

WHO IS ROBERT, AND WHY ALL THE RULES?

HELPFUL HINTS OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Many people come to a meeting and get intimidated by *Robert's Rules of Order*. At the time being, however, they're mandated by the Book of Order, which is part of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church. But the basics of Robert's Rules and parliamentary procedure are fairly simple, and are all most people need to be able to participate effectively in a meeting.

Here's some helpful information about the types of motions you may make in a meeting and the rules concerning them:

ROBERTS RULES CHEAT SHEET

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Object to procedure or personal affront	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decides
Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	None
Ask for vote by actual count to verify voice vote	"I call for a division of the house"	Must be done before new motion	No	No	No	None unless someone objects
Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter	"I object to consideration of this question"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up matter previously tabled	"I move we take from the table..."	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to..."	Yes	Yes	Only if original motion was debatable	No	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	"I appeal the Chair's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

Other Important Motions:

Commit or Refer to a committee: "I refer that we refer X to X Committee." This motion requires a second, is debateable and amendable, requires a majority vote, and it can be reconsidered if voted down.

Amend or Rescind Something Previously Adopted: "I move to rescind/amend the motion previously adopted to X (by adding, inserting, and/or striking words, if amending)." This motion requires a second, is debateable and amendable, requires a 2/3 vote unless previous notice has been given, and it cannot be reconsidered if voted down.

Call For the Order of the Day: "I call for the order of the day." This motion forces the assembly to return to the docket. It can interrupt a speaker and no second or vote is required. The moderator will then return the assembly to the business

listed on the docket at that time. But a member may make another motion and say “I move to suspend the rules to allow five more minutes to debate and vote on the pending question.” This motion would require a 2/3 vote.

Fix the Time To Which To Adjourn: “I move to fix the time (or the place) to which to adjourn to...” This motion is a good motion to make if the meeting has run very long and you think it would be better to end the meeting and take up the business another day. It’s also a good motion when you don’t have a quorum. It must be seconded, it is not debateable but it is amendable, it requires a majority vote, and it can be reconsidered.

Withdraw a Motion: The maker of a motion may move to withdraw it. However, if the motion has already been seconded and stated by the chair, it will take a majority vote of the assembly to withdraw the motion.

When do you reconsider, rescind, or renew?

Reconsider may only be used at the same meeting or session and it must be made by someone who voted on the prevailing side. Let’s say you voted for a motion, it passed then there was a dinner break and you talked to someone and gained information you didn’t have before. You may now move to reconsider the previous motion, and make sure you tell the moderator you voted for the motion last time.

Rescind or Amend Something Previously Adopted may be used when you want to change something the assembly had voted on previously. Previous notice of this motion can be helpful in getting it on the docket, and it typically changes the vote needed to pass from 2/3 to simple majority, so make sure that you submit the motion to the Stated Clerk prior to the meeting.

Renew may be used when the assembly voted something down, and you want the assembly to consider it again. However, Renew may not be used at the same meeting as the original vote, you have to wait until the next meeting. On the other hand, if the motion was withdrawn, it may be considered again at that meeting.

There is an established order of precedence to main motions and twelve subsidiary motions (motions that have to do with the main motion). See below. As an example, if a main motion and a motion to refer to a committee are pending, you could move to lay the motion on the table, but not a motion to amend.

