

Robert's Rules of Order - Summary Version

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For Fair and Orderly Meetings & Conventions

Provides common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate in order to place the whole membership on the same footing and speaking the same language. The conduct of ALL business is controlled by the general will of the whole membership - the right of the deliberate majority to decide. Complementary is the right of at least a strong minority to require the majority to be deliberate - to act according to its considered judgment AFTER a full and fair "working through" of the issues involved. Robert's Rules provides for constructive and democratic meetings, to help, not hinder, the business of the assembly. Under no circumstances should "undue strictness" be allowed to intimidate members or limit full participation.

The fundamental right of deliberative assemblies require all questions to be thoroughly discussed before taking action!

The assembly rules - they have the final say on everything!
Silence means consent!

- Obtain the floor (the right to speak) by being the first to stand when the person speaking has finished; state Mr./Madam Chairman. Raising your hand means nothing, and standing while another has the floor is out of order! Must be recognized by the Chair before speaking!
- Debate cannot begin until the Chair has stated the motion or resolution and asked "are you ready for the question?" If no one rises, the chair calls for the vote!
- Before the motion is stated by the Chair (the question) members may suggest modification of the motion; the mover can modify as he pleases, or even withdraw the motion without consent of the seconder; if mover modifies, the seconder can withdraw the second.
- The "immediately pending question" is the last question stated by the Chair! Motion/Resolution - Amendment - Motion to Postpone
- The member moving the "immediately pending question" is entitled to preference to the floor!

- No member can speak twice to the same issue until everyone else wishing to speak has spoken to it once!
- All remarks must be directed to the Chair. Remarks must be courteous in language and deportment - avoid all personalities, never allude to others by name or to motives!
- The agenda and all committee reports are merely recommendations! When presented to the assembly and the question is stated, debate begins and changes occur!

The Rules

- **Point of Privilege:** Pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc. - may interrupt only if necessary!
- **Parliamentary Inquiry:** Inquire as to the correct motion - to accomplish a desired result, or raise a point of order
- **Point of Information:** Generally applies to information desired from the speaker: "I should like to ask the (speaker) a question."
- **Orders of the Day (Agenda):** A call to adhere to the agenda (a deviation from the agenda requires Suspending the Rules)
- **Point of Order:** Infraction of the rules, or improper decorum in speaking. Must be raised immediately after the error is made
- **Main Motion:** Brings new business (the next item on the agenda) before the assembly
- **Divide the Question:** Divides a motion into two or more separate motions (must be able to stand on their own)
- **Consider by Paragraph:** Adoption of paper is held until all paragraphs are debated and amended and entire paper is satisfactory; after all paragraphs are considered, the entire paper is then open to amendment, and paragraphs may be further amended. Any Preamble cannot be considered until debate on the body of the paper has ceased.
- **Amend:** Inserting or striking out words or paragraphs, or substituting whole paragraphs or resolutions
- **Withdraw/Modify Motion:** Applies only after question is stated; mover can accept an amendment without obtaining the floor
- **Commit /Refer/Recommit to Committee:** State the committee to receive the question or resolution; if no committee exists include size of committee desired and method of selecting the members (election or appointment).

- **Extend Debate:** Applies only to the immediately pending question; extends until a certain time or for a certain period of time
- **Limit Debate:** Closing debate at a certain time, or limiting to a certain period of time
- **Postpone to a Certain Time:** State the time the motion or agenda item will be resumed
- **Object to Consideration:** Objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated
- **Lay on the Table:** Temporarily suspends further consideration/action on pending question; may be made after motion to close debate has carried or is pending
- **Take from the Table:** Resumes consideration of item previously "laid on the table" - state the motion to take from the table
- **Reconsider:** Can be made only by one on the prevailing side who has changed position or view
- **Postpone Indefinitely:** Kills the question/resolution for this session - exception: the motion to reconsider can be made this session
- **Previous Question:** Closes debate if successful - may be moved to "Close Debate" if preferred
- **Informal Consideration:** Move that the assembly go into "Committee of the Whole" - informal debate as if in committee; this committee may limit number or length of speeches or close debate by other means by a 2/3 vote. All votes, however, are formal.
- **Appeal Decision of the Chair:** Appeal for the assembly to decide - must be made before other business is resumed; NOT debatable if relates to decorum, violation of rules or order of business
- **Suspend the Rules:** Allows a violation of the assembly's own rules (except Constitution); the object of the suspension must be specified

Works Cited

Kennedy, Beverly, "Robert's Rule of Order-Summary Version", 1997. April 22, 2010
 <<http://www.robertsrules.org/rulesintro.htm>>.

Excerpt from:

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER NEWLY REVISED 10th Edition
PROCEDURE IN SMALL BOARDS

In a board meeting where there are not more than about ~ dozen members present, some of the formality that is necessary in a large assembly would hinder business. The rules governing such meetings are different from the rules that hold in other assemblies, in the following respects:

- 1) Members are not required to obtain the floor before making motions or speaking, which they can do while seated.
- 2) Motions need not be seconded.
- 3) 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.
- 4) Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no motion is pending.
- 5) Sometimes, when a proposal is perfectly clear to all present, a vote can be taken without a motion's having been introduced. Unless agreed to by unanimous consent, however, all proposed actions of a board must be approved by vote under the same rules as in other assemblies, except that a vote can be taken initially by a show of hands, which is often a better method in such meetings.
- 6) The chairman need not rise while putting questions to vote.
- 7) The chairman can speak in discussion without rising or leaving the chair; and, subject to rule or custom within the particular board (which should be uniformly followed regardless of how many members are present), he usually can make motions and usually votes on all questions.

General Rule	Boards	Committees
Organization establishes its own rules, via bylaws, etc.	Sets own rules if autonomous and not in conflict with higher laws	Rules set by establishing body; comm. of whole very limited
Meetings scheduled by bylaws	Scheduled by bylaws or statute	Chair calls meeting, or any two members may, if chair doesn't
No quorum, no business	—	—
Minutes	Accessible to members only	Accessible to members only
Secretary takes minutes	—	Chair takes minutes
Obtaining Floor	Not required; may speak while seated	Not required; may speak while seated
Seconding motions	Not required	Not required
Chair rises to put questions	Chair may remain seated	Chair may remain seated
Chair may not offer motions, enter debate, nor vote (unless tie)	Chair can make motions, discuss freely, and vote	As in board, and is probably most active member
No discussion without a motion	Informal discussion O.K. without a motion	Informal discussion O.K. without a motion
Number and Length at Speeches	No limits; "previous question" not appropriate	No limits; "question" not allowed

General Rule	Boards	Committees
No vote without stated motion	If proposal "clear to all," may vote without formal motion	If proposal "clear to all," may vote without formal motion
Vote by "aye" & "no"	Vote by show of hands	Vote by show of hands
Majority = more than half present and voting	As in general rule	—
Reconsider	—	No time limit; no repetition limit; "non-loser" may make motion; needs 2/3 to adopt
Chair, etc., elected per bylaws	Chair, etc., elected when new members come onto board, per schedule	Chair designated by establishing body, or elect own
Unfinished business (UB) goes over to next session	If members to go off board, per schedule, UB not go over	Special: all meetings = one session - Standing: UB goes over to continuing comm. with new members
Discipline members	—	Cannot discipline members; may report problems
n/a	Board may establish Executive Committee only if bylaws so authorize	n/a