

Robert's Rules of Order

Modify by the Twelve Traditions and
Adapted for the General Service Conference Area 47 Assembly

What are Robert's Rules of Order?

They are set of guidelines for conducting business first written in 1876. Clubs, organizations, associations and conventions generally utilize Robert's Rules for business meetings.

Why are Robert's Rules Important?

These guidelines allow everyone to be heard so this group can make decisions without confusion. This version of Robert's Rules have been modified to fit the needs of Area 47. Today, Robert's Rules of Order are the basic meeting operation for AA at the District, Area, Regional and National level, so it's important that everyone know these basic procedures. They should not be utilized in a way to stifle full discussion of an issue. We use these guidelines, but keep in mind that they must occasionally give way to the 12 Traditions.

Moving to Motion:

A *motion* is a proposal that the entire membership take action or a stand on an issue. Only members that can vote on motions may make motions. Motions cannot be made when any other motion is on the floor. Original motions yield to subsidiary motions such as amendments.

1) Obtain the floor by raising your hand.

- a) Wait until the last speaker has finished.
Always wait until the Chairperson recognizes you.

2) Make Your Motion.

- a) Speak in a clear and concise manner. It is sometimes helpful to write out your motion before saying it.
- b) Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we ..." rather than, "I move that we do not ..."
- c) Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.

3) Second the Motion.

- a) Another member will second your motion or the Chairperson will call for a second.
- b) If there is no second to your motion it is lost.
- c) It is generally not advisable to second a motion to simply get on with the discussion. The better course is to wait for the motion to fail without a second and then make a new motion. This avoids the problem of having to overly amend a motion that is not effectively worded in the first place.

4) The Chairperson States Your Motion.

- a) The Chairperson will say, "It has been moved and seconded that we ..." Thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
- b) Once your motion is presented to the membership by the Chairperson it becomes "assembly property," and must follow the amendment procedure (below) to be modified.

5) The Motion is Discussed.

- a) The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time, rather than at the time you present it. The mover is always allowed to speak first.
- b) All comments and debate must be directed to the Chairperson.
- c) The membership then either discuss and debate your motion, or may move directly to a vote.
- d) Any member may speak on a motion, but should wait until other speakers are finished before taking the microphone for a second time.
- e) The mover may speak again only after other speakers are finished, unless called upon by the Chairperson.

6) Putting the Question to the Membership.

- a) The Chairperson asks, "Are you ready to vote on the question?" If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.
- b) Alternately, a members states "I call the vote" at the microphone.
 - i) Calling the question requires a second and requires a simple majority to pass.
 - ii) This action is not debatable.
 - iii) The person calling the question must be recognized and speak in turn, calling the question out of turn, interrupting those who have been waiting to speak, is out of order and does not have to be recognized by the Chair.
 - iv) The person calling the question may not address the motion prior to calling the question.

7) **Voting on a Motion:**

At the discretion of the Chair one of three methods of voting will be used:

1. **By Voice** -- The Chairperson asks those in favor to say, "Aye," those opposed to say "no", and ask for any abstentions. The only reason to abstain from the vote is if you could personally gain or profit from the motion. Any member may move for an exact count.
2. **By a Show of Hands** -- Each member raises their hand until all hands are counted. This method is used for counting dissenting votes also.
3. **By Ballot** -- Members write their vote on a slip of paper; this method is used when secrecy is desired, such as during elections of committee members. (Please see Third Legacy voting in your service manual for further instructions.)

Minority Opinion

The minority opinion is very important to AA and helps to preserve our Traditions.

Following a vote, the Chairperson will ask to hear from the minority opinion. The Chairperson can choose how many minority opinions will be heard. The purpose is to persuade even one person from the majority to change their opinion and move for reconsideration.

- a) If any member who voted on the prevailing side of the question raise their hands the request to reconsider a vote is considered made and seconded and discussion resumes on the matter as if the original vote had not taken place.
- b) This is not discussion, and no rebuttal by a member of the majority is allowed.
- c) If the motion that is being reconsidered is not debatable, then the motion to reconsider is not debatable.
- d) A matter may be reconsidered only once. Motions to reconsider or table cannot be subject to a motion to reconsider.
- e) Motions to reconsider must be made at the same meeting at which the vote being reconsidered was taken.

Amending a Motion:

When a motion requires change before approval, a motion to amend the motion may be made.

- a) A "friendly" amendment is suggested to the person making the motion and accepted by him. The Chairperson will then restate the question with the amendment included and discussion on the amended motion continues.
- b) A "formal" motion to amend is done by inserting, adding, deleting or changing the motion. For example, if the motion is to allocate \$500.00 to some task, and the discussion indicated the assembly thought that amount was too much, a member could amend the motion by saying "I move to change the motion from \$500.00 to \$250.00."
- c) Formal motions to amend must be seconded.
- d) If seconded, discussion of the motion to amend takes precedence over the main motion and the discussion then focuses on the amendment.
- e) Once the assembly votes on the amendment, the discussion of the main motion resumes.

Tabling a Motion:

Tabling a motion has the effect of removing the motion from further consideration at that time, and postpones it to such time in the future when it is taken off the table.

- a) A motion to table requires a second.
- b) Motions to table are not debatable.
- c) Motions to table require a simple majority to pass.
- d) If the matter is to be postponed to a specific time, then the appropriate motion is not to table, but to postpone until {date}.

Point of Order

It is the duty of the Chairperson to enforce the guidelines of the Assembly. It is the right of each member of the Assembly who notices a shift from these guidelines to bring the problem the Chair's attention by calling "Point of Order".

- a) The Chair may stop discussion that does not follow the guidelines of the Assembly without calling "Point of Order". An explanation of the guideline will be provided before discussion on the motion continues.
- b) Any member may call "Point of Order" from the Assembly floor.
- c) The discussion stops and the Chair will address the guideline question before continuing.
- d) The Chair may request the assistance of a member to act as the Parliamentarian of the group by suggesting an interpretation of these guidelines to the Chair.
- e) A decision is made on the rule or guideline by the Chairperson and discussion is resumed.