# District Newsletter Policy and Guiding Principles

## Statement of policy

District newsletters:

* Are the most important way in which members receive information about district events, activities and programs. In member surveys, members rate district newsletters in the top three preferred RTOERO communication channels.
* Follow RTOERO policies. Of special relevance are the Privacy Policy and the Equity and Diversity Policy.
* Comply with relevant federal and provincial legislation, such as copyright and privacy laws.
* Follow the RTOERO brand guidelines.
* Do not accept paid advertising – as stated in the Advertising Policy.

## Guiding principles

**Brand guidelines**

* Newsletter editors and writers should be familiar with RTOERO brand guidelines and make use of brand resources provided for district use, such as the district logo and newsletter template.
* All brand resources are available on the website - <https://rtoero.ca/brand-resources>.

**Newsletter editor**

* The district should recruit a volunteer newsletter editor, who is a member of the executive.
* The main responsibilities of the newsletter editor are outlined in a volunteer role description.
* Notify the RTOERO office, membership@rtoero.ca, when there is a change of newsletter editor.
* New newsletter editors receive training resources from the RTOERO office. The outgoing newsletter editor should provide relevant information to support smooth succession.

**Editorial team**

* The newsletter editor may establish a volunteer editorial team of district members to assist in the writing, design and production of the newsletter.
* These volunteers are not normally considered members of the district executive.
* The newsletter editor can access RTOERO training materials for these volunteers on request to media@rtoero.ca.
* RTOERO members may not be paid for their work on the newsletter. If it wishes, the district may recognize and thank the newsletter volunteers through gifts and other allowable methods of appreciation.

**Support from Marketing and Communications Committee**

* The Marketing and Communications Committee is an advisory committee of the RTOERO board of directors. Each member of the committee is responsible to liaise regularly with newsletter editors in their assigned districts – to share information and to gather feedback.
* District newsletter editors receive the minutes of the Marketing and Communications Committee.
* Newsletter editors receive “Topics for Sharing” from the Marketing and Communications Committee. This resource provides short information items that editors may include in newsletters or other district communications, as the editor deems appropriate.
* The Marketing and Communications Committee provides regional and national training for editors.

**Orientation and training for newsletter editors**

* When a new district newsletter editor takes on the role, orientation and training materials will be provided automatically by the RTOERO office, including the following:
	+ Newsletter editor role description
	+ Relevant policies
	+ RTOERO strategic plan
	+ Brand standards and templates
	+ Information about how to access Shutterstock account
	+ Training resources
* Support for newsletter editors is available from the Marketing and Communications staff by contacting media@rtoero.ca.

**Approval of newsletter content**

* The newsletter editor is responsible for assigning, collecting and editing newsletter content. See full newsletter editor role description.
* The newsletter editor may institute review, proofreading and approval processes to ensure the quality and accuracy of the editorial content.
* The editor is responsible to ensure that information, views and opinions in the newsletter must be consistent with RTOERO mission, vision, values, brand and political advocacy positions.

**Copyright**

* The articles and stories in district newsletters are normally original editorial content written by RTOERO members.
* The editor may invite a non-member to submit an article on a topic of interest to members (for example, a lawyer submitting an article about power of attorney). Such articles must be fact-based, rather than advertisement for paid services.
* The editor may share editorial content from RTOERO preferred sponsors.
* Articles should not be published from other sources – e.g. websites, other publications – without obtaining copyright consent.
* Photos, illustrations and other artwork used in district newsletter must comply with copyright legislation.
* RTOERO supplies districts with Shutterstock accounts, to ensure copyright compliance.
* Member photos or artwork may be published with the consent of the member who created the image. Images from the internet or social media must NOT be reproduced in the district newsletter, because it breaches copyright regulations.
* Photos from district events may be used in newsletters. Notify participants in advance that photos are being taken for publication.
* Publish personal information about a member (for example, birth date, age, email address) only with the member’s consent.

**Newsletter budget**

* RTOERO provides grants to support the programs and services offered at the district level, including the printing and mailing of district newsletters.
* The newsletter editor works with the treasurer, president and other members of the district executive to determine the annual budget for the newsletter.
* The editor, in collaboration with the treasurer, is responsible to monitor newsletter expenditures. Expenses beyond the pre-approved budget must be approved by the treasurer or executive.
* The editor is responsible to ensure that the cost of printing the newsletter is done in a cost-effective way. Periodically, obtain competitive printing quotes and review the newsletter format. Marketing and Communications staff can assist editors in obtaining printing quotes.

**Editorial content and style**

* District newsletters include a range of content of interest to members. Typical types of content include, but are not limited to, the following:
	+ President’s message
	+ News from district committees and/or working groups
	+ Information about upcoming events, activities, programs, clubs
	+ Important RTOERO information
	+ Stories by and about members of the district
	+ Welcome to new members
	+ Recognition of member milestones, achievements and honours
	+ District travel opportunities
	+ Health and wellness information
	+ Stories about how the district is giving back and serving the community – for example, news about district PSTO activities
	+ Information about district Goodwill services
	+ Local political advocacy activities
* An effort should be made to include editorial content of interest to members of all ages and to reflect the range of members’ interests.
* The newsletter content should follow the style guidelines outlined in the RTOERO Editorial Guidelines and the [Canadian Press Stylebook](https://www.thecanadianpress.com/writing-guide/).

**Frequency of newsletters**

* Districts determine the frequency of printed newsletters, based on factors such as available budget and volunteer resources. Typically, districts publish two to four newsletters annually.
* Districts determine the newsletter publication dates and frequency based on factors such as budget, volunteer capacity and reader interest.

**Subscribing to the district newsletter**

* Members determine their subscription preferences for their district newsletter.
* They may opt for print and/or email versions of the district newsletter.
* These preferences may be changed at any time by:
	+ clicking the “Manage Preferences” link at the bottom of any eblast
	+ emailing membership@rtoero.ca
	+ calling the RTOERO office 1-800-361-9888

**Distribution of district newsletters to non-members**

* District newsletters are designed primarily for members of the district.
* Districts may choose to send print or digital copies of their newsletters to local stakeholders, partners and elected officials in their communities.
* Others interested in reading the district newsletter may access it from the district website.

**Eblast, website and social media**

* Newsletters should be sent to members via eblast. RTOERO staff provide this service at no charge to members. Contact the CRM Digital Marketing Specialist to send the newsletter to district members by email.
* Newsletters should be posted on the district website.
* Editors are encouraged to work with the district social media manager to create posts for the district Facebook page, linking to the newsletter on the website.

*This policy was approved by RTOERO board of directors on Sept. 30, 2020.*

Related policies and resources:

[Brand Guidelines](https://1lukv37l5jobed338pye9tvd-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RTO-Graphic_Standards_EN.pdf)

[Privacy Policy](https://rtoero.ca/privacy-policy/)

Advertising Policy

Equity and Diversity Policy

[Accessibility Policy](https://rtoero.ca/accessibility-policy/)

[Social Media Policy](https://rtoero.ca/social-media-policy/)

RTOERO Editorial Guidelines

Newsletter Editor Role Description

[Code of Conduct](https://rtoero.ca/code-of-conduct/)