

Tips for conducting business using Robert's Rules of Order

A. Obtaining the Floor:

Before a member in an assembly can make a motion or speak in debate, he or she must obtain the floor; that is, the member must be recognized by the chair as having the exclusive right to be heard at that time. Go to one of the microphones and wait for the Chairman to call on the person at that mic by microphone number. Then state your NAME, CHAPTER, and SCHOOL.

B. Introducing Business (Making Motions):

Business may be introduced by an individual member or by a committee. Business is always introduced in the form of a motion. All resolutions must first be discussed in committee unless the rules have been suspended.

C. Seconding a Motion:

1. After a motion has been made, another member, without rising and obtaining the floor, may second the motion.
2. A second merely implies that the seconder agrees that the motion should come before the assembly and not that he or she necessarily favors the motion.
3. A motion made by a committee requires no second, since its introduction into the assembly has been approved by a majority of the committee.
4. The purpose of a second is to prevent time from being consumed by the assembly having to dispose of a motion that only one person wants to see introduced.

D. Debate:

1. Every member of the assembly has the right to speak on every debatable motion before it is finally acted upon; this right cannot be interfered with except by a motion to limit debate.
2. All discussion must be confined to the immediately pending question and to whether or not it should be adopted.
3. While debate is in progress, amendments or other secondary motions can be introduced and disposed of accordingly.
4. During debate, no member can attack or question the motives of another member.
5. The maker of a motion, although allowed to vote against it, is not allowed to speak against it.

E. Amendments:

1. There are six ways to amend a motion: a. Add words, phrases, or sentences at the end of a motion; b. Insert words, phrases, or sentences; c. Strike words, phrases, or sentences; d. Strike and insert words, phrases, or sentences; e. Strike and add words, phrases, or sentences; and f. Substitute whole paragraphs or an entire text.
2. Only two amendments (primary and secondary) may be pending on a main motion at any time.
3. Discussion of an amendment must relate only to the amendment, unless the whole motion is involved by substitution.
4. An amendment must be germane to the question under consideration.

F. Voting:

1. Unless special rules apply, a majority decides. A majority is more than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote, excluding blank ballots or abstentions.
2. Unless otherwise provided for, voting is by voice vote.
3. Any member may request a division of the assembly if there is uncertainty as to the true result of the vote.