

COVID-19 risks are real

Many Rotary Clubs understandably are eager to start meeting again and having events, and some clubs already are meeting in person. All clubs need to take adequate measures to keep people safe during this time when COVID-19 poses a serious risk to the health of Rotarians, their guests and the greater community.

Rotary International strongly recommends that U.S. Rotary Clubs and Districts follow “all applicable guidelines from the CDC, and their state and local regulations.” RI also has made clear that clubs and districts cannot require a Rotarian to attend any event in person during this new Rotary year. Clubs and districts have been encouraged to have a virtual backup for each event.

COVID-19 presents some special challenges in South Carolina because cases of the coronavirus are increasing rapidly. South Carolina now is considered a hotspot for the coronavirus. New cases have jumped from 1,000 to 1,300 weekly during the eight weeks from March 24 to May 23, to 4,515 new cases for the week ending June 13 and 5,906 new cases for the week ending June 20.

Some Rotary Clubs meet in cities in District 7750 that have more restrictions on public gatherings than other places in the state. Rotary Club leaders need to know their local and state restrictions.

A [wealth of information can be found at the Centers for Disease Control](#) that will guide club and district leaders on how to keep meetings as safe as possible. Please pay special attention to the sections on [Gatherings and Public Events](#), and [Community and Faith-Based Organizations](#).

Rotary Clubs are urged to follow recommendations to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19 when offering in-person meetings or events. The CDC offers guidelines if groups are planning in-person meetings that include:

- Urge people to stay home when appropriate, such as when a person is sick or has recently had close contact with a person showing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Encourage frequent handwashing and make available a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Promote social distancing at all times during the meeting or event.
- Require cloth face coverings, as feasible.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Have individual, pre-packaged boxes or bags instead of a potluck, buffet, or family-style meal.
- Avoid sharing of foods and utensils.

A complete set of recommendations can be found on the CDC website. We all have a role to play in keeping our communities safe during this global pandemic and protecting the health of our Rotarians and their guests. It's important to prepare and plan for any Rotary meeting or event.