WEBER COUNTY
CONSERVATIVES

Introduction to Parliamentary Procedure

A Basic Guide to Meeting Procedures for

State Central Committee Members

County Central Committee Members

Party Leadership

State Delegates

County Delegates

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Parliamentary Law

An organized society requires certain rules to establish its basic structure and manner of operation.

The application of parliamentary law is the best method yet devised to enable assemblies of any size, with due regard for every member's opinion, to arrive at the general will on the maximum number questions of varying complexity in a minimum amount of time and under all kinds of internal climate ranging from total harmony to hardened or impassioned division of opinion.

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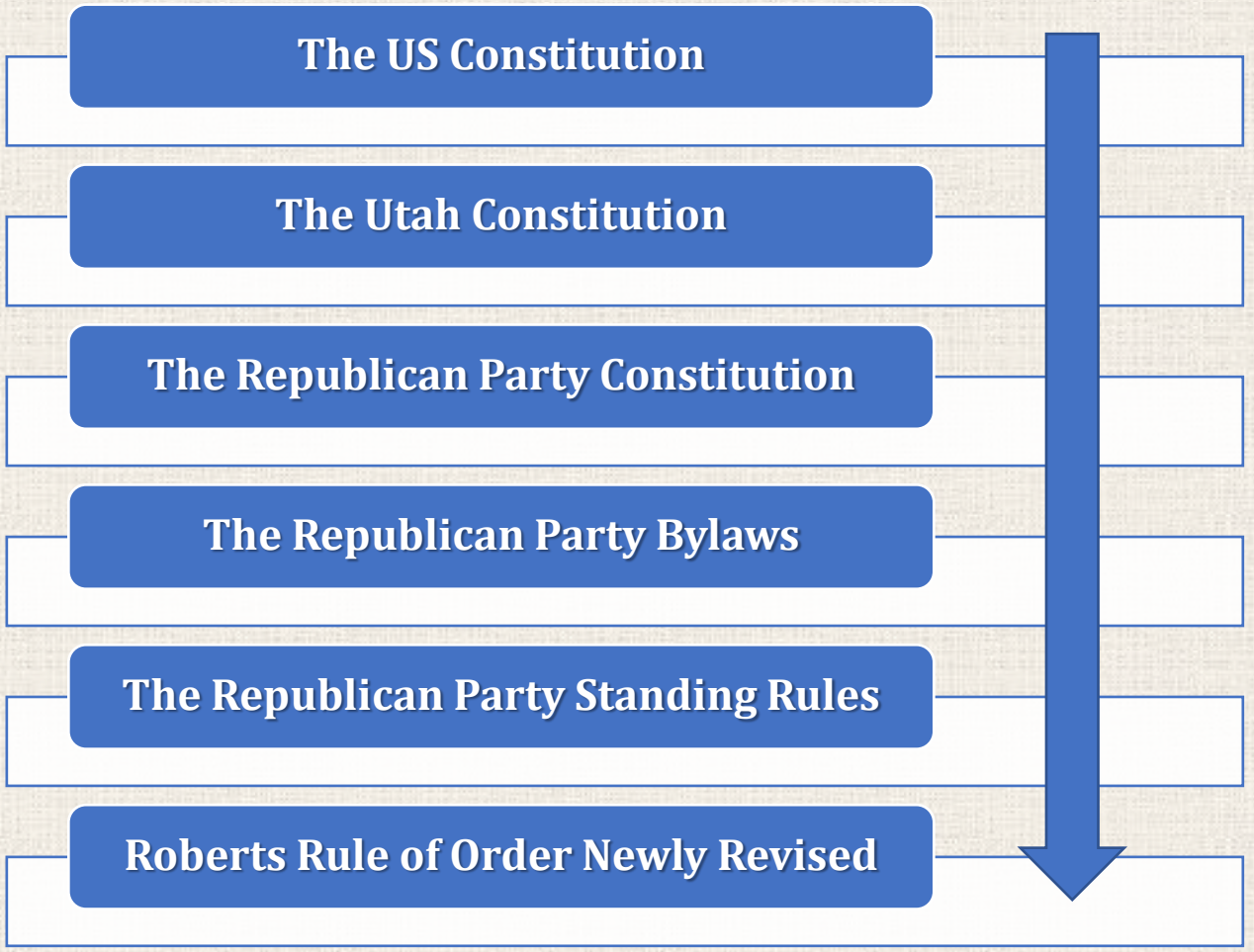
The Utah Republican Party Governing Rules Precedence

THE RULES

Our governing documents contain a complete set of rules for conducting the Party's business and establishing the rights of its members.



