

# ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER - SIMPLIFIED

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- **EQUAL VOICE:** Everyone gets an opportunity to speak before anyone speaks twice.
- **TRANSPARENCY:** Everyone has the right to know what's happening at all times.
- **ORDER:** Only one motion or topic is discussed at a time.
- **RESPECT:** No interruptions unless urgent or procedural.

## MOTIONS:

A *motion* is a formal proposal for the group to act or discuss. After being recognized by the chair of the board, any member can introduce a motion when no other motion is on the table. A motion requires a second to be considered. If there is no second, the matter is not considered. Each motion must be disposed of (passed, defeated, tabled, referred to committee, or postponed indefinitely).

## HOW IT WORKS:

You want to bring a new idea before the group.

*After recognition by the chair, present your motion. A second is required for the motion to go to the floor for discussion or consideration.*

⇒ "I move that..."

You want to change the wording in a motion under discussion.

*After recognition by the chair, move to amend by*

- Adding words
- Striking words or
- Striking and inserting words
  - ⇒ "I move that the motion be amended by adding the following words..."
  - ⇒ "I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words..."
  - ⇒ "I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words, \_\_\_\_\_, and adding in their place the following words \_\_\_\_\_."

You like the idea of the motion being discussed by it requires more rewording beyond simple changes.

*Move to substitute your motion for the original motion, If seconded, discussion will continue on both motions and eventually the body will vote on which motion they prefer more.*

⇒ "I move to substitute the motion with:..."

You want more study, investigation, or time allotted to an idea being discussed.

*Move to refer to a committee. Be clear about what the committee should be focused on.*

⇒ "I move this issue/question/motion be referred to a committee with instructions to \_\_\_\_\_."

You want more time personally to study the proposal being discussed.

*Move to postpone to a definite time or date.*

⇒ "I move to postpone the question until \_\_\_\_\_."



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## HOW IT WORKS CONTINUED:

You've heard enough discussion.

Move to close the debate. Also referred to as calling the question - This cuts off discussion and brings the board to a vote on the pending question only.

⇒ "I move to close the debate and call the question..."

You want to take a short break.

Move to recess for a set period of time.

⇒ "I move to recess for ten minutes."

You want to postpone a motion until some later time.

Move to table the motion. The motion may be taken from the table after 1 item of business has been conducted. If the motion is not taken from the table by the end of the next scheduled meeting, it is dead. To kill a motion at the time it is tabled required 2/3rds vote. A majority is required to table a motion without killing it.

⇒ "I move to table this motion until after we finish the budget discussion."

You believe the discussion has drifted away from the agenda and want to bring it back.

⇒ "Call for orders of the day."

You have changed your mind about something that was voted on earlier in the meeting for which you were on the winning side.

Move to reconsider. If the majority agrees, the motion comes back to the floor as though the vote had not occurred.

⇒ "I move to reconsider the motion to \_\_\_\_\_."

You're confused about a procedure being used and want clarification.

Without requiring recognition, call for "Point of Information" or "Point of Parliamentary Inquiry." The chair will ask you to state your question and will attempt to clarify the situation.

You want to end the meeting.

⇒ "I move to adjourn."

## Unanimous Consent:

If a matter is considered relatively minor or opposition is not expected, a call for unanimous consent may be requested. If the request is made by others, the board chair will repeat the request then pause for objections. If none are heard, the motion passes.

⇒ "I request unanimous consent to ..."



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**Interrupting a speaker may be for these reasons only:**

- To ask about what is being discussed - *Point of information*
- To ask about how the rules work - *Parliamentary Inquiry*
- If you can't hear, or there's a comfort/safety issue - *Question of privilege*
- If someone breaks the rules - *Point of order*
- If you disagree with the chair's decision - *Appeal*
- If you don't agree with skipping a formal vote or Unanimous Consent - *Object*

**QUICK REFERENCE:**

	Must be Seconded	Open for Discussion	Can be Amended	Vote Count Required to Pass	May be Reconsidered or Rescinded
Main Motion	√	√	√	Majority	√
Amend Motion	√	√		Majority	√
Kill a Motion	√			Majority	√
Limit Debate	√		√	2/3rds	√
Close Discussion	√			2/3rds	
Recess	√		√	Majority	
Adjourn (End Meeting)	√			Majority	
Refer to Committee	√	√	√	Majority	√
Postpone to later time	√	√		Majority	√
Table	√			Majority	
Postpone Indefinitely	√	√	√	Majority	√

**TIPS FOR MEETINGS:**

When debating motions...

1. Listen to the other side
2. Focus on issues, not personalities
3. Avoid questioning motives
4. Be polite

