

Robert's Rules of Order - The Basics



I. Basic Principles

Adapted from Robert's Rules of Order, 10th Edition

- Parliamentary procedure exists to facilitate the transaction of business and to promote cooperation and harmony.
- All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.
 - The majority has the right to decide.
 - The minority has rights, which must be protected.
- A quorum must be present for the group to act.
- Full and free discussion of every motion considered is a basic right.
- Only one question at a time can be considered at any given time.
- Members have the right to know at all times what the immediately pending question is, and to have it restated before a vote is taken.
- No member can speak until recognized by the chair.
- No one can speak a second time on the same question as long as another wants to speak a first time.
- The chair should be strictly impartial.

II. Parliamentary Procedure “Lingo”

Adapted from The ABCs of Parliamentary Procedure, Arnold Air Society-Silver Wings

Motion

A proposal or resolution by a member that the assembly take a certain action or express a certain view. A motion is considered out of order if it conflicts with the constitution or by-laws of the group.

Main Motion

A motion to introduce a principal subject. Only one main motion may be considered at a time and must be disposed of before another main motion may be considered.

Motion to Lay on the Table (or Tabling)

A motion to lay aside a pending question for an indefinite amount of time.

Motion to Take from the Table

A motion enabling the assembly to resume consideration of a previously tabled item.

Point of Order

To object to a proceeding as being in conflict with the rules of procedure. The chair must recognize the point.

Previous Questions

A motion to end debate, which requires the assembly to vote on the issue at hand. The motion must be suspended, requires a 2/3 vote, and is not debatable.

Friendly Amendment

A small change to an original motion. Those who made and seconded the original motion must agree to the amendment.

Motion to Adjourn

A motion made at the conclusion of a business meeting or at the final business session.

Majority Vote

More than half of the votes, or 50%+1.

Quorum

The number of members required in the by-laws to hold a legal meeting.

III. Handling a Motion

Adpated from Robert's Rules of Order, 10th Edition

Three steps by which a motion is brought before the group:

1. A member makes a motion.
2. Another member seconds the motion.
3. The chair states the question in the motion.

Three Steps in the Consideration of a Motion

1. The members debate the motion (unless no member claims the floor for that purpose).
2. The chair puts the question to a vote:
 "All in favor, say aye."
 "Those opposed, say no."
 A vote passes with a simple majority (except in cases of Suspending the rules, previous question, limit or extended debate and amend a previously adopted motion), which requires a 2/3 vote.
3. The chair announces the result of a vote. A complete announcement should include:
 - A. Report on the voting itself, stating which side prevailed (and giving the count if a count prevailed).
 - B. Declaration that the motion is adopted or lost.
 - C. Statement indicating the effect of the vote or ordering its execution.
 - D. Where applicable, announcement of the next item of business or stating the question of the next motion that consequently comes up for a vote.

IV. Parliamentary Procedures at a Glance

To do this...	You say this...	May you interrupt the speaker?	Must you be seconded?	Is the motion debatable?	What vote is required?
Adjourn meeting	I move that we adjourn	no	yes	no	majority
Recess Meeting	I move that we recess until...	no	yes	no	majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	Point of privilege	yes	no	no	no vote
Suspend further consideration of something	I move we table it	no	yes	no	majority
End debate	I move the previous question	no	yes	no	2/3 vote
Have something studied further	I move we refer this matter to committee	no	yes	yes	majority
Amend a motion	I move this motion be amended by...	no	yes	yes	majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	I move that...	no	yes	yes	majority
Object to procedure or personal affront*	Point of order	yes	no	no	no vote, chair decides
Request information	Point of information	yes	no	no	no vote
Ask for actual count to verify voice vote	I call for a division of the house	no	no	no	no vote
Take up a matter previously tabled*	I move to take from the table...	no	yes	no	majority
Reconsider something already disposed of*	I move we reconsider our action relative to...	yes	yes	yes	majority
Vote on a ruling by the chair	I appeal the chair's decision	yes	yes	yes	majority

* not amendable

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