

## Debate Protocol

### Convince Others to Vote your Way



The following concepts as described in Robert's Rules of Order assure efficient and productive meetings. When a board neglects these concepts, the board suffers from aimless and purposeless delays.

1. Only one person may speak at one time. A Director who wishes to speak must wait to be recognized.
2. A speaker must direct his comments to the Chairman, and not to other Directors. Cross conversations prevent others from hearing what is being discussed. Directors must not talk while walking around or to congregate at the beverage area to converse.
3. A Director must not repeat himself or other Directors during debate. Listeners will stop listening if they do not hear something new or different. A Director has the right to be heard, but not the right to filibuster or monopolize the discussion.
4. A Director must confine his comments to the current issue, and not wander off the pending question, (whether it is a main motion or an amendment). Valid and important points not related to the pending question do not justify wandering away from the pending question.
5. Any Director who speaks once on a topic must wait to speak again after those who have not spoken, have an opportunity to speak. Without the board's permission, a Director may not speak more than twice on the same pending question.
6. Sarcastic remarks constitute a verbal attack. Robert's Rules prohibits verbal attacks, and even mild comments that tend to intimidate or lead to a hostile environment.
7. In order for the comments of one Director to obligate the board to any action, that action must be approved by the board. No unilateral decision will rule the board, not even one by the Chairman unless the bylaws so authorize.
8. If the Chairman states, "If there is no objection ...", and there is no objection, this means that the board gave its consent.
9. If a Director debates adamantly in opposition to a motion, the Director should consider amending, referring or postponing the motion, rather than just being adamant.
  - a. To Lay on the Table (**VALID**): Used only as a short procedural interruption due to an urgency. Immediately after the urgency, we return to the interrupted motion.
  - b. To Kill a motion by Tabling it (**INVALID**): This is always out of order.
  - c. To Table until Tomorrow (**INVALID**): This is actually the motion to Postpone.
  - d. To Table to a Committee (**INVALID**): This is actually the motion to Refer.

## Purpose and Form for Each Motion

(Beware of Order of Precedence)



Purpose	The Motion and its Form
Propose some action	<b>Main Motion</b> I move to donate \$50 to preserve the habitat of the Clay Pigeon.
Improve a proposal	<b>Amend</b> I move to amend the motion by striking \$50 and inserting \$75.
Change the amount of time for discussion	<b>Limit or Extend Debate</b> I move to limit debate to 1 minute per speaker.
Stop discussion and vote now	<b>Close Debate</b> I call the previous question.
Delay a decision	<b>Refer</b> I move to refer the motion to the bylaws committee  <b>Postpone to a Certain Time</b> I move to postpone the motion until after the break.  <b>Recess</b> I move to recess for 5 minutes.
Kill a motion	<b>Postpone Indefinitely</b> I move to postpone the motion indefinitely.
Deal with an emergency	<b>Lay on the Table</b> I move to lay the motion on the table.  <b>Suspend the Rules (Not Suspend the Orders of the Day)</b> I move to suspend the rules that prohibit us from taking up the new business now.
Obtain information	<b>Parliamentary Inquiry</b> Mr. Chair, if we adopt this motion can we rescind it tomorrow?  <b>Request for Information</b> Mr. Chair, can the treasurer tell us if we have enough money for this motion?
Challenge the ruling of the chair	<b>Point of Order</b> Point of Order. We cannot vote on this motion. There is already another motion on the floor.  <b>Appeal</b> I appeal from the decision of the chair.
Assure the accuracy of the voice vote	<b>Division</b> Division. Division.
Close the meeting	<b>Adjourn</b> I move to adjourn.

## Ranking of Selected Motions



	Interrupt	Second	Debate	Amend	Vote
<b>PRIVILEGED MOTIONS</b>					
13. Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn		S		A	M
12. Adjourn		S			M
11. Take a Recess		S		A	M
10. Raise a Question of Privilege	I				C
9. Call for the Orders of the Day	I				C**
<b>SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS</b>					
8. Lay on the Table		S			M
7. Previous Question		S			2/3
6. Limit or Extend Limits of Debate		S		A	2/3
5. Postpone to a Certain Time		S	D	A	M**
4. Commit (Refer)		S	D	A	M
3. Amend		S	D**	A	M
2. Postpone Indefinitely		S	D		M
1. MAIN MOTION		S	D	A	M
<b>INCIDENTAL MOTIONS (No Ranking)</b>					
Appeal	I	S	D		M
Division of Assembly	I				**
Point of Order	I				C**
Request for Information					C
Suspend the Rules (that prohibit)		S			2/3
<b>BRING AGAIN BEFORE ASSEMBLY</b>					
Rescind/Amend Something Prev Adopted		S	D**	A	**
Reconsider the Vote		S	D		M
Discharge a Committee		S	D**	A	**
Take from the Table		S			M

**\*\*** See Robert's Rules  
**C** Chair Decides  
**I** Can Interrupt

**S**  
**A, D**  
**M or 2/3**

Requires a Second  
 May be Amended, Debated  
 Vote Required to Adopt