

## Robert's Rules Highlighted at MOPC

1. It is very important to say precisely what the words of a motion are to be. The group votes on exact language, not a vague idea. Each motion has to be written in minutes. It is the secretary's job to copy the motions down accurately – not to come up with language he or she thinks is what the group or mover meant. The chair can require that main motions be submitted by the mover in writing. It is a good practice to write out any motion proposed. A long or complex motion should always be written out!
2. Any member who wishes to end debate on a standing motion must first "move the previous question", receive a second, and obtain 2/3 approval from the group. A motion to "move" or "call" the previous question is not debatable. If approved, no more debate on the previous motion is allowed and a vote is to be immediately taken. Note that someone can't simply "call the question" and end the discussion without consensus from the rest of the group to end debate.
3. A vote on an amendment to a main motion does not decide whether the main motion will be adopted, only whether the wording in the main motion will be changed. After an amendment is adopted, the main motion as amended may be further debated and further amended. Ultimately a vote is taken on the main motion as amended. (Note, we have used "friendly" amendments in the past as a way to help the mover craft his or her motion. In this case, because debate on the motion being crafted hasn't yet begun, it is technically not an amendment and doesn't require a vote. If debate has begun and no one objects to a "friendly" amendment, the main motion can be amended without requiring a vote.)
4. One of the most important rules of debate is that the proposal, not the member, is the subject of debate. A member may criticize an opponent's reasoning but not the opponent. If debate were allowed to include personal attacks, it might intimidate many from taking part in the debate who might otherwise make important points. It will leave hard feelings and foster personal antipathy in the group long after the debate has ended. Under no circumstances should you attack or question the motives of another member.
5. Once debate has begun on a motion, all ensuing speech must relate to that motion. In other words, all comments until the motion is acted upon must be germane. Comments not considered to be germane are out of order and should be called out to quickly maintain proper order.
6. Meeting minutes should generally include only what was *done* in the meeting, not what was *said*.
7. If a motion has been either adopted or defeated during a meeting, a motion to *reconsider* can only be made by a member who voted on the winning side. Once made, the motion to reconsider can be seconded by any member, regardless of how he or she previously voted.
8. A motion to *rescind* or *amend* something previously adopted can be made in any meeting subsequent to the meeting where a motion was adopted and can be made by any voting member regardless of how they voted previously. If notice of an intent to make such motion is not given prior to the meeting, adoption of the motion will require 2/3 approval or approval by a

majority of the entire membership of the voting body, whichever is the smaller number. (Note: the bylaws require 66% approval for all votes of the MOPC.)

9. Making a motion again after it has already been defeated is called a *renewal* of the motion and cannot occur during the same meeting; it can only happen in a subsequent meeting.
10. A motion to "*postpone to a certain time*" may be made if a member wishes to defer debate on a main motion to a specific time or after another action is taken, either in the same meeting or an upcoming meeting. The motion to "*postpone*" is debatable and requires a vote with majority approval. A motion to "*table*" a certain matter is not debatable and should be used when there is no specified time desired to take up the matter again. Once a matter is tabled, a motion to "*take from the table*" must be approved in order to resume debate on the matter.
11. A motion to "postpone indefinitely" may be made to kill a main motion being discussed. The motion to postpone indefinitely requires a second and majority approval vote. When passed, the main motion may not be reintroduced at that meeting, although it may be brought up again at a later date.
12. Any member who believes he or she has noticed a breach of proper meeting procedure can call attention to it by stating "Point of Order" at the time the suspected breach occurs and explaining why the breach is believed to have occurred. When a Point of Order has been made, the chair must make a ruling on proper procedure. No further discussion or debate on any question in place at the time may occur until the ruling is given.
13. In order to convey impartiality in the leadership position, the chair of larger committees (i.e., 12 or more voting members) should only vote on motions when that vote is needed to make a difference in the outcome.
14. An unqualified motion to adjourn is a privileged motion, meaning it takes precedence over normal business and is not debatable, that may be made to end a meeting prior to conclusion of its business. It requires a second and a majority vote. If the scheduled business has been completed, the scheduled time of adjournment has arrived, or an emergency situation has arisen, the chair may simply declare the meeting adjourned without having a motion made.
15. A motion to recess may be used to take a break in the middle of a meeting and is a privileged motion if made in order to take an immediate break while another motion is pending. In that case, it requires a second and a majority vote and is not debatable. No motion is required to recess if one has already been scheduled and that time has arrived.
16. The result of a vote on a standing motion depends on the judgement of the chair. The chair may elect to count votes, particularly when uncertainty exists about the result or if a close vote is anticipated. In the event that the chair chooses not to count votes, a member may move to take a counted vote. The motion to count the vote must be seconded and approved by a simple majority before a count of votes for the standing motion is then taken.
17. Debate on a motion may be limited to a defined amount of time, either in total or on a per-member basis, by making a motion to Limit Debate. The motion to Limit Debate is not

debatable unless no other motion is pending. A two-thirds approval is required to enact the proposed debate limits.

18. A quorum is required for a group to conduct substantive business in a meeting. When no quorum is present, the group can only take a very limited number of actions during the meeting, such as set the time and place for another meeting or to adjourn. Even when a meeting begins with a quorum present, the group loses its right to conduct business if attendance falls below the quorum level. Quorum requirements for the MOPC are those members participating. Quorum requirements for all other groups shall be half, but not less than three, of the group's representatives.
19. A main motion is one whose introduction brings business before an assembly. Strictly speaking, there should be no debate on a matter before a motion regarding it has been made. Only one main motion may be before the assembly for action at a time. (7/31/20)
20. The chair must determine that the motion is in order at the time. If the motion in some way violates the rules, the chair does not state the motion but instead says, "The chair rules that the motion is not in order because..." (8/28/20)
21. The time of the group should not be wasted by making it vote over and over on the same thing. So once the group has voted on an amendment, that specific matter is considered settled. If the group has voted down an amendment to add certain words, you cannot propose another amendment to add substantially the same words in the same place...The basic rule is that after the group has voted that certain words shall, or shall not, be part of motion, you cannot offer another amendment that raises the same question of content and effect. Common sense is necessary to apply this rule from case to case. (9/24/20)
22. When a motion has been moved and seconded, the chair then **states the question** on the motion. To "state" a motion, the chair simply says, "**It is moved and seconded that**" and then repeats the exact words in which the motion was made. For example: "**It is moved and seconded that** the Tennis League establish a division open to juniors and seniors in high school." (10/30/20)
23. If it is desired to continue consideration of a motion but debate is consuming too much time, a member can move to place a limit on the debate. On the other hand, if special circumstances make it advisable to permit more or longer speeches than under the usual rules, a motion to do so can be made. Or, it may sometimes be desirable to combine the elements of limitation and extension, as in limiting the length of speeches but allowing more speeches per member. All such modifications of the normal limits of debate on a pending motion are proposed by means of the motion to **Limit or Extend Limits of Debate**.  
A motion to limit/extend debate is not debatable." A two-thirds vote is required as a compromise between the right of the individual to be heard and the right of the group not to be unduly delayed in conducting its business.  
*Examples: "I move that in debate on the pending motion be limited to 20 minutes."  
"I move that in debate on the pending amendment, each member be limited to one speech of three minutes." (11/20/20)*

24. Robert's Rules specifies that any member may speak up to twice a day on any debatable motion, and for up to ten minutes at a time, unless special rules setting other limits have been adopted by the organization. SPP has not specified any such debate limiting rules in its bylaws. As we covered with the previous month's rule, it is possible to change these debate limits with a motion to limit or extend the limits of debate. (12/28/20)
25. When a committee originates a motion, it conveys its views to the assembly by means of a report. It's best for the committee report to be confined to recommendations, with brief explanations of supporting reasons. The committee chair or designee moves to implement the recommendations. Assuming the committee has at least two members, no second is required. (2/1/21) p. 164
26. As a general rule, the chair recognizes the person who first rises (or indicates they'd like to speak). There are three common exceptions to this rule. First, the maker of the motion has the right to preference in speaking about it. Normally the maker of the motion is the first to speak on it immediately after the chair has stated the motion. (2/26/21)
27. Second, he or she should try to alternate between speakers who favor and those who oppose a proposal that is being debated. So if there has just been a speech in favor of the motion, someone who wants to speak against it then should, if possible, be given preference over another person wanting to support it. (3/23/21) p. 30
28. Third, although everyone may speak twice on the same motion on the same day, someone who has not yet spoken on it even once has preference over anyone who has already spoken on it. (4/30)
29. The group as a whole, not the chair, is the final authority in judging whether the rules have been violated. A group member that disagrees with a ruling by the chair may appeal it to the group. The appeal must be made at the time of the chair's ruling. Without waiting to be recognized, the member would stand and say "I appeal from the decision of the chair." An appeal requires a second and a majority vote to approve. (6/24/21)