

Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order

What is Parliamentary Procedure?

It is a set of rules for conduct at meetings that allows everyone to be heard and make decisions.

Groups using parliamentary procedure usually follow a fixed order of business. Such as:

1. Call to order
2. Reading/Accepting of the minutes from the last meeting
3. Officers report
4. Committee reports
5. Old business
6. New business
7. Adjournment

The method used by members to express themselves is in the form of moving motions. A motion is a proposal that the entire membership take action or stand on an issue. Individual members can:

1. Call to order
2. Second motions
3. Debate motions
4. Vote on motions

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.

How are motions presented?

- 1. Obtaining the floor**
 - a. Wait until the last speaker has finished.
 - b. Wait until the Chairperson recognizes you.
- 2. Make your motion**
 - a. Speak in a clear, concise manner.
 - b. Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we..." rather than, "I move we do not ..."
- 3. Wait for someone to second your motion.**
- 4. Another member will second your motion or the chairperson will call for a second.**
- 5. If there is no second to your motion, it is lost.**

6. The chairperson states your motion.

- a. The chairperson will say, “it has been moved and seconded that we...” thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
- b. The membership then debates your motion, or may move directly to a vote.
- c. Once your motion is presented to the membership by the chairperson, it becomes “assembly property,” and cannot be changed by you without the consent of 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 chairperson.
- d. Keep to the time limit for speaking that has been established.
- e. The mover may speak again only after other speakers are finished, unless called upon by the chairperson.

8. Putting the motion to the membership

- a. The chairperson asks, “Are you ready to vote on the motion?”
- b. If there is no more discussion, vote is taken.

Voting on a motion:

The method of vote on any motion depends on the situation and the by-laws of policy of your group.

- 1. By voice** – the chairperson asks those in favor to say, “aye,” those opposed to say, “no.” Any member may move for an exact count.
- 2. By general consent** – When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the chairperson says, “if there is no objection...” The membership shows agreement by their silence. However, if one member says, “I object,” the item must be put to a vote.