

VIRGINIA DE JURE ASSEMBLY

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER MADE SIMPLE

Robert's Rules of Order is a manual of parliamentary procedures that was developed to ensure that meetings are fair, efficient, democratic, and orderly. The Chairperson is responsible for keeping the flow of the meeting going but the work is the responsibility of the group.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Everyone has the right to participate in the discussion on the floor ONCE, before any one person can speak a second time. Members may only speak to a motion twice total in one day, unless permission has been given by consent of the group.
- Only URGENT matters may interrupt any speaker at any given time – See “Points” below
- Only ONE item (motion) may be discussed at a time

A motion is the topic under discussion. Motions are introduced a variety of ways however a motion requires a second to be considered or to open the floor for discussion. If there is no second, then the matter is moot. Each motion must be disposed of (passed, defeated, tabled, referred to committee, or postponed indefinitely).

EVERY MOTION HAS 6 STEPS

1. **Motion** – The member addresses the Chair and states “I move to...” or “I so move...”
2. **Second** – Another member seconds the motion
3. **Restate** the Motion on the Floor – the Chair restates the motion to ensure accuracy
4. **Debate** – the Chair opens the floor for discussion
5. **Vote** – the Chair restates the motion, then first asks for affirmative votes, and then the negative votes
6. **Announce** the vote – The Chair then announces the result of the vote and any instructions to the appropriate party(ies) because of the motion passing/ failing.
 - a. If the Board is in obvious agreement, the Chair may save time by stating “If there is no objection, we will adopt the motion to...” Then must wait for objections. Then states “Hearing no objections, (state the motion) is adopted unanimously” then the Chair gives instructions. If there are objections, then it must go through the 6 steps above.

HOW TO USE ROBERT'S RULES

You want to introduce a new idea to the group

- After recognition by the Chair, present your motion. Remember, a second is required for the motion to go to the floor for discussion, or consideration
- The language is “I move to....”

You want to change some of the wording in the motion currently under discussion

- After recognition by the Chair, move to amend the motion by adding words, striking words, or striking and inserting words.
- The language is “I move to amend the motion by....” And state your changes
- This motion must have a second to open up discussion for the amendment
- Then the vote must be taken to adopt the amendments first. Then the original motion, with the change(s), is then voted on.

You want more time for the members to study the proposal being discussed

- After recognition by the Chair, move to postpone the motion to a definite time/date.
- The language is “I move that we postpone the matter until....” The motion must be seconded.

ROBERT’S RULES OF ORDER MADE SIMPLE (CONT’D)

You like the idea of the motion being discussed, but you need to reword it beyond simple word changes

- After recognition by the Chair, move to substitute your motion for the original motion.
- The language is “I move to substitute the current motion as follows...” The motion must be seconded so that discussion can continue on BOTH motions. The body will vote at the direction of the chair on which motion they prefer.

You want further study or investigation given to the motion being discussed

- After recognition by the Chair, move to refer it to committee.
- The language is “I move that we refer the matter to committee” The motion must be seconded.
- Try and be specific of the charge to the committee

You believe there has been ample discussion on the matter or the discussion is growing repetitive

- Move to close the debate also known as calling for the question
- This cuts off debate and brings the group to a vote on the pending question
- The language is “I move to call for the question”. Motion again must be seconded.

REQUESTING POINTS OF SOMETHING

Certain situations need attention during the meeting, but they don’t require a motion, second, debate or a vote. Members can declare a Point of Order, Point of Information, or Point of Personal Privilege. You may **INTERRUPT** the person speaking **ONLY FOR THESE** (except Point of Information):

- **Point of Order** – calls attention to a breach of rules, improper procedure or breach of established practices, etc
- **Point of Information** – allows a member to bring up an additional point or additional information (in the form of a statement of fact) so that the other members may make fully informed votes
- **Point of Inquiry** – to ask for clarification in a document/report to make better voting decisions
- **Point of Personal Privilege** – members may use this to address safety, physical comfort, volume, noise levels, etc.

ACTION	CAN INTERRUPT SPEAKER?	NEED A SECOND?	OPEN FOR DISCUSSION?	RECONSIDERED/ RESCINDED	VOTES NEEDED TO PASS
INTRODUCE MAIN MOTION	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY
AMEND A MOTION	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY
SUBSTITUTE A MOTION	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY
MOVE ITEM TO COMMITTEE	NO	YES	YES	NO	MAJORITY
POSTPONE ITEM	NO	YES	YES	NO	MAJORITY
OBJECT TO PROCEDURE/POINT OF ORDER	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE
POINT OF INFORMATION	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO VOTE
END DEBATE/CALL FOR QUESTION	YES	YES	YES	NO	MAJORITY
ADJOURN THE MEETING	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY