Dear Governor Matthews,

Thank you for your emails today.

While I can’t promise it will help with all Rotarians, here is what I’m sharing with Rotarians that have questions about the policy.  Of course, I’m happy to talk to any Rotarian via phone or email if they want to share their feedback with the RI Board.

Previous to 2000, Rotary’s board was of the opinion that use of the Rotary mark in sponsorship was commercial and therefore inconsistent with the Bylaws and not allowed for Rotary clubs, districts, Rotary entities and Rotary International.  In reality, the RI Board knew that clubs were accepting sponsorship regardless of the bylaws. In 2000-2001, the Rotary Board adopted a policy prohibiting Rotary International, the Rotary Foundation, Rotary clubs, districts and other Rotary Entities from entering into sponsorship or cooperative relationships involving weapons.   In 2015, Rotary received questions from Rotarians regarding the policy’s application.  In reviewing the policy, it was noted that the language was not clear, so the Rotary Board undertook a review.  The discussion of potential policy clarifications lasted over a year, culminating in the recent decision to update the policy in January 2017.

A key consideration was Rotary’s risk if a weapon was purchased at a Rotary event and then caused serious injury or death. Another objective was to ensure consistency in how the Rotary logo is used in the 200 countries and regions where we have clubs.

The policy modifications made do not indicate an organizational stance on the appropriateness of gun use or ownership, nor do they limit anyone’s right to own or use guns.  This policy does not prohibit clubs from organizing sporting events such as duck hunts or skeet shooting. Instead, these policy clarifications address the questions raised by our members and provide clarity on our sponsorship guidelines and use of the Rotary mark.

As you know, Rotary’s mission is advancing world understanding, goodwill and peace.  Rotary is a nonpolitical organization.  We do not take positions on government policy in the United States or elsewhere.  The Board did not make the recent policy modifications for political purposes or effect. This policy was reviewed and modified by Rotary members elected to act in the best interests of clubs throughout the world.

The revision clarified five policy points:

1. Rotary clubs, districts, and other Rotary Entities may not engage in transferring ownership of weapons or participate in activities where weapons are sold, given away or raffled.
2. Rotary clubs, districts and other Rotary Entities and their events may not be sponsored by organizations whose primary business is the sale or manufacture of guns or weapons.
3. The Rotary marks (or Rotary wheel) may not be used in conjunction with those organizations whose primary business is the sale or manufacture of guns or weapons.
4. The Rotary Marks (or wheel) shall not be used in any visual that includes guns, weapons or other armaments.
5. Clubs/districts/Entities shall not conduct any gun shows or exhibitions involving guns, weapons or other armaments.

What Rotary’s policy does not do:

* The policy does not limit any person’s right to own or use weapons of any kind.
* The policy makes no comment on the ownership or use of weapons.

This policy does not prohibit clubs from sponsoring or organizing sporting events such as turkey shoots, fox hunts, or skeet shooting.

Here is a [link](https://my.rotary.org/en/document/rotary-code-policies) to the updated full edition of the Rotary Code of Policies on our website.  Please note that you need to be logged in as a member to access the document and use this link.

However, since this document is long, I’ve extracted the club and district references to guns and weapons in the attached document.

If your club or district would like to formally petition the Board, the letter should be addressed to the RI Board of Directors, signed by the club president, and indicate the majority of club members requested the petition to be sent. All such petitions can be forwarded to my email address as I’m collecting feedback and petitions to the Board on this issue.

It’s very helpful if club petitions include specific changes to the policy that the club would like the Board to consider and why they would like this change to be made or what impact the policy has on their operations.

Rotary’s Board is keenly interested in hearing from its members on this issue and any general observations on how we can make a more meaningful and effective Rotary experience.

Let me know how else I can help.  I am

Sincerely yours,

Laurie

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Laurie S. McCarthy

Director | Member Support

Tel 1.847.424.5289

[rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org/)

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**From:** David Matthews, DG [<mailto:demrotary@mediacombb.net>]   
**Sent:** Monday, 03 April, 2017 10:39 AM  
**To:** Laurie McCarthy  
**Cc:** 'Jill Pietrusinski'  
**Subject:** Gun Policy

**Laurie,  I understand you are the point person  at RI on inquiries regarding the policy on firearms.  Can you provide me with a brief summary of what you are telling those who call?  I am wanting to make sure we in our district are on the same page.  Also we have two clubs that have regularly done gun raffles.  So  do you have suggestions for that?**

**We have a PN, Kenny Harrelson, from Carmi, Illinois who is complaining about this.  Under a separate email I will send you his response to our PE and suggest you contact him.  He has also posted something on Facebook last night, but this morning I can’t find it so hopefully he has pulled it.**

**Any direction you can give would be greatly appreciated.**

**Thank you,**

**David Matthews, District Governor 2016-17**

**Rotary District  6510**

**618-534-5933**

[**demrotary@mediacombb.net**](mailto:demrotary@mediacombb.net)