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Robert's Rules of Order

- Parliamentary procedure was developed by General Henry M. Robert during the Civil War to bring order to officer meetings.
- The basic premise of Robert's Rules of Order is to protect each member's rights, while seeing that the majority rules.
- Parliamentary procedure is designed to accomplish one thing at a time, bringing each to resolution before going on to the next, all the while seeing that courtesy is extended to everyone.

General Henry M. Robert

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Parliamentary Procedures

- Parliamentary procedure is simple in principle.
- It is based largely on common sense and courtesy.
- It just seems technical due to the special vocabulary used.
- If the vocabulary is understood, the rules are easy.

Robert's Rules of Order, Latest Edition is our guide.

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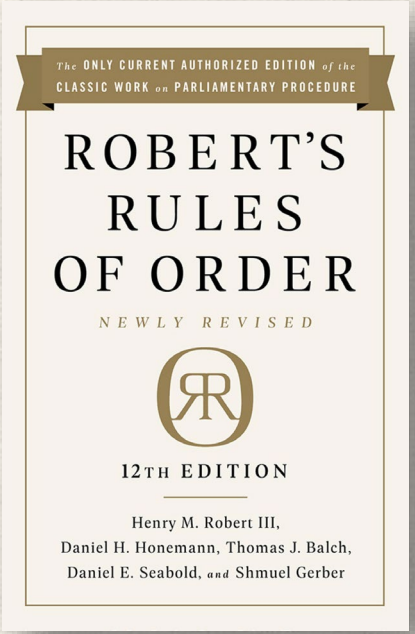
Robert's Rules of Order

- Provides common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate in order to place the whole membership on the same footing and speaking the same language.
- The conduct of ALL business is controlled by the general will of the whole membership - the right of the deliberate majority to decide.
- Complementary to the process is the right of at least a strong minority to require the majority to be deliberate - to act according to its considered judgment AFTER a full and fair "working through" of the issues involved.
- Under no circumstances should "undue strictness" be allowed to intimidate members or limit full participation.



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Our Objectives Tonight

- State the purposes of following parliamentary procedure.
- Recognize the five basic principles of parliamentary procedure.
- Identify steps involved with presenting a motion.
- Differentiate the types of motions.
- Recognize various methods of voting.

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Purpose of Parliamentary Procedure

- To give every member a chance to be heard.
- To allow everyone to participate.
- To establish and maintain order in a meeting.
- To prevent confusion when discussing meeting's agenda.
- To keep the meeting moving.

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Principles of Parliamentary Procedure

- Discuss one subject at a time.
- Allow full and free discussion of each idea presented.
- Treat all members with justice and courtesy.
- Carry out the rule of the majority and respect the rights of the minority.
- Bring together the wishes of all group members to form a cooperating, united organization.

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Common Terminology

Motion – proposal for action

Second – shows approval for a motion

Chair – presiding official

Floor – the right to speak without interruption

Germane – pertaining to the subject at hand

Question – motion under consideration

Debate – discussion

Pending – motion currently being considered

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Parliamentary Procedure Basics

There are four methods of voting.

- Voice
- Standing
- Roll Call
- Secret Ballot

Can the chairman (president) vote? YES - The Chair only votes:

- In the event of a tie
- To make a vote a tie
- When secret ballot is used
- When he is part of the assembly

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Parliamentary Procedure Basics

- Only one topic at a time can be discussed.
- The person who makes a motion has the right to speak to it first.
- Anyone against the motion speaks second.
- Pro and Con alternate speaking for and against the motion.

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Parliamentary Procedure Basics

The Gavel

- A symbol of power and authority.
- Used by the presiding officer to give instructions to the members.
- The number of taps have a specific meaning.

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Taps of the Gavel

One Tap

- Follows the announcement of adjournment.
- Completion of a business item.
- Members to be seated.

Two Taps

- Call the meeting to order.

Three Taps

- All members to stand.

Series of Taps

- Restores order to a meeting.

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Order of Business

- A meeting should have a set agenda.
- The Agenda is the “Order of Business.”
- The agenda forms the framework for the development of a good business meeting
- Purpose of the Order of Business is to keep the meeting moving forward.

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Steps to the Order the Business

- Call to Order by the President & the opening ceremonies.
- Minutes of previous meeting read by the Secretary and approved by the body in accordance with our organizational by-laws and parliamentary procedure.
- Treasurer reports on the financial standing of the chapter.

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Steps to the Order of Business

- Report on Chapter program of Activities (by officers and committee chairmen).
- Unfinished (Old or Continuing) Business (Business leftover from the previous meeting)
- New Business (Presented by members in the form of motions)
- Adjournment & Closing Ceremony

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Order of Business

How does one conduct the meeting as it is laid out in the Agenda?

By using various motions and rules governing them which are part of parliamentary law.

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Motions

- Parliamentary procedure is based on Motions.
- The key to parliamentary procedure is learning and understanding these motions.
- Don't become overwhelmed by the list of motions – concentrate on those that will be used on a regular basis.
- REMEMBER – using parliamentary procedure takes patience, practice, and a lot of effort.

