

Basic Roberts Rules of Order

Newly revised 10th edition

Course Overview

- Background
- Why Robert's
- Purpose of Robert's
- 10 Basic Rules
- Running a meeting efficiently
- Keeping minutes
- Motions and Voting
- Discussion

Background

- *Robert's Rules of Order* is the default legal process for most corporate, *fraternal*, professional, and other *social groups* founded during the last century in Canada. First published in 1876 as a synthesis of existing practices derived from British parliamentary law and continuously revised since then, Robert's specifies the creation and maintenance of what are technically known as deliberative assemblies. It is through the action of deliberative assemblies that most of our public business is legally conducted.

Why Robert's

- It is generally accepted that our deliberative assemblies must operate in a manner that is formal, fair, and democratic. It is generally agreed that Robert's provides such a process. If we ignore the sometimes musty terminology of traditional parliamentary procedure, it may not be going too far to say that the process described by Robert's is basically what anyone would get if he or she thought through the fair and orderly operation of majority rule.

Why Robert's

- There is a lot to be said for the traditional approach to group procedure. After centuries of use it has been thoroughly debugged and tested under every conceivable set of circumstances; this demands respect from anyone who has tried to construct group processes. Robert's is built into most of our parent organizations (commercial and otherwise); its documentation is very widely available; it knows how to bootstrap itself; and it can continue to function even when resolving questions about which there are deeply opposed points of view.

Purpose of RRO

Based on common sense and logic...

The rules protect:

- **(a) the rights of the majority to decide**
- **(b) the rights of the minority to be heard**
- **(c) the rights of individual members**
- **(d) the rights of absentees**

The Ten Basic Rules

1. The Rights of the Organization Supersede the Rights of the Individual Members
2. All members are equal and their rights are equal

Those rights are...

- **TO ATTEND MEETING**
- **TO MAKE MOTIONS AND SPEAK**

In debate...

- **TO NOMINATE**
- **TO VOTE**
- **TO HOLD OFFICE**

The Ten Basic Rules

3. A quorum must be present to do business

For General Business Meetings...

“Quorum”

- Either 10% or ?? members in good standing (depends on House or local rules)
- Including a majority of the local's officers



The Ten Basic Rules

4. The majority rules

- “All questions at any legally convened Society meeting shall be decided by simple majority of the votes cast, unless stipulated otherwise in the Constitution.”

5. Silence means consent

- “Those members that do NOT vote AGREE to go along with the decision of the majority by their silence.”

6. Two-thirds vote rule

- “A 2/3rds vote is necessary whenever limiting or taking away the rights of members or changing a previous decision.”

The Ten Basic Rules

7. One question at a time and one speaker at a time.

- “Motions must be related to matters under consideration”
- “Once a member has been ‘recognized’ this individual has been granted ‘the floor’ and may not be interrupted by another member”

8. Motions must receive full debate

- “The meeting chair may not put a motion to vote as long as members wish to debate it”
- “The debate can only be cut short by a 2/3rds vote”

The Ten Basic Rules

9. Once a decision made, an identical motion must not be brought forward at the same meeting

- Such a motion shall be ruled out of order by the meeting chair
- If a motion wants to be reconsidered it may at another general with a 2/3 majority vote

10. Personal remarks in a debate are ALWAYS out of order

- Debate **MOTIONS** not **MOTIVES**
- Debate must be directed to **PRINCIPLES** and not **PERSONALITIES**

Running a Meeting Effectively

Meeting Chair Characteristics

- On time and stays on time
- Organized: has a meeting agenda sent out ahead of time
- Prepared: knows the rules and bylaws

Running a Meeting Effectively

- In control of the floor
- Impartial
- Composed
- Precise: restates motions before votes
- Focused: stays on track with discussions
- Temperate: uses the gavel sparingly



Keeping Minutes

Minutes are the written record of the meeting

- Minutes are the permanent and legal record of the meeting
- They should be written as concisely as possible
- Secretary's duty (the secretary should not be that of conflicting role).
- All Local bylaw's must be recorded and entered in a separate document so that a member can view at any time.



Keeping Minutes

What should be in the minutes?

- Date/time of meeting
- List of attendance
- Brief description of discussions
- Recording of all motions
 - **Include name**
 - **Who made the motion**
 - **Who seconded**
 - **Results of the vote**
- Time of adjournment



Keeping Minutes

Approval of Minutes

- At each meeting, review minutes from prior meeting
- Allow for corrections
- Reminder to members of previous decisions and discussions



Motions and Voting

Keep it simple

- Any voting member may make a motion
- Another voting member must “second” the motion
- Discussion may then take place
- Following discussion, the Meeting Chair must call for a vote
 - **Those in favour**
 - **Those opposed**
 - **Those abstaining**

Robert's Rules of Order

Some useful Web sites:

www.roberts-rules.com/

www.constitution.org

www.amta-il.org

www.rpia.org

www.lcdems.com