



Online District Council Meeting FAQ

District 53

Many members are unfamiliar with District Council Business Meetings and their importance. This document presents some of the frequently asked questions about these meetings. The current copy of this document can always be found at: <https://d53tm.org/wp-content/uploads/D53-Online-DC-Meeting-FAQ.pdf>.

Q1. Do I have to attend this meeting?

Answer: Yes. The District Council (DC) meeting invitation (AKA, "call to meeting" (CTM)) is only sent to members of the District Council, which is comprised of the District Executive Committee (DEC) plus the President and Vice President Education (VPE) of each active club. So if you got the CTM, you should plan to attend. However, either the Club President or VPE can carry both votes for their club, so although both can attend and vote, it's only required that one of them attend.

The DC meeting is where we conduct the business of your Toastmasters District, so it affects your club and your own membership. As a Club President or VPE, you have a responsibility for at least one of you to represent your club at this meeting. If you are a DEC member, participation in these business meetings is also an important responsibility of your elected or appointed office.

Q2. Why should I care?

We're all busy and this is another demand on your precious time. We get that. But we have to assume that you care about Toastmasters, and care about the success of your members, your club, and our District. This is why we feel that this meeting is important to you.

Q3. What happens if I don't attend?

If you can't attend, your vote is just lost. As of August 2022, proxies are not allowed at District business meetings anymore. The only exception is that the Club President or VPE can represent both of their club's 2 votes. If neither the President or VPE can attend, then your club won't be represented and both club votes are lost. It becomes a problem if MANY clubs are not represented because we might not make quorum, which really hampers the important business objectives of this meeting.

Q4. How do I register to attend?

Unlike our in-person District Council meetings, where you have to register for the conference, our online DC meetings are virtual (held online via webinar). No registration is required. We do have a roll call tool for you to use at the beginning of the meeting to check attendance so that we can verify quorum.

Q5. How often do District Council meetings happen?

We are required to hold two DC meetings each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. This works well because fall and spring are when the important business decisions are required.

Q6. Why is this meeting virtual instead of in-person?

Starting in 2018, Toastmasters decided to reduce the number of annual conferences from two per year to one per year, in the spring. All fall Business Meetings will now be virtual. For 2022, the Toastmasters International mandated that all spring Business Meetings be online only. Since then, in-person vs online was a district option, and District 53 decided to hold the Spring meetings online. A side benefit to doing these

meetings online is that they help us all get more comfortable with virtual meetings, which is beneficial because these are very common in today's business environment.

Q7. Since this is a virtual meeting, how will we vote on items presented?

We have a very simple, but effective online ballot tool. For each needed vote, you will have a link to an online ballot for that vote. A test ballot will be distributed with the agenda before the meeting. We strongly encourage you to try out the test ballot because there will be no time during the actual meeting to stop and address anyone's technical issues.

Q8. How do I join and participate in the meeting.

A credentials email with all the links you'll need to join the meeting, check in, and vote will be sent during the week before the meeting.

Q9. If I can't attend, can I assign a proxy to vote for me?

Sorry, but no. As previously mentioned, per Toastmasters Bylaws, as amended in August 2022, proxies are no longer allowed at any District Council meetings. However, if only one can attend, either the President or VPE can represent both votes for the club.

Q10. What are we voting on?

Voting topics are included in the CTM invitation and the agenda. The CTM is typically distributed approximately 4 weeks before the meeting. All other meeting materials are distributed during the week before the meeting.

Q11. How will you ensure the integrity of online voting?

We have security built into our online system by way of a unique credentials code for each voting member. Your credentials code will be emailed to you approximately one week before the meeting.

Q12. Will there be any other business conducted?

Yes, Sr Staff reports will be provided. These will be distributed at least 2 weeks before the meeting for your preview. It's important that you review all reports before the meeting because they will not be presented. In the interest of time, each report will be briefly summarized followed by time for discussion, questions, and feedback.

Q13. Won't the meeting format need to be different because the meeting is virtual?

No, not the format. The agenda is very similar to the agenda we use for all of our business meetings. But because the meeting is online, and we may have over 100 participants, we will have to follow certain protocols to keep the meeting productive. These have been provided to you in the Meeting Info Kit and will be reviewed at the beginning of the meeting.

Q14. I've never participated in a Zoom meeting before. I don't know how to join.

No problem. All you need is a computer with a web browser and our meeting link. We're using Zoom, as this has become the D53 standard for virtual contests, online club meetings, and our business meetings. You will find Zoom very easy to use.

Q15. How long will the meeting last?

We have scheduled two hours for this meeting and believe that will be adequate time. But there is some risk that the meeting will run over, depending on the volume and length of delegate questions.

We hope this answers your questions. But if you have any questions not covered by this FAQ document, please contact:

D53 District Director, DD@D53TM.org

D53 District Services Manager, DSM@D53TM.org.

DOCUMENT CHANGE LOG

Date	Description of Changes	Changed By	Approved by*
03/28/24	Document in use for several years, now formalized for District Operations Manual.	Norm Thibodeau, DSM	Patti Walter, DD, 03/30/24

* Per D53 Documentation Standard, approval of any changes is required by the incoming District Director, with review by the District Trio.