

A Quick Guide to Robert's Rules of Order

Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules for meeting conduct, allowing everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion. Robert's Rules was first published in 1876 by Henry Martin Robert. The basic principles center on courtesy, a balance of rights, the majority to decide, the minority to be heard and absentees to be protected.

Business and Discussion

Business is conducted by means of motions introduced by individuals present at the meeting. ***Business may only be conducted when a quorum--a significant minority of the membership stipulated by the Bylaws--is present.***

Individuals are permitted to speak by raising their hand and waiting to be recognized. When an individual has been recognized, he is said to ***have the floor.*** A speaker may yield the floor when he is finished speaking, or temporarily for an inquiry or secondary motion. No one can interrupt a recognized speaker who has the floor. Anyone who interrupts without just cause should be ruled out of order.

Motions

A motion that brings new business before the assembly is called a ***main motion***, and it is submitted ***consideration***--debate and a vote--when it has been ***seconded*** by a show of support from another member. ***Only one main motion may be considered at a time.***

Subsidiary motions change or affect how a main motion is handled and is voted on before a main motion. Privileged motions bring up urgent items about special or important matters unrelated to pending business. Incidental motions provide a means of questioning procedure concerning other motions and must be considered before the other motion.

Fixed Order of Business

1. Call to order
2. Member roll call
3. Reading of previous meeting minutes
4. Officers' reports
5. Committee reports
6. Special orders—Important business designated for consideration at meeting
7. Unfinished business
8. New business
9. Announcements
10. Adjournment



Debate Rules

- All comments/debate must be directed to the president.
- Keep to established speaking time limit.
- The mover may speak again only after others are finished, unless called by the president.
- You can only interrupt the speaker by making a "point of order" or "point of procedure."

Present a Motion:

1. Obtain the floor by rising and addressing the president by saying, "Ms. President." Wait until the president recognizes you.
2. State the motion affirmatively--say, "I move that we..."
3. Wait for a second to the motion; if there is no second to motion is lost.

Then:

1. The president states the motion by saying, "it has been moved and seconded..." - this places the motion for consideration and action.
2. Membership debates the motion — once presented it becomes "assembly property" and cannot be changed without member consent.
3. Once debate is finished, the president asks, "Are you ready to vote on the question?" If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.

Voting—Majority vote is one more than half of the members; Two-thirds vote is one more than two-thirds.

By Voice – President asks those in favor to say "aye" and those opposed to say "no." Any member may move for a exact count.

By Roll Call – Each member answers "yes" or "no" as his name is called and vote is recorded by secretary.

By Division – This is a slight verification of a voice vote. It does not require a count unless the chairman so desires. Members raise their hands or stand.

By Ballot – Members write their vote on a slip of paper, this method is used when secrecy is desired.

A Quick Guide to Robert's Rules of Order

Points (Incidental Motions)

Points are motions that refer to parliamentary process or other incidental issues. They must always be addressed immediately by the president.

- **Point of Clarification**—used to clear up confusion, to ask to reword a motion, to ask a question about the motion or to inquire as to the correct motion.
- **Point of Information**—used to ask a question of the speaker holding the floor during debate.
- **Point of Order**—used to question a process, improper decorum, or to raise an issue regarding an infraction of the rules. Must be raised immediately after the error is made.



10 Basic Rules for RRO

1. The rights of the organization supersede the rights of individual members.
2. All members are equal and their rights are equal.
3. A quorum must be present to do business.
4. The majority rules.
5. Silence means consent.
6. Two-thirds vote rules.
7. One question and one speaker at a time.
8. Motions must receive full debate.
9. Once a decision is made, an identical motion must not be brought forward at the same meeting.
10. Personal remarks are always out of order.

Motion	Purpose	To Enact
Main	Take action on behalf of the assembly	Debatable; requires majority vote
Adjourn	End the meeting	Not Debatable; immediately voted upon and requires majority vote
Appeal Decision of the Chair	Appeal for the assembly to make the decision instead of the president; must be made before other business is resumed	Not Debatable; use only if relates to decorum, violation of rules, or order of business
Call for Orders of the Day	Ask to stick to the agenda (orders of the day) - deviation from agenda requires a rules suspension	Not Debatable; requires one-third majority vote
Call to Question	Close debate and force a vote	Not Debatable; requires two-thirds majority vote
Divide the Question	Divide a motion into two or more separate questions	Not Debatable; requires majority vote
Extend Debate	Extend debate on a question for a certain period of time; applies only to the pending question	Not Debatable; requires two-thirds majority vote
Object to Consideration	Avoid a motion when it would be undesirable for question to come before the assembly; must be stated before discussion or another motion is made	Not Debatable; requires two-thirds majority vote
Rescind	Change the results of a vote	Debatable; requires two-thirds majority vote
Refer to Committee	Send question to a committee to resolve; if no committee exists, motion must include size of committee desired and method of selecting the members (election or appointment)	Debatable; requires majority vote
Suspend the Rules	Suspend formal process for a short period of time; the object of the suspension must be specified	Debatable; requires two-thirds majority vote
Table	To kill a motion or temporarily suspend further consideration/ action on pending question	Not Debatable; requires majority vote
Withdraw/Modify Motion	Request to withdraw or modify a motion before debate; after question is stated, mover can accept amendment without obtaining the floor	Not Debatable; president grants request, or if objection, member of assembly can grant request