

Robert's Rules of Order

These century-old rules are the standard for meetings, discussions, and group decision-making.

They provide for fair and constructive conversations and work best when all members are familiar with the rules. Robert's Rules provide a strong framework for motions and voting.

- Making Motions
 - In order to present a motion, a member must seek recognition from the Chair after the previous speaker has finished. To make a motion, state “I move that we...” and continue with your proposal. Another member must second your motion by stating “Second,” or “I second the motion.” Without the backing of multiple members, the motion dies.
- Types of Motions
 - Main Motions – to introduce items to membership for consideration on any subject. Main motions cannot be made when any other motions are alive.
 - Incidental Motions – to bring up questions of procedure which take precedence over other motions at any time. Incidental Motions include:
 - Point of order – used to bring a violation of the rules to the attention of the Chair.
 - Appeal – challenges the chair's ruling on a procedural question.
 - Suspension of the rules – used to remove some or all rules for discussion (decisions cannot be made under suspension of the rules), requires a two-thirds vote.
 - Withdrawing a motion – pulling a motion from deliberation.
 - Point of information – a question asked to the Chair.
 - Objection to consideration – used to suppress motions that are illegitimate or distracting, requires a two-thirds vote.
 - Division of a question – divides a motion containing multiple provisions to be voted on separately.
 - Division of the assembly – used to demand an enumerable vote count, such as hand raising or standing.
 - Privileged Motions – to deal with urgent or pressing matters that are unrelated to pending business but must be tended to immediately. These include:
 - Raise a question of privilege – relates to the rights or welfare of any or all members, can be used to demand/remind members to return to the previously set agenda.

- Recess – requests an intermission and sets a time for the meeting to resume.
 - Adjourn – used to close the meeting immediately.
 - Fix the time to which to adjourn – to set a later time to continue an adjourned meeting before the next regular meeting.
 - Subsidiary Motions – to change how a main motion is handled, voted on before a main motion. These include:
 - Lay on the table – postpones discussion until a later time when something more urgent has arisen, but does not kill the motion.
 - Closing debate – “call for the previous question” or “I move to close debate” requires a two-thirds majority to end discussion and prevent further amendment.
 - Limit or extend debate – if the group has a rule regarding the amount of time to be spent on a topic, this can increase or decrease the time allotted for the debate and it requires a two-thirds majority.
 - Postpone definitely – tabling, but to a set time and date.
 - Refer to committee – a direction to a standing or special committee to review the subject matter and report back at a future time.
 - Amendment – changes the wording of the main motion, can be used to make a motion more acceptable to the majority of the group.
 - Postpone indefinitely – effectively kills the motion and avoids a direct vote, can be used when the body taking any position on the issue could result in consequences.
- Voting
 - Voting methods
 - Voice – those in favor say “aye”, those opposed say “no”.
 - Roll call – each member responds with “yes” or “no” when their name is called.
 - General consent – allows for a motion to pass if there are no objections; if one member objects, the motion must be voted on.
 - Division – members either raise their hands or stand with their vote.
 - Ballot – voting intention is written on a slip of paper, can be kept secret.
 - Other voting terminology
 - Majority vote – requires that more than half of those partaking in the vote approve a motion.

- Two-thirds vote – requires that at least two-thirds (66.7%) of those partaking in the vote approve a motion.
- Tie vote – If no one receives a majority vote, the motion is lost, unless the presiding officer has not voted, in which case they can vote to make or break the tie.
- Quorum – a minimum number of members must be present at the meeting in order to legally conduct business