

Rotary Election Guidelines

(This document is intended for use by district governors in conducting elections according to RI policies and procedures.)

1. Consult the [2007 RI Manual of Procedure](#)

RI Bylaws Article 10: Nominations and Elections for Officers – General Provisions

RI Bylaws Article 12: Nominations and Elections for Directors

RI Bylaws Article 13: Nominations and Elections for Governors

2. References from the *Rotary Code of Policies*

17.040. District-Level Elections

Districts are encouraged to use the nominating committee system for all district elections (with a ballot-by-mail in the event of a challenge to the selection of the nominating committee) provided however, that nominating committees need not be used to select the members of nominating committees.

17.040.1. Guidelines for District-Level Elections

The governor shall send the “Guidelines for Candidates for Elective Position in RI,” as adopted by the RI Board, as well as the following list of election guidelines to all clubs at the time of the official call for nominations:

Rotarians and election candidates shall:

1. learn and follow both the spirit and the letter of RI’s election guidelines.
2. consult with knowledgeable Rotarians if you have any concerns about a current assignment or a new assignment if it may give an appearance of campaigning.
3. not undertake personal initiatives to gain visibility, personal recognition, or favor.
4. not respond in kind to another candidate’s improper activities.
5. not communicate with or visit clubs involved in the applicable election except to fulfill necessary functions.

17.040.2. Voluntary System of Rotation

Districts may adopt a voluntary system of rotating an office among the components of the district, but candidates who notwithstanding seek an office contrary to the voluntary rotation system may not be excluded from candidacy by a nominating committee or vote of the clubs. Actions to exclude a candidate or influence an election on the basis that the rotation system should be upheld is not permissible.

19.030. Governor-nominee Selection

19.030.1. Selection of Governor-nominee

The selection by the clubs in a district of a governor-nominee should be conducted in a dignified, responsible manner in harmony with the principles of Rotary. Districts should seek out and nominate for the office of district governor the best qualified person through procedures not influenced by a system whereby the nomination is by tradition rotated among various groups of clubs or geographic areas.

District nominating committees are encouraged to interview all candidates for governor, whether they are suggested by clubs or by the nominating committee. Each interview of governor-nominee candidates should satisfy the following minimum needs:

- a. verify that each candidate meets the formal requirements for nomination, in accordance with RI Bylaws sections 15.070. and 15.080.;
- b. clarify the specific duties that a governor requires, including knowledge, experience, time, and fiscal resources;
- c. allow an overall summary of each candidate's qualifications and suitability;
- d. enable each candidate to reveal her or his intentions and ambitions.

19.030.2. Selection of Governor-nominee through Ballot-by-Mail Procedure

Information to be included in the biographical data to accompany ballots-by-mail for election of the governor shall be as follows:

- 1) name of candidate; name and location of Rotary club; number of years a Rotarian; classification or former classification; name of firm or former firm; position in firm or former firm; meetings attended in last five years; current position(s) and/or assignment(s) in Rotary (elective or appointed); former position(s) and/or assignment(s) (elective or appointed);

- 2) special Rotary services and/or particular Rotary activities in which candidate has been engaged, i.e. what candidate has done to advance Rotary;
- 3) most significant honors or achievements in business and professional activities;
- 4) most significant honors or achievements in civic and public service activities.

21.010. District Rules and Procedures Committee

Districts are encouraged to form a district “Rules and Procedures” committee to advise and assist governors on nominations and elections and other matters involving RI’s constitutional documents. The committee shall consist of three members, each serving a staggered three-year term with the possibility of reappointment. Appointments to the committee are made by the governor at the conclusion of his or her year in office. Members should be knowledgeable about RI’s constitutional documents and election procedures.

Governors with questions concerning RI election policies and procedures that they cannot resolve within their districts with the assistance of their Rules and Procedures committee should contact their Club and District Administration representative, Rotarians in neighboring districts familiar with RI election procedures and guidelines, or the RI director from their area for assistance.

26.100. Election Guidelines and Campaigning

26.100.1. Board Approved Statement of Guidelines

A single statement of guidelines for RI elections should apply to the entire Rotary world. All candidates for elective office should be advised in writing of the RI election policies and procedures by the person responsible for administering the election.

26.100.2. Official Report of Nominating Committee

After confidential discussion in committee, all nominating committees for RI offices, including nominating committees for governor, shall state in writing on official reports to the general secretary that the selected nominee, to the best of the committee’s knowledge, has not violated any of the rules against campaigning, electioneering or canvassing in the RI Bylaws. The report of all nominating committees shall also contain the names and signatures of all committee members in attendance. Such report should be forwarded to the general secretary along with the name of the nominee of the committee.

26.100.3. Balloting Procedures for Selection of Directors-nominee

Ballots sent to clubs to select Directors-nominee shall be accompanied by return envelopes, pre-addressed to the balloting committee, with instructions that the ballot must be returned in the pre-addressed envelope.

Ballots returned in the pre-addressed envelopes shall be delivered unopened for safe-keeping to a member of the staff as designated by the general secretary. With the approval of and at the instruction of the chair of the balloting committee, the general secretary may open the envelopes before the committee's meeting in order to sort ballots and verify the number of votes to which clubs are entitled, without tabulating the votes, and taking all necessary steps to safeguard the confidentiality of ballots. Ballots for directors-nominee cannot be duplicated and only returned original ballots shall be counted.

26.100.5. Rules Regarding Campaigning, Canvassing and Electioneering

It is a fundamental principle in Rotary that the best qualified candidate should be selected for service in Rotary's elective offices. Therefore, any effort to influence the selection process in a positive or negative manner by campaigning, canvassing, electioneering or otherwise is prohibited under the RI Bylaws.

The following rules shall be followed concerning campaigning, canvassing and electioneering for any Rotarian considering election to the office of president, director, Governor, or representative to the Council on Legislation, or the nominating committee for any such office. These guidelines are designed to ensure that the best qualified candidate is selected for office:

- 1) Rotarians should at all times conform to the prohibitions of the RI Bylaws concerning campaigning, canvassing or electioneering. All Rotarians should observe both the letter and the spirit of the bylaws and refrain from any activity whose purpose or effect is to influence others by promoting or soliciting support for a candidate's or another Rotarian's candidacy. Such activity is repugnant to the spirit of the bylaws and the principles of Rotary and will be grounds for disqualification of a candidate.
- 2) Campaigning, canvassing or electioneering is any action seeking to promote, attack, support, or oppose a candidate, either directly or indirectly, in any medium, including, but not limited to, any action seeking votes, requesting support in a forthcoming election, distribution of literature or promotional materials or other overt actions intended to promote one's candidacy for an elected Rotary office.

- 3) The periods of candidacy for elective office begin when individual Rotarians begin to give serious consideration to submitting their names for a position covered by the RI rules for nominations and elections. Commencing at that time, candidates should be particularly careful to avoid any actions designed to publicize their names or achievements, to call attention to the applicable nominations or elections, or to give candidates an unfair advantage over other candidates for the same position.
- 4) The normal performance of duly-assigned Rotary activities would not be considered to be a violation of the policies related to campaigning, canvassing or electioneering.
- 5) Should a candidate become aware of any campaigning or electioneering activities which are undertaken on the candidate's behalf, the candidate shall immediately and in writing express disapproval to all concerned and instruct them to terminate such activity.
- 6) Contacting clubs to inform them to request their concurrence for a proposed challenge or election complaint is not prohibited provided that such contact is limited to the exchange of factual information.