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Motions

- A motion is a formal way to bring an idea, proposal, or plan of action before a group.
- A motion is part of an orderly way to conduct business using parliamentary procedure.
- A motion calls for discussion and action by the group.

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Types of Motions

- Main Motions
- Privileged Motions
- Incidental Motions
- Subsidiary Motions
- Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Group
- Dilatory and Improper Motions

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Steps in Discussing a Motion

1) A member who wants the organization to do something makes a motion by addressing the presiding officer.
2) The member must be called on by the presiding officer.
3) The member makes a motion by saying, “I move…
4) The motion is then seconded by another member.
5) The presiding officer restates the motion and asks for discussion.

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Steps in Discussing a Motion

6) Discussion is held on the motion.
7) The presiding officer repeats the motion and says, “Are you ready for the question? All in favor say Aye; all opposed say No.”
8) A vote is taken to ask who is in favor of and who is opposed to the motion.
9) The presiding officer announces the result and declares, “The motion is passed.”-OR- “The motion is lost.”

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Amending a Motion

The purpose of the motion-to-amend is to modify a motion that has already been presented in such a manner that it will be more satisfactory to the members.

The following are common methods of amending:

- By addition or insertion to add something to the motion which it did not contain.
- By eliminating or striking out to subtract or eliminate something from the original motion.
- By substitution to eliminate something from the original motion and substitute something else in its place.

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Amending a Motion

AN AMENDMENT MAY BE HOSTILE, BUT IT MUST BE GERMANE.

A hostile amendment is opposed to the spirit of the motion to which it is applied.

To be germane, an amendment must have direct bearing on the subject of the motion to which it is applied.

An amendment may nullify the original motion, but if it relates to the same subject matter, it is germane.

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Type of Amendments

- **Amendment of the First Rank** - An amendment to the motion.
- **Amendment of the Second Rank** - An amendment to an amendment, that modifies and relates directly to the amendment, and NOT to the original motion.

NO AMENDMENT BEYOND THE SECOND RANK IS POSSIBLE.

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Type of Amendments

- If it is desired to amend two separate and unrelated parts of a motion, then it must be done with two amendments of the first rank.
- Until an amendment of the second rank is voted on no other amendment of the second rank is in order. Until the amendment of the first rank is voted upon, no other amendment of the first rank can be proposed.

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Order of Voting on Amendments

Amendments are voted upon in inverse order of proposal.

1) Discussion is held and the vote is taken upon the amendment to the amendment.
2) Discussion is called for and the vote is taken upon the amendment to the motion.
3) When the vote on the amendment has been taken, discussion on the motion as amended is opened and when completed, a vote is taken upon the motion as amended.

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Main Motions

- A main motion introduces a new item of business, the matter to be considered by the group.
- It can be ruled out of order if it conflicts with the organization's by-laws, constitution, standing rules or any resolution already agreed upon.
- Only one main motion can be considered at a time.

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Main Motions

CHARACTERISTICS

- Lowest-ranking motion
- Cannot be made when another motion is being considered
- Yield to subsidiary, incidental, and privileged motions
- Cannot be applied to any other motion, but other motions can be applied to it

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Main Motions

- Can be amended in five different ways, debated, divided, laid on the table, objected to, postponed, reconsidered, referred to committee, renewed (if rejected), rescinded (after approval), seconded, terminated, voted on, or withdrawn.
- Requires a majority vote
- A vote on a main motion is not valid when it supersedes the rights of members, in which case a two-thirds vote is needed.

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Main Motions

CLASSIFICATION OF MAIN MOTIONS

- Resolutions
- Original Main Motions
- Incidental Main Motions

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Main Motions

RESOLUTIONS

- Resolutions usually state a policy, principle, feeling, or sentiment. They tend to have explanatory preamble that usually begins with the word whereas, which serves a bridge to introduce the explanation for the resolution.
- Resolutions are a type of main motion. Resolutions and main motions differ only in their format.
- All resolutions are main motions, but not all main motions are resolutions.

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Main Motions

ORIGINAL MAIN MOTIONS

- An original main motion presents a new topic for debate or discussion.
- *"I move that our Party invest in mechanical voting machines."*

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Incidental Main Motions

- An incidental main motion is tied into events before the assembly.
- Unlike a main motion or a resolution, it does not initiate business.
- Like a main motion or a resolution, an incidental main motion can only be proposed when there is no other motion on the floor.

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Types of Incidental Main Motions

- Adjourn
- Adopt by-laws
- Adopt constitution
- Adopt agenda
- Amend rules
- Amend agenda
- Adopt a matter previously considered
- Adopt a report (accept, agree to)
- Adopt standing or special rules

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Types of Incidental Main Motions

- Annul or rescind or repeal
- Approve the minutes
- Confirm or ratify
- Discharge a committee
- Extend debate
- Nominations
- Order of the Day
- Question of Privilege
- Recess
- Voting

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Illegal Main Motions

MAIN MOTIONS THAT ARE NOT LEGAL:

- Break any local, state, or national law.
- One that brings up a previously failed motion.
- Items that are out of the power of the group.
- Negative motions.

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Main Motions

- The person who makes a motion cannot speak against it.
- Main motions can be reconsidered.
- Cannot interrupt another speaker.
- Proper Example: Mr. President, "*I move that the chapter hold a cookout for all party members*."

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Making Another Motion

Before another motion can be made, a motion that is seconded must either be:

- Voted on
- Withdrawn
- Amended
- Tabled

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Withdrawing a Motion

- Both the person who made the motion and the person who seconded the motion must agree that it be withdrawn.
- The assembly doesn't actually withdraw the motion, but the assembly can grant the mover permission to withdraw the motion once it has been stated by the chair and is the property of the assembly.

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Privileged Motions

- A privileged motion deals with a special matter of pressing importance and does not relate to the business on the floor.
- Privileged motions are the highest-ranking motions, taking precedence over all other motions.
- They can interrupt any business on the floor, without requiring debate or discussion.

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Types of Privileged Motions

MOTION	DESCRIPTION
Adjourn	Ending the meeting
Call for Orders of the Day	Requiring the Agenda be followed
Fix time to which to Adjourn	Setting the time for the next meeting
Question of Privilege	Allowing members to make urgent requests about the rights of the assembly and its members
Recess	Taking a short break in a meeting

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Example of a Privileged Motion

Motion to Adjourn

- Has the affect of closing the meeting. If the motion fails, it cannot be made again until after the completion of other business.
- “I move that we adjourn.”
- Not debatable, not amendable, majority vote required.

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Example of a Privileged Motions

Call for the Order of the Day

- A request to have the chair return the meeting to the regular order of business.
- This motion may be made only when there is no other privileged motion on the floor but may be made when another member is speaking.
- It is a signal that the body is no longer on its agenda.
- “I call for the orders of the day.”
- Not debatable, not amendable, no vote required.

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Example of a Privileged Motion

Motion to Set Time for Next Meeting

- Typically used when the next meeting needed is not the next regularly scheduled meeting. Usually implies that business will not or can not be completed in the current meeting, but also can not wait until the next regular meeting.
- Therefore, it is not really an adjournment, but rather a lengthy recess, usually of at least one day.
- “I move to set the time of our next meeting for 7:00 pm tomorrow night to continue the present discussion.”
- Not debatable, amendable, majority vote required.

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Example of a Privileged Motion

Question of Privilege

- Deals with disturbances, unfavorable condition of the room, or the rights and privileges of the body or of a member. Raising a question of privilege does not require being recognized by the Chair before speaking.
- Member: " rise to a question of privilege."
- Chair: "State your question of privilege."
- Member: "Due to the noise in the outer hallway, I request that the doors be closed."
- Chair: "Your point is well taken. The doors will be closed."

Example of a Privileged Motion

OR

- Chair: “Your point is not well taken. Due to the temperature in the meeting room, the doors must remain open for ventilation.”
- Not debatable, not amendable, no vote required, unless:
- Any two members, one moving and one seconding, may appeal the decision of the chair and bring the question of privilege to a vote of the body.

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Example of a Privileged Motion

Motion to Recess

- Calls for a specific time for the recess to begin and a specific time for the meeting to resume. When other business is pending, it is a privileged motion.
- If there is no business pending, it is a main motion and may have subsidiary motions applied to it.
- “I move that we recess from now until 9:00 pm.”
- Debatable, amendable, majority vote required.

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Incidental Motions

- An incidental motion comes from another motion.
- It is always directly related to the business on the floor.

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Incidental Motions

CHARACTERISTICS

- Incidental motions take precedence over main motions and subsidiary motions but yield to privileged motions.
- They must be decided before the meeting can continue.
- They must be decided before other motions.
- They cannot be amended.
- They cannot be debated, except for the motion to Appeal.

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Types of Incidental Motions

MOTION	DESCRIPTION
Appeal	Challenging the Chair's ruling
Consideration by Paragraph	Separating a long document or motion into different parts and voting on each part separately.
Division of the Assembly	Call for retaking a vote
Division of a question	Separating the main motion into different parts to vote on each part differently

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Types of Incidental Motions

MOTION	DESCRIPTION
Objection to the Consideration of a Question	Avoiding motions that are off the topic or disruptive
Point of Order	Compelling the Chair to adhere to the rules of the assembly
Request (Parliamentary Inquiry, Point of Information, Reading Papers)	Making inquiries about the business at a meeting and asking permission for meeting-related activities
Suspend the Rules	Temporarily setting aside the organizations rules

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Appeal the Decision of the Chair

- If you do not feel the Chair made a proper or legal decision, you may appeal their decision.
- Your appeal should be based on the occurrence of improper procedure, not disagreement on issues.
- This motion must be made at the time of the decision. Say, “Mr/Ms Chairperson, I appeal the decision of the Chair,” without being recognized.
- The Chair must then put their decision to a vote of the body.

