

Robert's Rules of Order, 11th Edition

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Robert's Rules of Order (RONR) Basic Principles

The purpose of Robert's Rules of Order is to have efficient meetings and reduce conflict.

- The basic principles are:
 - All votes are counted equally
 - Preserve rights of the minority and those absent
 - Free and fair debate
 - Right to know the meaning
 - Minority can protest, but majority decides
 - Business transactions are characterized by fairness and good faith
 - Definitions:
 - Constitution identifies the basics of a group:
 - Name and purpose
 - These rarely change
 - Bylaws:
 - Regulations that may change
 - Officer duties
 - Committees
 - Bylaw contents can be changed
 - With prior notification
 - Typically a month or more
 - Protects the rights of the absent
 - A two-thirds majority vote to make changes
 - Amendments requirements are typically part of the Bylaws
 - The Presiding Officer (Chair):
 - Leads the meeting
 - Ensures the procedures are followed
 - General guidelines:
 - Use titles such as "Madam Chair" instead of "Mary"
 - Stand when speaking
 - To be seen and heard
 - Address the Chair, not the members
 - Maintain a courteous tone
 - Avoid the personal pronouns "I" and "you"
 - "The Chair rules" not "I rule"
 - In large groups, may need to state your name
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Robert's Rules of Order (RONR) Business Meetings

- Quorum:
 - Minimum number of members to transact business.
 - Quorum requirement is commonly specified in the Bylaws.
 - Often a majority of members.
 - Sometimes, a majority of active members.
 - There can be no business if there is no quorum.

- A common meeting agenda is comprised of:
 - Meeting Minutes from previous meeting.
 - Officer reports and announcements.
 - Standing Committee reports.
 - Special Committee reports.
 - Special Orders.
 - Unfinished Business (not old business).
 - New Business.

- Meeting Minutes
 - Do not need to be orally read if printed or distributed.
 - Do not require a motion:
 - The Chair asks, "Are there any additions or corrections to the meeting minutes as distributed?"
 - The Chair then states
 - "The meeting minutes stand approved as distributed."
 - or – "The meeting minutes stand approved as corrected."
 - A vote is not necessary.
 - If corrections are made to the meeting minutes
 - The new meeting minutes state the previous meeting minutes were corrected (without specifying the correction).

- The Treasurer's Report:
 - Does not require a motion.
 - It is a statement of fact (just as any other officer report).

- Unfinished Business:
 - A motion from a previous meeting that was referred to a committee.
 - or – A motion that was not completed (such as adjourning) before a vote is taken.

Robert's Rules of Order (RONR) Main Motions

Main motions bring business to the group for consideration and action.

- A member rises and states, "Madam Chair", or "Mr. Chair". ", or "Madam Acting Chair".

- The Chair recognizes the member, "Jon Arbuckle has the floor."
 - The member states, "I move we purchase a portable lectern" (not "I make a motion").
 - Another member calls out, "Second" (no need for the Chair to recognize that person).
 - If no one seconds the motion
 - The Chair asks if anyone seconds the motion.
 - If no one does, the motion dies.
 - The motion is not recorded in the meeting minutes if there is no second.
 - The person who makes the "second"
 - Only agrees the motion should be discussed.
 - May or may not support the motion.
 - The person who made the second is not recorded in the meeting minutes
 - A second is not needed
 - If it is a resolution (proposed by a committee of more than one person).
- Before the Chair places it "on the floor"
 - The Chair can suggest minor modifications (such as, "It would be good to include a location")
 - Tweaking a motion "before" it is presented to the group
 - Reduces amendments.
 - The Chair asks the Secretary to restate the motion as recorded
 - The Chair asks the person who made the motion if it is recorded correctly.
- Then the Chair places the motion on the floor (to the group),
 - "There is a motion on the floor that Is there any discussion?"
 - Now the motion is the property of the group.
 - The motion cannot be changed without an amendment.
 - Who speaks first?
 - The person who made the motion is entitled to speak first.
 - Who speaks second?
 - Anyone who is recognized by the Chair:
 - Members should stand and wait to be recognized.
 - The Chair attempts to alternate between those who support and those who oppose the motion (using body language as an indicator).
 - Discussion
 - No one can speak more than twice.
 - No one can speak longer than ten minutes.
 - Before anyone speaks a second time
 - Everyone should be given the "opportunity" to speak a first time.
 - Everyone does not need to speak (only given the opportunity).
 - It takes a two-thirds vote to change these rules.
 - All should address the Chair in a courteous tone.
 - The Chair cannot interrupt unless rules are violated.
- The Chair can participate in the discussion
 - Only if control of the meeting is relinquished

- Someone else (such as a Vice President) serves as the "Chair"
 - The previous Chair is now a regular member, steps away from the lectern, and joins the group
 - Follows the same procedures as outlined above
- The Chair can close debate
 - After all have been given the opportunity to speak twice.
 - After debate is closed, the Chair restates the motion, then asks
 - "All in favor state aye."
 - "All opposed no."
 - Not "same sign".
 - Any member can abstain.
 - Only "yes" and "no" votes count (abstain votes do not count)
 - 20 members present, 5 "yes", 2 "no" => motion passes.
 - If a tie, the motion is defeated.
 - If the vote is unclear, the Chair calls for a Rising Vote (people stand)
 - Easier than a hand count vote (especially in a large group).
 - The Chair does not vote unless it affects the outcome.
 - Case 1: It is a tie.
 - The motion passes only if the Chair votes to approve.
 - Case 2: Six in favor, five opposed.
 - The motion is defeated only if the Chair votes "no" to create a tie.
 - If it is a ballot vote, the Chair votes.
 - The Chair announces the result
 - "The motion passes."
 - --- or --- "The motion is defeated."
 - The motion is recorded in the meeting minutes
 - Amendments are not recorded.
 - Only the final wording of the motion is recorded.
 - The person who made the motion is recorded.
 - The person who amended the motion is recorded.
 - The person who made the second is "not" recorded.
 - Discussion is "not" recorded.
 - How many voted, or who voted, is "not" recorded.
 - If the motion passed or failed is recorded.

Robert's Rules of Order (RONR) Subsidiary Motions

Subsidiary motions modify, delay, handle, or dispose a main motion.

- Subsidiary motions take precedence over a Main Motion.
 - There can be only one Main Motion on the floor.

- Multiple subsidiary motions are often ok.
- The most common subsidiary motion is an Amendment motion.
 - An Amendment modifies a Main Motion
 - "I move to amend the time from 6pm to 7pm".
 - An Amendment cannot modify the Main Motion intent
 - With a Main Motion to purchase a gavel.
 - An Amendment to have a pizza lunch is out of order.
- The "Lay on the Table" motion is often misused.
 - To "Lay on the Table" should be used to take care of an emergency.
 - If there is no emergency, it is out of order.
 - Better is to "Refer to a Committee"
 - Member: "I move we refer this to a committee comprised of"
 - This sends the pending question to a small group to retrieve more information.
 - This motion is brought up under Unfinished Business at the next meeting.
- The motion to "Call the Question" (or "Previous Question") is often misunderstood.
 - Does not force an immediate vote.
 - Cannot interrupt.
 - There must be a second.
 - Chair asks if there is any objection to closing debate.
 - If anyone objects, the debate can be closed only by a two-thirds vote.

 Robert's Rules of Order (RONR) Privileged Motions

Privileged motions are for rights (not items of business). They are entitled to immediate consideration.

- The "Call for the Orders of the Day" motion:
 - Used to bring a group back to the agenda.
 - Does not require a second.
- The "Question of Privilege" motion:
 - Does not require a second.
 - Used to obtain action for
 - Member / officer conduct
 - Accuracy of published reports, etc.
 - Comfort of members (air conditioner is too loud)
 - "Mr. Chair, I rise to a question of privilege."
 - Chair: "State the question."
 - Member: "We cannot hear the speaker."
- "Recess" motion

- Used to provide an intermission during the meeting.
 - "I move we recess for ten minutes" ... or other length of time.
 - If adopted ... provides immediate intermission
 - Useful for heated debates.
 - Allows time for one-on-one discussion to reduce conflicts
- "Adjourn" motion adjourns the meeting while a Main Motion is on the floor.
 - "I move we adjourn."
 - If adopted ... forces immediate adjournment
 - Can occur while Main Motion on floor
 - Perhaps it is midnight, and members want to go home.
 - All pending motions
 - Continue under Unfinished Business at the next meeting.

[Robert's Rules of Order \(RONR\) Incidental Motions](#)

Incidental motions are for situations that may arise. They must be resolved before business can continue.

- "Point of Order"
 - Used when a member thinks there is a violation of the rules. For example,
 - Member: "Mr. Chair, I rise to a point of order."
 - Chair: "State your point."
 - Member: "There was no second to the motion."
- "Appeal decision of the Chair "
 - Can reverse a Chair's decision
 - Member: "Madam Chair, I appeal from the chair's decision."
 - Chair: "Is there a second?"
 - Chair explains the motion
 - Chair: "Is there any discussion?"
 - (if the pending motion is debatable)
 - Chair:
 - "All those in favor of upholding the Chair's decision vote aye."
 - "All opposed vote no."
 - The Chair's decision overruled if "no" votes exceed "aye" votes
- "Suspend the Rules"
 - Can modify the agenda
 - Member: "I move to suspend the rules governing the order of business. Mr. Lee needs to leave."
 - If anyone objects, it takes a 2/3 majority vote to suspend the rules.
- "Division of Assembly"
 - Can force a visual count vote

- Member: "I call for a division of assembly."
 - May interrupt, and does not require a second.
 - Chair proceeds to take a Rising Vote
 - In large groups, is easier to count bodies vs. hands.
 - "Request for Information" (previously known as "Point of Information")
 - Member: "I rise to a point of information."
 - Chair: "State your point."
 - Member: "How much money is in the treasury?"
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