

Running Your Meetings & Robert's Rules

1. What is parliamentary procedure?

- a. Rules of democracy: Defines how groups of people can meet most effectively, make decisions in a fair, consistent manner, and make good use of everyone's time.
- b. It expedites business, maintains order, ensures justice, provides equal treatment for members, helps the organization accomplish its purposes.

2. Basic principles

- a. Organization is paramount.
- b. Decisions are generally final.
- c. Power is in the hands of the voting members.
- d. A quorum is necessary to make decisions.
- e. All members have equal rights—to make motions, debate and vote.
- f. Members have the right to vote – or not. Silence means consent.
- g. Majority rules.
- h. Discuss only one item at a time.
- i. Only one person speaks at a time.
- j. Personal remarks are never in order.

HANDLING A MOTION - LANGUAGE FOR THE CHAIR

- Chair: Is there any new business?
- Member A: Mr/Madam Chair
- Chair: Member A
- Member A: I move that . . .
- Member B: Second
- Chair: It is moved and seconded that ... Is there any discussion?
(Look at or calls on Member A first.)
- Member A: (Give explanation or reasons for the motion.)
- Chair: Thank you. Is there further discussion?
- Member B: (Make comments)
- Chair: Thank you. Is there further discussion?
- Member C: I move to amend the motion by . . . (or other subsidiary motion)
- Chair: It is moved and seconded to amend the motion by . . . If the amendment is adopted, the motion will read. . . Is there any discussion on the amendment?
- Members: Discuss, each one seeks recognition by the chairman first.
- Chair: Is there further discussion? (Pause) The amendment is on . . .
Those in favor, say aye.
- Some Members: Aye
- Chair: Those opposed, say no.
- Some Members: No
- Chair: The ayes have it and the amendment is adopted. The question is on the main motion as amended. Is there any further discussion?

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN A MEETING

Use the following to help you know what motions to use and how to say them:

MOTION OR ACTION	WHAT TO SAY	WHEN TO SAY IT
Main motion	"I move to ..."	To bring up an idea or topic for action
Second	"Second"	To let the chair know you want to discuss the idea or topic
Amend	"I move to amend by— Adding Inserting Striking out Striking and inserting	To change or improve the wording of a motion
Discussion or debate	"I am speaking for (or against) the motion"	To discuss the issues relating to the motion
Request for Information	"Request for information"	To ask for relevant information related to a motion
Parliamentary inquiry	"I rise to a parliamentary inquiry."	To ask for information about procedure
Postpone indefinitely	"I move to postpone the motion indefinitely."	To kill a main motion before it is voted on
Refer to a committee	"I move to refer the motion to the _____ committee."	To send a motion to a committee for more study
Postpone definitely	"I move to postpone the motion until _____."	To delay considering the motion and to set a specific time to bring it up again.
Limit Debate	"I move to limit debate to 10 minutes on this motion." "I move to limit debate to two minutes for all speakers."	To set a limit on how long to discuss a motion.
Extend debate	"I move to extend debate for 5 minutes."	To allow more time to discuss a motion.
Previous question or call the question.	"I move the previous question" or "I call the question."	To close debate
Lay on the table	"I move to lay the motion on the table."	To set a motion aside temporarily.
Take from the table	"I move to take from the table the motion to ..."	To resume consideration of a motion that was tabled.
Recess	"I move to recess for _____ minutes."	To take a short break during a meeting.
Adjourn	"I move to adjourn."	To end the meeting
Rescind	"I move to rescind the motion relating to ..."	To strike out an entire main motion that was adopted previously.
Reconsider	"I move to reconsider the vote on the motion that..."	To bring a motion that was already adopted back again for further consideration.
Unanimous consent (The chair uses this language. Members need to know what it means.)	"If there is no objection to _____, we will take that action. (Pause) Since there is no objection, the action will be taken."	If no one objects, the motion is adopted without a direct vote.

THIRTEEN RANKING MOTIONS

- **Privileged Motions**, while they do not have any relation to the pending question, are so urgent or important they are entitled to immediate consideration.
- **Subsidiary Motions** are those that may be applied to another motion to modify it, delay action, or dispose of it.
- **Main Motions** are the basis of all parliamentary procedure. They provide the method to bring business before the assembly for consideration and action.

Type	Name of Motion	In order when another has the floor?	Does it require a second?	Is it debatable?	Is it amendable?	Vote needed to adopt?	May it be reconsidered?
P	Fix the Time to which to Adjourn	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	Yes
P	Adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
P	Recess	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
P	Raise a Question of Privilege	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides	No
P	Call for the Orders of the Day	Yes	No	No	No	No vote; Demand	No
S	Lay on the Table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
S	Previous Question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes
S	Limit or Extend Limits of Debate	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3	Yes (1)
S	Postpone to a Certain Time (Definitely)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority (2)	Yes
S	Commit (Refer to a Committee)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes (3)
S	Amend	No	Yes	Yes(4)	Yes	Majority	Yes
S	Postpone Indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Aff. Only
M	Main Motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes