

Roberts Rules of Order

7 Fundamental Motions

Introduction: Welcome to Robert's Rules of Order. Also known as Parliamentary Procedure.

Why Roberts? _____

Robert's was created for the purpose of having order and efficiency during business meetings. Without clear concise rules we create chaos. We want to work efficiently and ensure every decision we make is well thought out and is in the best interest of CPOA.

In the course Roberts Rules Made Simple, founder and author Susan Leahy lays out what she calls the 7 Fundamental Motions. These are the most common and most used motions, during most business meetings.

Here's Robert's Rules for Dummies take on the 7 fundamental motions, of which, we really need to master the first 3. The **Main Motion**, The **Amendment**, and **Amend the Amendment**.

1. Main Motion (Original Main Motion)

- a.** The main motion is a proposal for a specific action and marks the beginning of consideration of a subject. The main motion is the starting point on the way to making a group decision. (Focused Discussion)
 - (1. Until the motion is made, seconded, and stated by the Chair, no discussion is in order. This rule of "motion before discussion" saves valuable meeting time. During the discussion, you and the other members are free to alter your motion as much as necessary before you reach a final decision.
 - (2. Brainstorming is great, but you need to do it outside your business meeting.
- b.** Putting your motion in writing.
 - (1. Writing out your motion helps you to organize your thoughts and compose a motion that's clear and covers the necessary details.
 - (2. A well-prepared motion helps others understand the idea.
 - (3. As often as not, ideas come during the meeting. An effective member works out the motion's wording before rising to make the motion.
 - (4. The presiding officer may ask for motions in writing, as well as the secretary, especially long paragraph type motions. The presiding officer must repeat the motion exactly as the maker makes the motion and the secretary must record it.
 - (5. By writing or working out your words, our goals will be achieved more effectively if we don't fumble over words. Sound prepared because you are prepared.
- c.** Use the proper form "I move that...."
- d.** A more formal Main Motion is called a Resolution. You will see some however I have never seen on created at Convention, just wanted you to be aware.
- e. Incidental Main Motions.** Is a main motion that deals with the business of the group, including previously made decisions and decisions yet to be made. They include Motion to adopt, (will be seen on committee reports), to ratify, to recess, limit debate,

point of order.

f. Making a main motion.

- (1. Is in order only when no other business is pending and never applied to another motion. Requires a second. Are debatable. Are Amendable. Requires majority vote. Requires a higher vote for bylaws, procedural rulings, and changing decisions already made. Can be reconsidered.

g. The Eight Steps:

Member rises, Chair recognizes member, Member makes the motion, another member seconds the motion, The Chair states the motion, the members debate the motion, Chair puts the question, and the members vote and finally the Chair announces the result.

2. Amend. Primary amendment is to the main motion

- a.** This subsidiary motion is the most used of the subsidiary motions.
 - (1. Its use includes changing the wording of a motion, to make a good idea better, or a bad one more palatable.
 - (2. Amendments are at the very heart of perfecting the motion before its final vote.
 - (3. Applies to pending motions only.
- b.** Must be seconded, are debatable, are amendable, requires majority vote, can be reconsidered.
- c.** The BIG rule: An amendment must be relevant (or as Robert's Rules describes, germane) to the motion it seeks to amend.
- d.** Basic Forms: inserting, striking out words or paragraphs, striking out and inserting words, by substituting.

3. Amend the Amendment. (Secondary amendment is to the primary amendment.)

- a.** Amendments can be amended, but amendments to amendments cannot. That could just go on forever. It is important to remember you can only have one primary and one secondary amendment pending at the same time.
- b.** Although the Amendment to the Amendment cannot be amended, **all other rules apply.**
- c.** Once the secondary is decided, the primary may once again be amended. However additional amendments may not raise a question already decided.

4. Refer to Committee. Or (Commit)

- a.** For all but the most simple and direct of motions, everyone's interests may be best served by referring a motion to a committee. Get the details worked out without using up valuable meeting time.
- b.** It's a simple process, before you make the motion, give it some thought and ask yourself these two questions:
 - (1. Which committee?
 - (2. What do you want them to do?

- c. The above should be relayed in your motion. Without enough details the Chair cannot proceed on to the next item of business. The questions above must be decided before you can move on.
- d. Refer to committee gives best opportunity to work out details, gather information, and consider alternatives before making the final decision.
- e. Must be seconded, are debatable, are amendable, requires majority vote, can be reconsidered.

5. Postpone to a Certain Time.

- a. Sometimes you just need to put things off.
- b. Groups sometimes start discussion on a motion and don't have all the information needed to make a final decision, or that a motion is taking up way too much time and you know there needs to be a decision but not right now and you have other more pressing issues to resolve.
- c. Postpone to any time during current meeting, or you may postpone to next meeting if your meeting schedule is not more than quarterly.
- d. Must be seconded, are debatable, are amendable, requires majority vote, can be reconsidered.

6. Lay on the Table.

- a. When something urgent comes up that requires the immediate decision by the assembly to set aside a pending motion, the motion to Lay on the Table is the motion to use.
- b. It is never in order, to kill or delay a pending motion.
- c. Everything attached to the pending motion is also tabled.
- d. Must be taken from the table to continue consideration. If it is not removed before your meeting adjourns it remains on the table for the next meeting. If your meeting schedule is less than quarterly, then it evaporates.
- e. Must be seconded, requires majority vote.

7. Previous Question or Call the Question

- a. Have you ever been in a meeting and said to yourself, when are we going to quit beating this dead horse?
- b. Is simply a motion to stop debate, allow no further discussion or subsidiary motions on the pending question.
- c. Because adopting this motion terminates members rights to speak or hear more information, it requires a 2/3 vote.
- d. However, it can save a lot of time, because if 2/3 of the voting members are ready to stop debate and vote, then it would be pointless to continue.
- e. Must be seconded, requires 2/3 vote, can be reconsidered