Warning

**Big penalties apply for using copyright material**

**Do not put you or your club at risk**

One club in our district had a very nasty shock when they received a copyright infringement complaint letter from a Canadian company, **PicRights**.

PicRights is a legitimate company who specialise in trawling the internet to look for unlicensed usage of imagery on behalf of Reuters and others.
They demand removal of the imagery from the document (in this case a club bulletin) and the payment of a hefty fee, which if not paid, can be escalated into legal action and a consequent higher penalty.

Whatever we think of the ethics involved, PicRights is not a scam. What they are doing is entirely legal, serving to enforce copyright laws.

We know it is convenient to grab that great photo from Google (or elsewhere) but Club Bulletin editors are strongly advised against, without determining it is legal to do so. And it is not just photos, you cannot generally republish songs, poems, illustrations, charts, videos, or graphs in presentations, club/district websites, online or in newsletters, without obtaining a licence or permission from the author or photographer prior to use.

**We will prepare a more detailed document about what you can and can’t do**.

In the meantime there are a lot of photos that you can use, starting with the Rotary Brand Centre: [Brand Center (rotary.org)](https://brandcenter.rotary.org/en-us/)

There are lots of other sources for copyright-free photos you can use, free to download. These include:

* [PixaBay](http://www.pixabay.com/)
* [Unsplash](http://www.unsplash.com/)
* [Reshot](http://www.reshot.com/)
* [Burst](http://www.burst.shopify.com/)
* [Pexels](http://www.pexels.com/)
* [FreeImages](http://www.freeimages.com/)

Even if you use photos that you take at club meetings, you need a release from each identifiable person in it. You should also obtain a release for illustrations, digital or otherwise, based on real people. **We will advise on this aspect also in our future more comprehensive guidelines.**