

## Robert's Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order is the informal, short title of a book containing rules of order tended to be adopted for use by a deliberative assembly (such as a board or committee meeting). Created by U. S. Army Major Henry Robert as a set of parliamentary procedures prescribed by and loosely modeled after those used in the United States House of Representatives, it is a set of parliamentary rules that allow members of differing backgrounds to conduct meetings in an orderly and fair manner. Familiarity with basic rules of parliamentary procedure as outlined in Robert's Rules of Order will allow you to more readily follow the action during business portions of a session.

### Parliamentary Procedure

Under the rules of parliamentary procedure, business is brought before the Council in the form of a motion, called a proposal.

**Motion:** There are six steps in processing a motion.

**Step One:** A voting member makes a motion.

**Step Two:** Another voting member seconds the motion.

**Step Three:** The chair states the motion by repeating it. This formally places the motion before the assembly.

**Step Four:** The chair asks for discussion on the motion. The person who made the original motion is given the first opportunity to speak. The chair then alternately calls on speakers who are AGAINST the motion and those who are FOR it.

**Step Five:** The chair puts the motion to a vote. Each voting member casts her or his vote. Votes are tallied quickly, so the results (proposal adopted or defeated) are known in a short time frame.

**Step Six:** The chair announces the result of the vote.



## **Secondary Motions**

Secondary motions you'll commonly see used are Amend, Previous Question, and Request for Information.

Amendments change the wording of a proposal, or an amendment, either by inserting words, striking (or deleting) words, or doing both at once by striking and inserting. If the amendment is adopted, debate resumes on the main motion as amended, or amendment as amended.

If the amendment is defeated, debate resumes on the main motion or amendment as originally worded.

## **Scope of Notice**

Amendments must be within the scope of notice of the pending motion.

The **scope** is the range between the situation that currently exists and the change proposed in the motion. Anything within that range is in order, and anything outside that range is out of order.

## **Germane**

All amendments must be germane – or related – to the motion being amended. An amendment cannot introduce a new subject.

## **Previous Question**

If debate becomes repetitious and no new points are being made, a voting member may move the motion “previous question.” Adoption of this motion ends debate and amendment of the immediately pending question (or all pending questions, depending on how the motion is made) and the chair then puts the question to a vote.

A two-thirds vote of all votes cast is required to adopt the previous question and have the assembly proceed immediately to a vote.

## **Request for Information**

While engaged in debate on a particular proposal, a voting member may want to ask a question about the proposal. If so, she or he goes to the microphone and awaits recognition from the chair. When called to speak, the correct form is: “I rise to request information” or “Request information”.

Please note that requests for information are stated in the form of a question. The purpose of requesting information is to get information, not to give information. The chair may respond to the question or call upon an appropriate resource person to answer.



## **What to Say When**

### **To make a motion**

“I move to/that (state what you want to do).”

### **To kill the motion**

“I move that the question be postponed indefinitely.”

### **To amend**

“I move to amend the motion by (inserting, adding, strike out or strike out and inserting)”.

### **To refer to a committee**

“I move to refer the question to (state which committee).”

### **To postpone to a certain time**

“I move to postpone the question to (state the time within the Session to which you want the question postponed).”

### **To limit debate**

“I move to limit debate to (state amount of time) or to (state number) speeches.”

### **To extend debate**

“I move to extend debate to (state amount of time) or to all (state number) speeches.”

### **To close debate**

“I move the previous question.”

### **To raise a question of privilege (not to be used for comfort issues)**

“I rise to a question of privilege affecting the assembly.”

### **To raise a point of order**

“I rise to a point of order.” Or “Point of order!”

### **To appeal the Chair’s ruling**

“I appeal from the decision of the Chair.”

### **To have an inconclusive voice or show of hands vote retaken**

“Division.” Or “I call for a division.”

### **To ask a question about parliamentary procedure related to the pending business**

“I rise to parliamentary inquiry”.

### **To have a vote reconsidered**

“I move to amend the Standing Rules by (state what change you want o make).”

### **To make a motion**

“I move to/that (state what you want to do).”