

Robert's Rules of Order – Summary

Highlights from RobertsRules.org

For Fair and Orderly Meetings & Conventions:

Robert's Rules 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 the 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. Basic procedures:

- Obtain the floor (the right to speak) by being the first to stand when the person speaking has finished; state “Mr./Madam Chairman.” You must be recognized by the Chair before speaking.
- Debate cannot begin until the Chair has stated the motion or resolution and asks for discussion. If no one rises, the chair calls for the vote.
- Before a vote is taken on the motion, 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.
- 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.

Definition of Terms:

- **Point of Privilege:** Pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc.
- **Parliamentary Inquiry:** Inquire as to the correct way to accomplish a desired result.
- **Point of Information:** Generally applies to information desired from the speaker.
- **Out of Order:** The Chair rules if a speaker is not following rules or lacks decorum.
- **Amend:** Inserting or striking out words or paragraphs.
- **Withdraw/Modify Motion:** Applies only after a question is stated; mover can accept an amendment without obtaining the floor.
- **Limit Debate:** Closing debate at a certain time or limiting to a certain period of time.
- **Table:** Temporarily suspends further consideration/action on pending question.
- **Reconsider:** Can only be made by one on the prevailing side who has changed position or view.
- **Postpone Indefinitely:** Kills the question/resolution for this session.
- **Call the Question:** Closes debate if successful. Must be approved by a 2/3rds vote.
- **Suspend the Rules:** Allows a violation of a specific item in the assembly's own rules (does not apply to the Constitution or Bylaws).