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Example of Incidental Motions

Appeal the Decision of the Chair

- Appealing the decision of the Chair means that a member disagrees with a decision or ruling made by the Chair.
- An appeal must be made immediately after a decision made by the Chair and must be seconded.
- Member: “I appeal the decision of the Chair.”
- Chair: “The question is, shall the decision of the Chair be upheld?”
- If another motion is pending, an appeal is not debatable; if no motion is pending the appeal is debatable. An appeal is not amendable. A tie vote or majority of affirmative votes sustains the decision of the Chair.

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Example of Incidental Motions

Division of the Assembly

- A call by a member for a show of hands or for members to stand to confirm the count following a voice vote.
- If the Chair fails to recognize a call for division, a motion for a method of voting which determines an accurate count is in order.

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Example of Incidental Motions

Division of a Motion

- A motion may be divided into parts for two reasons. It may be lengthy and be able to be more effectively discussed if considered paragraph by paragraph.
- Amendments may be concentrated on one paragraph at a time. A final vote to approve the entire motion is then in order.
- A motion may also contain two or more provisions that could each stand on their own. A motion for division would then separate the original motion into two or more separate questions which would each be voted upon.
- Not debatable, amendable, requires majority vote.

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Example of Incidental Motions

Object to Consideration

- A motion to prevent discussion on a main motion. An objection must be made before discussion begins or subsidiary motions are attached to the main motion.
- An objection may interrupt a speaker and requires no second.
- Member: “I object to consideration of this motion.”
- Chair: “State your objection.”
- Member: “This motion deals with personnel issues which are not appropriate to be brought before the entire body in this fashion.”
- Chair: “Your point is well taken. The motion is ruled out of order.”

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Example of Incidental Motions

OR

- Chair: “Your point is not well taken. Our rules clearly state that the body must discuss such matters. Discussion will continue.”

OR if a vote is needed:

- Chair: “Will the body consider this motion?” If 1/3 of the body votes to hear the question, the motion will stand on the floor for debate and action.

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Example of Incidental Motions

Point of Order

- A point of order may be called when a member realizes that a breach of the rules of procedure has occurred. The member may interrupt another speaker.
- Member: “I rise to a point of order.”
- Chair: “State your point.”
- Member states what is believed to have been incorrect. The Chair generally states, without discussion, his/her ruling on the point of order. The ruling may be appealed. The Chair, if in doubt, may refer the decision to the body for a vote.
- Not debatable, not amendable, no vote required unless referred to body by the Chair.

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Example of Incidental Motions

Point of Procedural Inquiry

- Allows a member to interrupt and address the Chair to ask a question regarding the procedures presently being followed. Its purpose is to make sure that all members understand what is happening.
- A procedural inquiry does not call for a ruling, but merely an explanation.
- Member: “I rise to a point of procedural inquiry.”
- Chair: “State your question.”
- Member: “Would you please explain the voting process we are about to use?”
- The Chair then explains the process not understood.
- Not debatable, not amendable, no vote is taken.

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Example of Incidental Motions

Point of Information

- Allows a member to interrupt and address the Chair to share information of interest to the body.
- Member: “I rise to a point of information.”
- Chair: “State your point.”

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Example of Incidental Motions

Withdraw a Motion

- A member may withdraw a motion to remove it from consideration by the body.
- If the motion has not yet been seconded, the author may state the decision to withdraw, and no further action is necessary. If the motion has been seconded the author must gain the permission of the seconder to have it withdrawn.
- The Chair must ask if there are any objections. If none, the motion is withdrawn. If there are objections, a motion to withdraw must be introduced.
- A second is not required.
- A majority vote is then required to approve withdrawing the motion.

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Example of Incidental Motions

Motions Relating to Voting

Types of voting are as follows:

- Voice - Members saying “aye” or “no” when called for by the Chair. No accurate count is available.
- Show of hands - an accurate count may be taken.
- Standing vote - an accurate vote may be taken by asking each row, from front to back, to be seated after their row is counted.
- Secret ballot - each member’s vote is written, unsigned, and counted by appointed tellers.

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Example of Incidental Motions

- Secret roll-call ballot - each member's vote is written, signed, recorded and counted by tellers.
- Roll call - Members respond orally when their names are called.
- A member may make a motion for any form of voting that will provide for an accurate count of the vote and a procedure suitable to the wishes of the body.
- Debatable, not amendable, requires majority vote.

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Example of Incidental Motions

Motion to Suspend the Rules

- A motion which suspends an established rule of the organization for a specific purpose or period of time. This practice is not to be entered into lightly for it is assumed that the rule to be suspended was established for a purpose.
- "I move to suspend the rule prohibiting the introduction of motions which have not been submitted by the required deadline, so that a motion regarding _____ may be brought before the body."
- Not debatable, not amendable, requires 2/3 vote.

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Example of Incidental Motions

Motion to Postpone Reading of Minutes

- Minutes are the official record of an organization. Their approval at the next meeting ratifies the actions taken at the previous meeting.
- If errors to the minutes are not corrected, they still stand as official.
- Unless the minutes of the previous meeting have been printed and distributed, it is not good practice to dispense with their reading.
- Not debatable, not amendable, requires majority vote.

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Subsidiary Motions

- A subsidiary motion is linked to a main motion to aid in its disposition.
- Subsidiary motions can be made while a main motion is still being considered.

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Subsidiary Motions

CHARACTERISTICS

- A subsidiary motion can never stand alone. It is always applied to another motion.
- It always changes the status of the motion to which it is applied by modifying it in some way.
- It must be decided before the assembly can act on the main motion.

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Types of Subsidiary Motions

MOTION	DESCRIPTION
Amend	Tailoring a motion to be more specific and acceptable
Commit to Refer	Sending a motion to a committee for further study
Lay on the Table	Setting aside a main motion to deal with more urgent business
Limit or Extend Debate	Decreasing or increasing the time to debate an issue

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Types of Subsidiary Motions

MOTION	DESCRIPTION
Postpone to a Certain Time	Moving consideration of the motion to a later time
Postpone Indefinitely	Removing the motion from consideration during the current meeting or session
Previous Question	Closing debate and forcing an immediate vote on the motion

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Example of a Subsidiary Motions

Motion to Amend

- Used to adjust and to “fine tune” a motion already on the floor. There is no limit to the number of times a motion may be amended. However, there may be no more than one amendment and one amendment to the amendment pending at any one time.
- Amendments may be to insert or add, strike out, or to substitute a word, phrase or clause. An amendment that would completely change the original intent of the original motion would be out of order.
- Debatable, amendable (within limits), requires majority vote.

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Example of a Subsidiary Motions

Motion to Refer to a Committee

- Made in order or to give a committee an opportunity to obtain additional necessary information, or to allow a committee to make a recommendation to the body, or to delay a vote until a more favorable time.
- "I move to refer this motion to the _____ committee for further consideration and that the committee chair report back at our next meeting with facts and a recommendation."
- A standing committee may be named, or the Chair may be designated to appoint a specified number of members to an ad hoc committee.
- A specified time for the committee's report may also be included in the motion.
- Debatable, amendable, majority vote required.

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Example of a Subsidiary Motions

Motion to Table

- A way of setting aside consideration of a motion. May be done to allow more urgent business to come forward, or to consider the motion under more favorable circumstances.
- The motion must specify that the motion will be considered at a meeting when a majority of the members are present and when the members choose to remove it from the table.
- “I move to table the motion until a future meeting”
- To remove from the table requires another motion.
- “I move to remove from the table the motion to…..”
- Not debatable, not amendable, requires majority vote.

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Example of a Subsidiary Motions

Motion to Limit (or Extend) Debate

- To limit the number of times a member may speak on the same motion, the length of time members may speak, the amount of time allowed for total discussion or time at which debate will cease.
- Also, to extend the time limit of a given speaker or extend other previously set limits.
- “I move that speeches be limited to two more in favor and two more against.”
- “I move that the speaker’s time be extended for two more questions from the body.”
- Not debatable, amendable, requires 2/3 vote.

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Example of a Subsidiary Motions

Motion to Postpone to a Definite Time

- Allows the members to consider the motion either later in the same meeting or at a future meeting.
- “I move to postpone consideration of this motion until our next regularly scheduled meeting.”
- Debatable, amendable, requires majority vote.

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Example of a Subsidiary Motions

Motion to Postpone Indefinitely

- Typically used as a means to kill a motion, with no further action to be taken.
- Does not prevent the motion from being introduced again.
- Debatable, not amendable, majority vote required.

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Example of a Subsidiary Motions

Motion to Close Debate (Call the Previous Question)

- Used to end discussion regardless of previously established limits and move to a vote at once.
- “I move to close debate” or “I call for the previous question.”
- Not debatable, not amendable, requires 2/3 vote.

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Special Main Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly

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Example of Special Main Motions

Motion to Reconsider

- A motion to reconsider proposes that a previously completed motion be discussed and voted upon again. The maker of this motion must have voted with the prevailing side in the previous vote.
- Debatable, not amendable, requires majority vote.

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Example of Special Main Motions

Motion to Rescind (Repeal)

- The purpose of the motion to rescind is the annulment of a previously adopted motion.
- Cannot interrupt another speaker
- If prior notice is given, only a majority vote is required; if no notice then a 2/3 vote is required.
- Debatable, not amendable, majority or 2/3 vote required.

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Example of Special Main Motions

Motion to Take from the Table

- A motion to take from the table allows a previously tabled motion to come back on the floor for debate and action.
- Not debatable, not amendable, requires majority vote

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Example of Special Main Motions

Motion to Discharge a Committee

- This motion has the effect of terminating the work of a committee.
- It will dissolve the committee if passed in the affirmative. It requires a 2/3 majority vote unless previous notice of intent is given which would then require a majority vote.
- Debatable, amendable, majority or 2/3 vote required.

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Dilatory and Improper Motions

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Dilatory and Improper Motions

The purpose of Robert's Rules (and parliamentary procedure in general) is to facilitate the transaction of business and to achieve the deliberate will of the majority after giving the minority a full hearing of its position, with full consideration of the rights of all the members whether present or not.

However, some people learn about a few different types of motions and think they can use them to force their will on the group or to thwart the process that rules of order are designed to protect.

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Dilatory and Improper Motions

Everybody has run into Joe Noe, the malcontent who stirs up trouble and tries to interrupt discussion and debate with points of order, appeals, and motions to table. All these motions have their rightful place in the big picture, but if they're used to hinder business instead of help it, they're properly termed dilatory and can be ruled out of order by the chair.

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Dilatory Motions

Dilatory motions include motions that are

- Misused with the purpose of obstructing business (such as a series of points of order and appeals, motions to table, or motions to adjourn offered every time a little discussion has passed by a few members who don't like the way things are going)
- Absurd in substance
- Frivolous, especially amendments
- Unwarranted (such as calling "division" when the result is clear)

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Improper Motions

Just as disruptive are the motions Robert describes as improper.

- Are inconsistent with the organization's charter, bylaws, or procedural laws
- Conflict with an adopted motion that hasn't been rescinded
- Present essentially the same question that has been defeated earlier in the same meeting

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Improper Motions

- Present a question that the membership still has within its reach (as it has when something has been postponed or referred to a committee, or is the object of a motion to reconsider)
- Are outside the scope of the purpose of the organization (unless the motion is agreed to be considered by a two-thirds vote)

A meeting's success depends upon the good faith of the members and leaders to give everybody their say, but not at the expense of letting a troublemaker take over.

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Speaking without Recognition

- You've probably heard folks shout out motions at meetings.
- First, and most importantly, just shouting out a motion is out of order.
- Indeed, it's a mistake to make just about any motion without first being recognized by the chair.
- The world would be a calmer place if members would only learn a little meeting etiquette and refrain from calling out their motions (except for points of order) until they have the recognition of the chair.

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Calling the Question

- Calling the question actually requires a formal motion from a member after being recognized by the chair.
- It's the chair's job to offer the members the opportunity to vote when it's clear that no one else wishes to speak.
- Calling out "Question" without first obtaining the floor is just plain rude.

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"Without Objection"

- Sometimes it is obvious that no one else wishes to speak, and the chair can simply say "If there's no one else who wishes to speak, then, without objection, we'll vote on the motion."
- However, it's difficult sometimes to know whether the presiding officer (our Chair in this case) is trying to do something correctly or not. By the time you look up the rules in the book, it's too late to do anything.
- So, stay alert to what is going on. If something doesn't seem right, do something about it immediately. For example, if the Chairman uses the words "WITHOUT OBJECTION" …object immediately!

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Be Efficient

I believe it is best to not use more parliamentary rules and procedures than is necessary and practical for your group meetings to run smoothly and efficiently.

To conduct the business of the Party, it may not be necessary to use more than the basics of properly making and completing main motions, amendments, and a few of the other subsidiary and incidental motions as needed.

We shouldn't complicate things.

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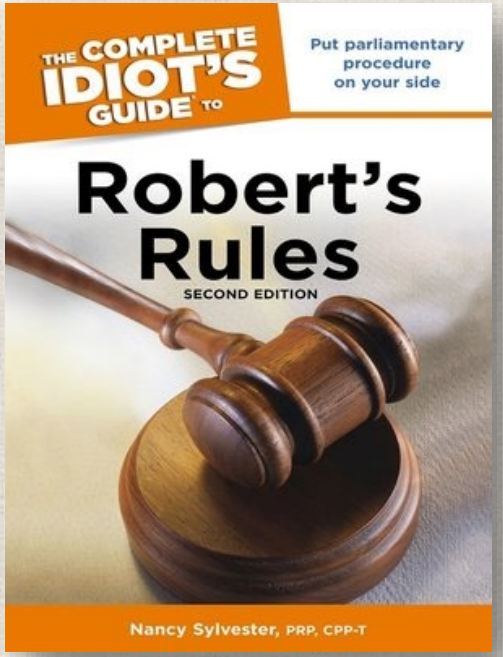
Resources



The Complete Idiot's Guide® to Robert's Rules

Written by professional Parliamentarian Nancy Sylvester, this guide explains everything from the ladder of motions to how to use Robert's Rules for any size or type of meeting.

Sylvester helps tailor the most popular form of parliamentary procedure today to meet any organization's needs.

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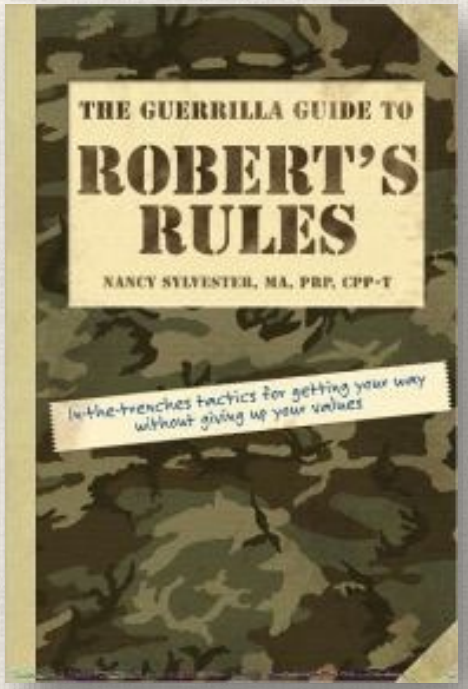
Resources



The Guerilla Guide to Robert's Rules

For anyone who has ever had something important to say at their local meeting, only to be drowned out by others who knew how to take control of the meeting, or were just louder, this guide shows how anyone can get their thoughts and ideas heard and their agendas and proposals passed.

Written by professional Parliamentarian Nancy Sylvester, this book provides secrets, tips, and tricks to learn all the ways to make your voice heard- fairly and ethically!

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Glossary of Standard Terms of Parliamentary Procedure

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- **Agenda (or Order of Business) -** The regular program of procedure of an organization.
- **Amend** - To alter a motion by addition, deletion, or in any other way.
- **Chair** - The Chairman or presiding officer. "**Addressing the Chair**" means speaking to the presiding officer. Being "Recognized by the Chair" means being given permission to speak further.
- **Power of Chair - The Chairman has the following authority:**
  a) to decide in what order speakers shall be recognized
  b) to refuse to recognize members offering dilatory, absurd, or frivolous motions
  c) to restrain speakers within the limits of the rules
  d) to enforce good decorum
  e) to appoint committees
  f) to decide points of order
  g) to vote in cases where the vote would make or break a tie
  h) The chair should avoid influencing a vote by his own comment on a motion.
- Actions of the chair are subject to appeal.

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- **Commit** - To refer to a committee
- **Committee of the Whole** - The meeting, on a motion duly made, may "resolve itself into a committee of the whole.“ This means that the meeting is officially discontinued while everyone remains and becomes a member of a large special committee, which includes everyone present. A special chairman is appointed to preside over the committee.
- **Division** - When all those voting stand in separate "for" and "against" groups.
- **Division of Question** - To separate a motion into different parts that are considered individually.
- **Floor** - The privilege of speaking before the assembly.
- **Indefinite Postponement** - The object is not merely to "postpone" but in effect to *reject* the motion.
- **Informal Consideration** - When a member moves for "informal consideration," and the motion is adopted, the meeting lays aside formal rules and allows each committee member to speak on the subject under consideration.

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- **Motion** - A formal proposal to a meeting that it take certain action.
- **Order** - An expression of the will of the assembly, in the form of a *command*.
- **Order of the Day** - A motion to drop the present discussion, and that the chairman announce the next matter to be taken up in accordance with the organization's customary business routine.
- **Parliamentary Inquiry** - An investigation to determine the proper course of procedure.
- **Privilege** - The privileges and rights of the meeting in connection with matters of physical comfort or ineligibility or misconduct of a member in the meeting.
- **Question** - The question is a proposition or motion that has been placed before the meeting for action by the chairman. To "**move the question**" is to demand that the chairman take a vote on the current motion.
- **Resolution** - An act of the assembly that declares *facts*, expresses *opinion*, but does not command.

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- **Suspension of Rules -** To allow something to be done that would otherwise violate the meeting rules but is not in conflict with the constitution or by-laws, or with the fundamental principles of parliamentary law.
- **Table** - To delay action on a motion.

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QUESTIONS?