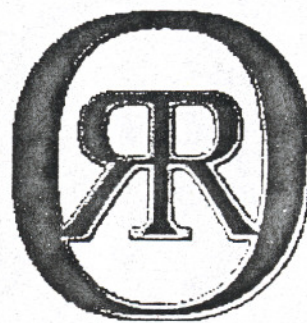


# Roberts Rules Made Simple



## Points

The following three points are always in order:

- 1. Point of Order:** a question about process, or objection and suggestion of alternative process. May include a request for the facilitator to rule on process.
  - 2. Point of Information:** a request for information on a specific question, either about process or about the content of a motion. This is not a way to get the floor to say something you think people should know. People misusing points of information in this fashion will be defenestrated, or otherwise sanctioned forcefully.
  - 3. Point of Personal Privilege:** a comment addressing a personal need - a direct response to a comment defaming one's character, a plea to open the windows, etc.
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## Motions

All motions must be seconded, and are adopted by a majority vote unless otherwise noted. All motions may be debated unless otherwise noted. Motions are in order of precedence: motions may be made only if no motion of equal or higher precedence is on the floor (i.e., don't do a number 5 (move to end debate) when the body is discussing a number 4 (move to suspend rules)).

- 1. Motion to Adjourn:** not debatable; goes to immediate majority vote.
- 2. Motion to Recess:** not debatable. May be for a specific time.
- 3. Motion to Appeal the Facilitator's Decision:** Not debatable; goes to immediate vote. Allows the body to overrule a decision made by the chair.
- 4. Motion to Suspend the Rules:** suspends formal process for dealing with a specific question. Debatable; requires 2/3 vote.
- 5. Motion to End Debate and Vote or Call the Question:** applies only to the motion on the floor. Not debatable; requires 2/3 vote.

6. **Motion to Extend Debate:** can be general, or for a specific time or number of speakers. Not debatable.

7. **Motion to Refer to Committee:** applies only to the main motion. Refers question to a specific group with a specific time and charge.

8. **Motion to Divide the Question:** breaks the motion on the floor into two parts, in manner suggested by mover.

9. **Motion to Amend:** must be voted for by a majority to be considered and by a 2/3 to be passed. If amendment is accepted as "friendly" by the proposer of the amendment then many bodies will allow it to be accepted without a formal vote; this is a way of including a consensus-building process into procedure without endless debate over amendments to amendments. Strictly speaking, however, once the main motion is made it is the property of the body to amend.

10. **Main Motion:** what it is you're debating and amending.

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## **Other Meeting Guidelines:**

1. **When a topic is first introduced** or a main motion is made, allow all questions for information purposes to be asked before opening to debate.

2. **Discourage the repetition of arguments.** Attempt to call on people who have not yet spoken before those who have already spoken. Discourage dialogues that start up between two individuals in debate.

3. **If debate carries on too long,** impose time limits on speakers.

4. **Discourage people from talking in initials -** spell them out.

-at a glance.



Here are some motions you might make, how to make them, and what to expect of the rules.

| TO DO THIS:                                   | YOU SAY THIS:                                | MAY YOU INTERRUPT THE SPEAKER? | DO YOU NEED A SECOND? | IS IT DEBATABLE? | CAN IT BE AMENDED? | WHAT VOTE IS NEEDED? | CAN IT BE RECONSIDERED? |
|---|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| ADJOURN MEETING                               | "I move that we adjourn"                     | NO                             | YES                   | NO               | NO                 | MAJORITY             | NO                      |
| CALL AN INTERMISSION                          | "I move that we recess for..."               | NO                             | YES                   | NO               | YES                | MAJORITY             | NO                      |
| COMPLAIN ABOUT HEAT, NOISE, ETC.              | "I rise to a question of privilege"          | YES                            | NO                    | NO               | NO                 | NO VOTE              | NO (usually)            |
| TEMPORARILY SUSPEND CONSIDERATION OF AN ISSUE | "I move to table the motion"                 | NO                             | YES                   | NO               | NO                 | MAJORITY             | NO                      |
| END DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS                     | "I move the previous question"               | NO                             | YES                   | NO               | NO                 | 2/3                  | NO <sup>①</sup>         |
| POSTPONE DISCUSSION FOR A CERTAIN TIME        | "I move to postpone the discussion until..." | NO                             | YES                   | YES              | YES                | MAJORITY             | YES                     |
| GIVE CLOSER STUDY OF SOMETHING                | "I move to refer the matter to committee"    | NO                             | YES                   | YES              | YES                | MAJORITY             | YES <sup>②</sup>        |
| AMEND A MOTION                                | "I move to amend the motion by..."           | NO                             | YES                   | YES <sup>③</sup> | YES                | MAJORITY             | YES                     |
| INTRODUCE BUSINESS                            | "I move that..."                             | NO                             | YES                   | YES              | YES                | MAJORITY             | YES                     |

THE MOTIONS LISTED ABOVE ARE IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE... BELOW THERE IS NO ORDER...

|   |  |     |     |                |    |                       |                |
|---|--|-----|-----|----------------|----|-----------------------|----------------|
| PROTEST BREACH OF RULES OR CONDUCT          | "I rise to a point of order."              | YES | NO  | NO             | NO | NO VOTE <sup>④</sup>  | NO             |
| VOTE ON A RULING OF THE CHAIR               | "I appeal from the chair's decision"       | YES | YES | YES            | NO | MAJORITY <sup>⑤</sup> | YES            |
| SUSPEND RULES TEMPORARILY                   | "I move to suspend the rules so that..."   | NO  | YES | NO             | NO | 2/3                   | NO             |
| AVOID CONSIDERING AN IMPROPER MATTER        | "I object to consideration of this motion" | YES | NO  | NO             | NO | 2/3 <sup>⑥</sup>      | - <sup>⑦</sup> |
| VERIFY A VOICE VOTE BY HAVING MEMBERS STAND | "I call for a division" or "Division!"     | YES | NO  | NO             | NO | NO VOTE               | NO             |
| REQUEST INFORMATION                         | "Point of information"                     | YES | NO  | NO             | NO | NO VOTE               | NO             |
| TAKE UP A MATTER PREVIOUSLY TABLED          | "I move to take from the table..."         | NO  | YES | NO             | NO | MAJORITY              | NO             |
| RECONSIDER A HASTY ACTION                   | "I move to reconsider the vote on..."      | YES | YES | - <sup>⑧</sup> | NO | MAJORITY              | NO             |

NOTES:

① Unless vote on question is not yet taken.

② Unless the committee has already taken up the subject.

③ Only if the motion to be amended is debatable.

④ Except in doubtful cases.

⑤ A majority vote in negative needed to reverse ruling of chair.

⑥ A 2/3 vote in negative needed to prevent consideration of main motion.

⑦ Only if the main question or motion was not, in fact, considered.

⑧ Only if motion to be reconsidered is debatable.