

A SIMPLIFIED GUIDE TO ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, District 24

9.b

Knowing a few basic rules, if applied fairly and supplemented with common sense, will get you through running a meeting under Robert's most of the time. ...It is the job of the chair to interpret the rules. (Democracy is Power)

No rules will take the place of tact and common sense on the part of the chair...the chair...should not permit the object of a meeting to be defeated by a few factious persons using parliamentary forms with the evident object of obstructing business. (Robert's Rules Revised)

The President must be fair and impartial during the meeting, letting everyone be heard and encouraging the lodge to make decisions democratically for the benefit of all. (Officers Guide, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers)

Most unions and community groups use a form of Robert's Rules. This is a guide to the basics:

Before discussion begins, a motion should be made.

- ✓ The maker of the motion gets to speak first, after the motion is made, seconded and then repeated by the chair.
- ✓ A motion is not necessary for discussion under agenda items where business is not conducted (e.g. "Good and Welfare" or committee reports presented for information but not adoption, or for requests for information and clarification.)

Only one motion (or amendment) is considered at a time.

- ✓ There may be an amendment to an amendment, but no further levels.

Discussion is democratic: Everyone who wishes may speak.

- ✓ On any motion, no one will be called to speak a second time until everyone has had a chance to speak for the first time. Members wait to be called on to speak. *By the IAM Constitution members are limited to 5 minutes, unless receiving the consent of two-thirds present.*
- ✓ The chair may call on people in order of requesting to speak, or may ask for alternating pro and con speakers. The meeting may vote on procedure.
- ✓ If the President wishes to speak to a motion, he/she must relinquish the chair and may not reclaim it until the question is decided.

Voting is democratic.

- ✓ The standard vote is by voice ("aye" and "no").
- ✓ The chair may rule a vote by general consent. On routine matters (e.g. approval of minutes) the chair may say: "If there is no objection", pause for anyone to object, and declare the motion passed if no objection is heard.
- ✓ A standing count (division of the house) may be conducted by the chair, and may be requested by any member on any motion, *before the chair declares the vote.*

A motion made to limit debate or move to a vote ("call the question" or "move the previous question"), or a motion to suspend the rules is not debatable.

- ✓ It requires two-thirds to pass.

A motion to table (postponing the question temporarily) is not debatable.

- ✓ It requires a majority vote.

A motion to refer motion to a committee or to postpone it to a certain time...

- ✓ Is not a motion to table and is treated like an amendment.

A SIMPLIFIED GUIDE TO ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER, Cont'd

A motion is in order if there is no motion currently before the membership, or if it has precedence over a motion currently before the membership. This is a guide to motions:

THE ORDER OF PRECEDENCE FOR MAKING MOTIONS

Motions in Order of Precedence	Second Required	Debatable	Amend-able	Majority Required	Notes
Move to Adjourn Meeting	Yes	No	No	Simple	Amendable if to recess until specific time
Move to Table the Motion	Yes	No	No	Simple	Temporarily postpones discussion
Move the Previous Question (Move to Close Debate, Call the Question)	Yes	No	No	Two-Thirds	
Move to Postpone Discussion until a specific time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Simple	
Move to Refer the Question to committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Simple	
Move to Amend the Motion amending the main motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Simple	An amendment may be amended but no further
Move to Postpone Indefinitely	Yes	Yes	No	Simple	Will force 2/3rds vote to reintroduce question
Make a Main Motion to conduct business of meeting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Simple	
Move to Take from the Table	Yes	No	No	Simple	
Move to Reconsider previously passed motion	Yes	Yes	No	Simple	May interrupt. Can only be made and seconded by the prevailing side.

MORE TYPES OF MOTIONS OR POINTS

Motion or Point	Second Required	Debatable	Amend-able	Majority Required	Notes
Point of Order (to protest breach of rules or conduct)	No	No	No	None	May interrupt. No vote unless chair submits to membership.
Appeal the Chair's Decision	Yes	Usually	No	Simple	May interrupt.
Object to Consideration of a motion (to avoid debate)	No	No	No	Two-Thirds	May interrupt.
Move to Suspend Rules temporarily	Yes	No	No	Two-Thirds	
Call for a Division (Standing Vote)	No	No	No	None	May interrupt. Must precede chair declaring the vote.
Point of Personal Privilege (e.g. to complain about noise)	No	No	No	None	May interrupt.
Point of Information (to request information, clarification)	No	No	No	None	May interrupt.

This guide is here to help everyone participate in the meeting. If you have questions about procedure, or how to contribute your ideas, you are encouraged to ask. A more complete guide, "Rules of Order for Local Lodges", appears in the IAM&AW Constitution preceding Article A, "Organization of Local Lodges".