

COVID-19 Coronavirus Guide for Rotary Clubs

Updated 14/03/2020

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to inform Rotary Clubs in District 9820 to enable appropriate decisions and measures to be taken to protect the wellbeing of members and the public.

We are in a rapidly changing situation with COVID-19 with trends showing that infections are doubling on average every 10 days. The actions of the Federal and State Governments as well as the advice from their websites dedicated to COVID-19 are intended to slow the new infection rates to avoid our health systems being overwhelmed.

It is the duty of us all to do all that we can to achieve this. For those who are still treating COVID-19 lightly, please do not do so. It has a fatality rate 4 times higher than a normal flu, and the demographic of Rotarians is squarely within the most risk of serious infection group.

We are not looking to cause panic or undue fear. We are encouraging clubs to recognise the risks and become knowledgeable in their mitigation.

Information & Resources

- Federal Government Health Department
<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>
- Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>
- Factsheet for people aged over 65 years
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/202003/FACTSHEET-People-over-65-coronavirus20200305.docx>
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- Victorian COVID-19 Screening Clinics
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>
- Know the Signs poster
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-know-the-signs>
- Stop the Spread Poster
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-stop-the-spread>
- WHO video “How is the new Coronavirus affecting people who get it?”
<https://youtu.be/qF42gZVm1Bo>
- WHO video “What can people do to protect themselves and others from getting the new Coronavirus?” <https://youtu.be/bPITHEiFWLc>
- WHO video “Why it is recommended to avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough?” <https://youtu.be/6Ooz1GZsQ70>

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Our collective Rotary responsibility

- To protect the health and safety of our members and families.
- To protect the health and safety of members of the public we interact with.
- To avoid potential liability from failing to act or being negligent about our duty of care.

How do we discharge that responsibility?

This list is not exhaustive and not all are necessarily appropriate at any given time.

- By supporting the guidance from WHO and the Federal and State Governments
- By implementing strategies to limit the potential for spread of the virus (*see the section headed "How to help prevent the spread"*)
- By making our members aware of good practices to protect from and limit the spread of the virus.
- By insisting members stay away from Rotary events and meetings if they feel unwell.
- By continuously assessing COVID-19's potential impact on our operations, meetings, and other events
- By cancelling or postponing meetings or Rotary Club-related travel when appropriate.
- By switching to online or conference call meetings as a preferred option.
- By encouraging meetings and events to be handshake, hug and kiss free - from elbow bumps to a good ol' foot shake (shoe bump), be creative in the greeting methods you might adopt.
- By actively promoting good hygiene.
- By actively promoting social distancing (at least 1 metre distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing).
- By asking for information from venue providers on what they are doing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus.
- By displaying the safety posters prominently
- By including COVID-19 safety information into Club Bulletins and as well as on your Facebook and websites.
- At dinners or meetings remove every second chair to spread people apart.

Event & Meeting Risks to Consider

- Attendance by infected persons
- Infected venue staff
- Infected surfaces and areas at the event venue, including potential contamination at any accommodation facilities

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Advice from Rotary Zone 8 Insurance & Protection Committee

The following has been taken from an email to District Governors received the evening of Friday 13 March 2020 from PDG Peter Kaye, the Chair of our Rotary Zone 8 Insurance & Protection Committee.

Points to consider:

- Australia's chief medical officer, Dr Brendan Murphy, stated today (13/03/2020) to the PM, state premiers and senior ministers, to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Australia, the government must implement a ban on mass gatherings of more than 500 people. *(PM Scott Morrison announced the ban later in the evening).*
- Rotary organised Markets or Events should be suspended.
- With major events around the country being cancelled, there will be a flood of public expectation not to proceed with events.
- The WA branch of the RSL has conceded there is a "pretty good possibility" Anzac Day services will be cancelled in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic given the vulnerability of elderly veterans to the disease.
- Rotary's public image must be that of a responsible Organisation, whose activities will not expose the general public to unnecessary risk.
- Where possible meetings are held electronically via conference call or video link.

Conferences, Events, and other meetings

- RI recommends that Rotary members and participants follow the guidelines set by the World Health Organization (WHO) and your national, regional, or local health authorities to protect the health and safety of our members and program participants. If it's recommended, postpone or cancel in-person meetings or hold them online or by phone. If there are travel advisories, exercise caution, during district or club travel. If you have any questions about travel related to a global grant, contact your regional grants officer.
- The Rotary National Insurance Policy does **not** include Event Cancellation Insurance for event holders.
- The Rotary ISR policy does not provide cover for any Loss of Revenue due to the cancellation of a Rotary event as a result of Coronavirus.
- We believe that it is prudent that you consider cancellation of Rotary conferences and events up to and including the 30th April 2020 as a minimum.

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Updated 14/03/2020

What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus that can cause an infection in people, including a severe respiratory illness. The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19.

Symptoms

- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Fever
- Pneumonia
- Difficulty breathing (severe cases)

How the virus is spread

The virus is most likely to spread from person to person through:

- direct contact with a person whilst they are infectious.
- contact with droplets when a person with a confirmed infection coughs or sneezes; or
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) that were contaminated by droplets from secretions coughed or sneezed from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

People at most risk of serious infection.

From previous experience with other coronaviruses the risk groups are identified below. People in any of these risk groups should review all the information and consider the advisability of attending events.

- people with compromised immune systems (e.g. cancer)
- elderly people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people[^]
- people with diagnosed chronic medical conditions (especially heart, respiratory)
- very young children and babies*

[^]Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience a burden of disease 2.3 times the rate of other Australians. This may increase the risk of severe disease.

** At this stage, the risk to children and babies, and the role children play in the transmission of COVID-19, is not clear. However, there has so far been a low rate of confirmed COVID-19 cases among children relative to the broader population.*

How to help prevent the spread

- Wash hands often with soap and running water, for at least 20 seconds. Always wash hands before and after eating, and after going to the toilet. Dry hands with paper towel or hand dryer.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue* when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow.
** Immediately dispose of used tissues into a closed top bin.*
- Avoid handshaking and facial contact with others
- Buy/Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with over 60 per cent alcohol.
- Don't wear a face mask if you are well.
- Continue healthy habits: exercise, drink water, get plenty of sleep, and now is the time to quit smoking. Call the Quitline 137 848.

Exclude Potential Virus Carriers from Meetings or Events

- Those who have COVID-19 coronavirus
- Those who have returned from a country or region that is at higher risk for COVID-19 within the 14 days leading to the event.
- Those who have returned from a country or region that is a moderate risk for COVID-19 within 14 days leading to the event.
- Those who have had more than casual contact with someone who has returned from a high or moderate country or region within the 14 days leading to event.
(Casual contact is described as 'someone who has been face to face for less than 15 minutes, or been in the same closed space for less than 2 hours, as someone who has tested positive for the novel coronavirus when that person was infectious')
- Those who have displayed any flu like symptoms, no matter how minor, in the 14 days preceding the event; or have had more than casual contact with someone who has either displayed flu like symptoms or been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the event.

*At 13/03/2020, The Australian Government considered the following countries to be at **higher risk** for COVID-19:*

- *Mainland China, Iran, Italy, Republic of Korea*

*At 13/03/2020 the Australian Government considered the following countries to be at **moderate risk** for COVID-19:*

- *Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, Thailand*

End: