

Robert's Rules of Order



Presented By

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WHAT IS PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE?

**IT IS A SET OF RULES FOR THE
CONDUCT OF MEETINGS THAT
ALLOWS EVERYONE TO BE HEARD
AND TO MAKE DECISIONS
WITHOUT CONFUSION.**

Simplified Rules of Order

Principles of Parliamentary Procedure

1. The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to make it easier for people to work together effectively and to help groups accomplish their purposes. Rules of procedure should assist a meeting, not inhibit it.
2. A meeting can deal with only one matter at a time. The various kinds of motions have therefore been assigned an order of precedence.
3. All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations. One of the chairperson's main responsibilities is to use the authority of the chair to ensure that all people attending a meeting are treated equally – for example, not to permit a vocal few to dominate the debates.
4. A majority vote decides an issue. In any group, each member agrees to be governed by the vote of the majority. Parliamentary rules enable a meeting to determine the will of the majority of those attending a meeting.
5. The rights of the minority must be protected at all times. Although the ultimate decision rests with a majority, all members have such basic rights as the right to be heard and the right to oppose. The rights of all members – majority and minority – should be the concern of every member, for a person may be in a majority on one question, but in the minority on the next.
6. Every matter presented for decision should be discussed fully. The right of every member to speak on any issue is as important as each member's right to vote.
7. Every member has the right to understand the meaning of any question presented to a meeting, and to know what effect a decision will have. A member always has the right to request information on any motion he or she does not thoroughly understand. Moreover, all meetings must be characterized by fairness and by good faith. Parliamentary strategy is the art of using procedure legitimately to support or defeat a proposal.

Simplified Rules of Order

Sample Order of Business

Here is the sample order of business for a regular business meeting. It is not intended that this is the final word on how an agenda should be presented. Each chairperson should follow an order that is satisfactory to him or her and to the organization.

The Order of Business

The chairperson of a meeting should prepare in advance a list of the order of business or an agenda for the meeting. A sample order of business follows:

1. Preliminaries
2. Call to Order
3. Minutes
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Correspondence (listed)
6. Unfinished Business
7. Committee Reports
8. New Business
9. Announcements
10. Adjournment

Excerpt From Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised

Procedure in Small Boards

- Members are not required to obtain the floor before making motions or speaking, which they can do while seated.
- Motions need not be seconded.
- There is no limit to the number of times a member can speak to a question, and motions to close or limit debate generally should not be entertained.
- Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no motion is pending.
- The chairperson need not rise while putting questions to vote.
- The chairperson can speak in discussion without rising or leaving the chair; and, subject to rule or custom within the particular board (which should be uniformly allowed regardless of how many members are present), the chair usually can make motions and usually votes on all questions.

Robert's 405-406

Robert, Sarah Corbin, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1970.

Simplified Rules of Order

Conducting Commission Meetings

1. The President calls the meeting to order and follows the order of the agenda.
2. The agenda may be prepared by the President or a secretary.
3. The County Clerk takes and is in charge of the minutes.
4. Motions do not need a second.
5. There is no limit on debate.
6. Informal discussion is permitted while no motion is pending.
7. The presiding officer can take motions, discuss motions, and should vote on all questions.
8. Voting is done by a show of hands or voice vote.
9. A member should disqualify himself or herself from voting where there is a conflict of interest or an ethical question involved, in the item of business before the commission.

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Minutes

What to Include in Minutes

1. Name of the organization, date, time, place of meeting, regular, special or adjourned.
2. The presence of the regular presiding officer and the secretary, or the name of their substitutes.
3. What action was taken on the minutes of the previous meeting (approved or corrected).
4. Body of minutes contains the fact that the report of officers, board, standing and special committees were given, and what action was taken.
5. All the final wording of all main motions with amendments incorporated, any motion to rescind, what happened to each motion – was it adopted, lost, or temporarily disposed of, but not if it is withdrawn.
6. The name of the maker of the motion is included but not the person who seconds the motion.
7. Announcements: For example, any previous notice of bylaw changes, or any motion to be made at a later meeting or if the meeting time or place is different for each meeting.
8. Last paragraph contains hour of adjournment.
9. Minutes are closed with signature and title of person who took the minutes.
10. Nothing is erased from the minutes. Corrections are made in the margin. If material is expunged, a line is drawn through the words that are to be expunged.
11. When minutes are approved, the word “approved” and the secretary’s initials and date of their approval are written below the minutes.

**I
MOVE
THAT.....**

Simplified Rules of Order

Motions That Bring a Question Again

Take From the Table

Before a meeting can consider a matter that has been tabled, a member must move:

“That the question concerning _____ be taken from the table.” Such a motion may not interrupt another speaker, must be seconded, is not debatable, is not amendable, cannot be reconsidered, and requires a majority vote.

If a motion to take from the table passes, the meeting resumes debate on the original question (or any amendments to it). If a considerable period of time has elapsed since the matter was tabled, it is often helpful for the first speaker to review the previous debate before proceeding to make any new points.

Reconsider

Rescind

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Incidental Motions

Point of Order

This motion permits a member to draw the chair's attention to what he/she believes to be an error in procedure or a lack of decorum in debate. The member will rise and say: "I rise to a point of order," or simply "Point of order". The chair should recognize the member, who will then state the point of order. The effect is to require the chair to make an immediate ruling on the question involved. The chair will usually give his/her reasons for making the ruling. If the ruling is thought to be wrong, the chair can be challenged.

A point of order can interrupt another speaker, does not require a second, is not debatable, is not amendable, and cannot be reconsidered.

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Privileged Motions

Recess

A member can propose a short intermission in a meeting even while business is pending, by moving to recess for a specified length of time.

A motion to take a recess may not interrupt another speaker, must be seconded, is not debatable, can be amended (for example, to change the length of the recess), cannot be reconsidered, and requires a majority vote.

Question or Point of Privilege

If a situation is affecting the comfort, convenience, integrity, rights or privileges of a meeting or of an individual member (for example, noise, inadequate ventilation, introduction of a confidential subject in the presence of guests, etc.), a member can *raise a point of privilege*, which permits him/her to interrupt pending business to make an urgent statement, request or motion. (If a motion is made, it must be seconded.) The motion might also concern the reputation of a member, a group of members, the assembly, or the association as a whole.

If the matter is not simple enough to be taken care of informally, the chair rules as to whether it is admitted as a question of privilege and whether it requires consideration before the pending business is resumed.

A point of privilege may also be used to seek permission of the meeting to present a motion of an urgent nature.

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Procedures Used in Meetings

Subsidiary Motions

Amend

An *amendment* is a motion to change, to add words to, or omit words from, an original motion. The change is usually to clarify or improve the wording of the original motion and must, of course be related to that motion.

An amendment cannot interrupt another speaker, must be seconded, is debatable, may itself be amended by an *amendment to the amendment*, can be reconsidered, and requires a majority vote.

The chair should allow full discussion of the amendment (being careful to restrict debate to the amendment, not the original motion) and take a vote on the amendment only, making sure everyone understands the vote is not on the main motion.

If the amendment is defeated, another amendment may be proposed, or discussion proceeds on the original motion.

An amendment to an amendment is a motion to change, to add words to, or omit words from the first amendment. This motion cannot be amended.

Sometimes a main motion is worded poorly, and several amendments may be presented to improve the wording. In such cases it is sometimes better to have a substitute motion rather than try to solve the wording problem with amendments.

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Procedures Used in Meetings

Debate on Motions

Technically, a meeting should not consider any matter unless it has been placed before the meeting in the form of a motion. In practice, however, it is sometimes advantageous to permit limited discussion of a general topic before the motion is introduced. This discussion can sometimes lead to a properly worded motion that will indicate exactly what the group wants to do. This departure from strict parliamentary procedure must be used with caution. The chair must be careful not to let the meeting get out of control.

Normally, a member may speak only once on the same question, except for the mover of the motion, who has the privilege of "closing" the debate. If an important part of a member's speech has been misinterpreted by a later speaker, the first speaker might speak again for clarification, but no new material should be introduced.

The member who made the motion claims the floor, even though he or she has already spoken on the question, the member is entitled to be recognized before other members.

The mover of a motion may not speak against his or her own motion, although the mover may vote against it. The mover need not speak at all, but when speaking, it must be in favor of the motion. If during the debate, the mover changes his or her mind, he or she can inform the meeting of the fact by asking the meetings permission to withdraw the motion.

Order of Precedence of Motions

Rank	Motion	May interrupt Speaker	Second Required	Debatable	Amendable	May be reconsidered	Majority required	2/3 majority required
1.	Fix time to adjourn		X		X	X	X	
2.	Adjourn		X				X	
3.	Recess		X		X		X	
4.	Question of privilege	X	X ¹	X	X	X	X	
5.	Orders of the day	X						X ²
6.	Table		X				X	
7.	Previous Question		X			X ³		X
8.	Limit/extend limits of debate		X		X			
9.	Postpone to a certain time		X	X ⁴		X	X ⁵	X ⁵
10.	Refer		X	X ⁶	X	X ⁷	X	
11.	Amend		X	X	X ⁸	X	X	X ⁹
12.	Postpone indefinitely		X	X		X ¹⁰	X	
13.	Main position		X	X	X	X	X	

Privileged motions

Subsidiary motions

