etc.), attendance requirements, or service expectations, as long as these policies are reflected in the club bylaws. Learn more in our [Guide to Corporate Membership](#).

### [How do family memberships work?](#)

Family membership – also called spouse or partner memberships – are similar to corporate membership, in that there is often a primary member and one or more alternate members. Often times, the alternate members are young adult children of the primary member or a partner or spouse. Clubs that offer this type of membership typically offer a reduced rate for the alternate member(s) as an incentive to join. The alternate members can attend in the primary member's place or come along with their family member Rotarian. Alternate members may be active, RI-dues paying members or not, depending on how the club chooses to structure this membership type.

### [How do associate memberships work?](#)

Your club can define associate membership as it wishes. Some clubs use associate membership as a trial period to engage prospective members. If the associate members see value in the experience, they can join the club. In such cases, the club would report them as active members once they've joined, and the members would then receive all the benefits that other active, dues-paying members enjoy and would be included in the club's membership count.

### [How do younger professional memberships work?](#)

Some clubs have designed a membership type for younger professionals with a more affordable dues structure, and more flexible expectations for participating. Clubs that create this type of membership recognize that younger members can play an integral role in the future of their club, but may not have the financial resources or available time to attend weekly meetings at this point in their careers.

### [Are Rotaractors now also Rotarians?](#)

No. Members of Rotary clubs are Rotarians and members of Rotaract clubs remain Rotaractors. The enactment that passed at the 2019 Council on Legislation (19-72) will not change the separate identity of Rotaractors. It simply expands the membership of Rotary International to include both Rotary and Rotaract clubs. For more information, see [Frequently asked questions about 2019 Council on Legislation changes to Rotaract](#).

### [If I'm a Rotaract member and a Rotary member, do I have to pay dues to both clubs?](#)

Yes. You would pay any required club or district dues for both clubs, and Rotary member dues to Rotary International. However, your club has the flexibility to create different membership types for Rotaract members and younger professionals. This could include reduced club or district dues for members who belong to both Rotaract and Rotary, as long as the dues to RI are paid.

Also, while there are many benefits that come with dual membership, it should be noted that when Rotaractors join Rotary, they become ineligible for Global Grant scholarship funds, Rotary Peace Fellowships, and Rotaract Convention registration rates.

## **Club models**

### [What Rotary club models are there?](#)

Club models simply refers to the way a club chooses to operate. The beauty of flexibility is that each club is free to define its own internal way of life within the framework set by the constitutional documents. Some trends that have emerged are included in [this document](#).

### [How does a satellite club work?](#)

Satellite clubs are branch clubs of a sponsor club. The satellite club members are Rotarians and considered members of the sponsor club. Only eight members and the support of a sponsor club are needed to start a satellite club. They often offer a different club environment or meeting time and location from their sponsor club. Like a Rotary club, satellite clubs hold regular meetings, have bylaws and a board, and get involved in community service projects. The sponsor club provides advice and support. In some



cases, satellite clubs may grow and apply to become a separate Rotary club. Satellite club members are Rotarians. Officially, they are members of the sponsor club. For more information, see the [Guide to Satellite Clubs](#) and the [Satellite Club Frequently Asked Questions](#).

### [How could my club benefit from creating a satellite club?](#)

Starting a satellite club offers the additional benefits of expanding project possibilities, visibility, and the impact of Rotary in your community. Satellite clubs can also attract members who want a different or more affordable club experience or bring Rotary to communities that might not be able to support a standalone club, and serve as transitional Rotary clubs.

### [Are satellite club members equal to Rotary club members?](#)

Yes. Satellite clubs are not substandard Rotary clubs. Their members are members of their sponsor club, and therefore, Rotarians. They have club leaders and committees, conduct service projects, and meet regularly, just like traditional Rotary clubs. Learn more in the [Guide to Satellite Clubs](#) and the [Satellite Club Frequently Asked Questions](#).

### [Now that Rotary no longer distinguishes between e-clubs and other clubs, are clubs that meet primarily online still called e-clubs?](#)

It is up to the club. Rotary no longer distinguishes between clubs that hold face-to-face meetings and clubs that meet online. That's because all clubs now have the option of meeting in person, online (using applications such as Skype, Zoom, or FaceTime), or a combination of both. If they choose, clubs that meet exclusively or primarily online may keep that word in their name and continue to brand themselves as an e-club to emphasize their preferred meeting format.

### [Are current Rotaract and Interact e-clubs still considered e-clubs?](#)

The Rotaract and Interact standard club constitutions and bylaws already permit these clubs to meet in person, online, or a combination of both, with the approval of their sponsor Rotary club or clubs. Rotaract and Interact clubs' official names do not include "e-club," but clubs may name and brand themselves as e-clubs to emphasize that they meet exclusively or primarily online.

Because of the age of Interact members, all online activities, such as the club website and social media pages, must be operated in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, and sponsor Rotary clubs must obtain written consent of Interactors' parents or legal guardians in advance of Interact participation as necessary.

### [What are passport clubs?](#)

Passport clubs are Rotary clubs that are using a model that gives members a more flexible club experience, such as frequently visiting other clubs, a relaxed attendance policy, and meetings that don't involve a meal and a speaker. The term "passport" refers to the ability to move freely from club to club visiting meetings or participating in their activities. Any Rotarian can visit another club when traveling, but passport clubs encourage their members to do so on a regular basis. This is how passport clubs got their name.

### [How many passport clubs is a district able to have?](#)

There is no limit to the number of passport clubs in a district.