

Robert's Rules of Order

A guide for effectively and efficiently
conducting a Congress meeting.

Privileges of the Chair

- Refuse to entertain motions that are obviously frivolous
- Limit the number of speakers, the amount of time, and can move the previous question to end debate
- Restrict the debate to the merits of the pending question
- Recognize who may have the floor and require them to identify themselves
- Entertain items in a different order than listed on the agenda if there are no objections
- Voting privileges: The chair can vote if his vote will make a tie (the motion then dies), or if the vote is a tie, the chair may vote and carry the motion



Quorum Guidelines

- A quorum is the number of people needed to conduct business
- A majority of the members of the group
- In addition to a quorum of members, the chair and secretary must be present for an assembly to conduct business
 - The officers are counted toward the quorum
- Business conducted without a quorum is null
- If a quorum is lost, no further business can be conducted



Walking Quorum

- A walking quorum is a series of meetings, telephone conferences, or some other means of communication such that groups of less than a quorum are effectively meeting and can arrive at a consensus or understanding regarding governmental business that, collectively, would constitute a quorum.



Motions

- A motion is the procedure of getting a matter before a group.

Before the group can consider any proposal for action, it must be presented to the assembly in the form of a motion.

“I move that...”



Types of motions

There are 4 types of motions

- Principle/ main motion
- Subsidiary motion
- Incidental motion
- Privileged motion

Secondary
Motions



Main Motion

- A proposal that certain action be taken or an opinion be expressed by the group
- Used to introduce a new item of business
- Only one main motion can be considered at a time
- A main motion cannot be made when another motion is being considered
- Cannot be applied to any other type of motion, but other motions can be applied to it

Main Motion

- Requires a second
- Can be amended
- Can be debated
- Requires a majority vote



Subsidiary Motions

- Applied to a main motion to aid in its disposition-can never stand alone
- Changes the status of the motion to which it is applied by modifying it in some way
- Subsidiary motion must be decided before the assembly can act on the main motion
 - To lay on the table
 - Previous question
 - To postpone to a specific time
 - To refer to committee
 - To amend

Incidental Motion

- A motion that comes up incidentally when another motion is being considered
- These motions are procedural and deal with correcting errors, verifying votes, etc.
- Must be considered and disposed of before the principle motion or subsidiary motion can be acted upon
 - To withdraw a motion
 - Request type of vote

Privileged Motion

- A motion relating to the well-being of the group or its members
- Because of its importance, it takes precedence over all other motions
 - To take a recess
 - To adjourn
 - To adjourn at a specified time

How to Make a Motion

- Obtain the floor (the motion may not be presented until the chair has recognized the speaker)
- State the motion carefully-be specific
- The motion must then be seconded, it cannot be discussed until it receives a second
 - If no second is received, the motion dies
- The chair must repeat the motion in full
 - “the motion has been made and seconded that.....Is there any discussion?”

Discussion/ Debate

- The motion is then open for discussion
 - Members wishing to participate in the discussion must first be recognized by the chair
 - The facts and merits of the question are brought out
 - Thorough discussion allows members to vote more intelligently
- After discussion, the vote is taken

Voting

- Voice Vote
 - “All those in favor please say AYE. All those opposed say NO.”
 - Chair makes the decision by what he/ she hears
- Show of Hands
 - Used if there is a doubt about the voice vote
 - Taken for all motions requiring a 2/3 majority
- Roll Call Vote
 - Clearly shows how each member voted on a specific issue
 - Especially useful when it is important that the votes are precisely recorded
 - Taken in alphabetical order with chair last and only if chair’s vote will affect the outcome



Amending a motion

- An amendment allows members to narrow, clarify, or tailor the main motion to their specific purpose if a main motion is unclear or too broad
- A motion to amend does not allow members to significantly alter the main moments; changes must relate specifically to the main motion
- Requires a majority vote to pass the amendment (amendment vote is separate from main motion vote)
- The motion to amend can be debated, but the debate cannot include the main motion to which it is applied
- Amending a motion is done **before** the motion is voted on

Ways to Amend a Motion

- Adding specific words at the end of the motion
- Inserting words in the body of the motion
- Deleting words in the motion
- Deleting and inserting words in the motion
- Replacing a pending motion in its entirety with another motion relating to the same subject



Hierarchy of Amendments

- Friendly amendments offer only slight changes and do not substantially change the motion
 - If members agree, friendly amendments are in order at any time during the process of making the main motion
- Primary amendments must be germane to the motion to which it is applied
- An secondary amendment can be made to a primary amendment, however a secondary amendment cannot be amended

Motion to Postpone

- The motion to postpone an item allows the assembly to set aside the main motion until a later date
- It can only be used on a main motion
- A time should be specified when the matter will be taken up again
- Items cannot be postponed beyond the next meeting or the motion dies

****This should not be confused with the motion to postpone indefinitely which removes the item from consideration***



Lay on the Table

- Laying a motion on the table can only be used to deal with another urgent matter
- Tabling an item does not establish a time for the debate to resume-the debate can be resumed at any time during the meeting
- Resuming consideration of the item requires that a motion be made to “...take the question of...off the table.”

Motion to Reconsider

- Can be moved anytime (except when another motion is before the assembly), including during the day when the motion of concern has been acted on or the next succeeding day
- Motion to reconsider a vote must be made by a member who voted with the prevailing side
- Motion to rescind is used when an assembly wants to annul a prior action and it is too late to reconsider

Previous Question

- Move the Previous Question closes the discussion and forces an immediate vote
- It is a motion that requires a second and a 2/3 majority vote to pass
- Person “moving the previous question” must first be recognized by the chair.



Questions?

