

Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order & Parliamentary Procedure At-a-Glance

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What are Robert's Rules of Order?

Robert's Rules of Order are parliamentary procedures, which set out rules for conduct at meetings that allow everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

Motions

The method used by members to express themselves is in the form of motions. A motion is a proposal that the entire membership take an action, or stand on an issue. There are two basic motions you may use frequently.

1. Main Motions: The purpose of a main motion is to introduce items to the membership for their consideration. They cannot be made when any other motion is on the floor, and yield to incidental motions.
2. Incidental Motions: Their purpose is to provide a means of questioning procedures concerning another motion and must be considered before the other motion.

How are Motions Presented?

1. Obtaining the floor:
 - a. Wait until the last speaker is finished.
 - b. Address the Chair by saying, "Mr./Madam Chair."
 - c. Wait until the Chair recognizes you.

2. Make your motion.
 - a. Speak in a clear and concise manner.
 - b. Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, “I move that we ...”, rather than, “I move that we do not ...”
 - c. Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.
3. Wait for someone to second your Motion.
4. Another member will second your Motion, or the Chair will call for a second.
5. If there is no second to your Motion, it is lost.
6. The Chair states that your Motion.
 - a. The Chair will say, “it has been moved and second that we ...” thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
 - b. The membership then either debates your motion, or may move directly to a vote.
 - c. Once your motion is presented to the membership by the Chair, it becomes “assembly property” and cannot be changed by you without the consent of the members.
7. Expanding on your Motion.
 - a. The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time, rather than at the time you present it.
 - b. The mover is always allowed to speak first.
 - c. All comments and debate must be directed to the Chair.
 - d. Keep to the time limit for speaking that has been established.
 - e. The mover may speak again only after the other speakers are finished, unless called upon by the Chair.
8. Putting the question to the membership.
 - a. The Chair asks, “Are you ready to vote on the question?”
 - b. If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.
 - c. On a motion to move, the previous question may be adopted.

Voting on a Motion

The method of vote on any motion depends on the situation and the policy and procedures. The method used to vote for a government is normally by voice:

1. By Voice: The Chair asks those in favor to say “aye”, those opposed to say “no”. Any member may move for an exact count.

Some other Motions that are commonly used that relate to voting are:

1. Motion to Table: This motion is often used in the attempt to “kill” a motion. This option is always present, however, to “take from the table” for reconsideration by the membership
2. Motion to Suspend or Postpone without further consideration: This is often used as a means of parliamentary strategy and allows opponents of motion to test their strength without an actual vote being taken. Also, debate is once again on the main motion!

Parliamentary Procedure is the best way to get things done at your meetings. But, it will only work if you use it properly. Most importantly, be COURTEOUS.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AT-A-GLANCE

To Do This	You Say This	May you Interrupt	Second Needed	Debat-able	Vote Required
*Adjourn the meeting	“I move that we adjourn”	No	Yes	No	Majority
Recess the meeting	“I move that we recess the meeting”	No	Yes	No	Majority
Complaint about noise, etc.	“Point of privilege”	Yes	No	No	No Vote
*Suspend further consideration	“I move that we table it”	No	Yes	No	Majority
End debate	“I move the previous question”	No	Yes	No	2/3 Vote
Postpone consideration	“I move we postpone this matter until ...”	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Study something further	“I move we refer this to a committee”	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	“I move to amend this motion”	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a Primary Motion)	I move that ...”	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Object to procedure/personal affront	“Point of order”	Yes	No	No	Chair Decision
*Request information	“Point of information	Yes	No	No	No Vote
*Ask for a vote count/verify a voice vote	“I call for a division of the house”	No	No	No	No Vote
Object to considering some matter	“I object to consideration of this”	Yes	No	No	2/3 Vote
*Take up a matter previously tabled	“I move to take from the table”	No	Yes	No	Majority
*Reconsider matter already disposed of	“I move we consider action on ...”	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
*Consider matter out	“I move we	No	Yes	No	2/3 Vote

of order	suspend the rules and ...”				
*Vote on a ruling by the Chair	“I appeal the Chair’s decision”	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

* Not Amendable