

## Parliamentary ‘Tips,’ or What to Do & Why

The following summary will help you determine when to use the actions described in Robert's Rules.

**A main motion must be moved, seconded, and stated by the chair before it can be discussed.**

**If you want to move, second, or speak to a motion, stand and address the chair.**

**If you approve the motion as is, vote for it.**

**If you disapprove the motion, vote against it.**

**If you approve the idea of the motion but want to change it, amend it or submit a substitute for it.**

**If you want advice or information to help you make your decision, move to refer the motion to an appropriate group or committee with instructions to report back.**

**If you feel they can handle it better than the assembly, move to refer the motion to a group or committee with power to act.**

**If you feel that there the pending question(s) should be delayed so more urgent business can be considered, move to lay the motion on the table.**

**If you want time to think the motion over, move that consideration be deferred to a certain time.**

**If you think that further discussion is unnecessary, move the previous question.**

**If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a motion referred to a committee, move the motion be recalled.**

**If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a matter already voted upon and you voted on the prevailing side, move that it be reconsidered.**

**If you do not agree with a decision rendered by the chair, appeal the decision to the assembly.**

**If you think that a matter introduced is not germane to the matter at hand, raise a point of order.**

**If you think that too much time is being consumed by speakers, you can move a time limit.**

**If a motion has several parts, and you wish to vote differently on these parts, move to divide the motion.**

**If there are several motions that are similar, and you feel the outcome for all of them should be the same, move to consider by paragraph (or ‘in seriatim’).**

**If you would like the Assembly to say the Serenity Prayer at any time, raise a point of privilege.**

## Bylaws / Policy / Parliamentary Procedure/ Standing Rules

Bylaws (which include the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts) take precedence over all other rules of the assembly. They describe things such as who can vote at an Assembly and Roles (e.g. officers), how often meetings are held, etc.

Policy discusses how bylaws are to be implemented and practiced. They include things such as Officer Duties, financial practices, Committee responsibilities, etc.

Standing Rules limit the practice of Parliamentary Law with regards to the Assembly being held. They speak to items such as limiting debate, election procedures, etc.

Parliamentary Procedure provides the Assembly with rules so that the business of an Assembly can be processed effectively and efficiently and more than anything else, **fairly**.

*Parliamentary information is based on contents of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (11<sup>th</sup> edition) [RONR] and Region 5 Bylaws, Policies & Procedures and Standing Rules*

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OA REGION 5

## PARLIAMENTARY OVERVIEW

*What every member should know in order to fully participate in a Region 75 Assembly*

**“American Parliamentary Law is built on the principle that rights must be respected: rights of the majority, of the minority, of individuals, of absentees and rights of all these together.”**  
**Roberts Rules of Order;**  
**11<sup>th</sup> edition**

**“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”**  
**The 12th Tradition of OA**

# Parliamentary Procedures: Placing principles before personalities

## Basic Principles Include:

- Only one question can be considered at a time. It must be put in the form of a Motion by one member and seconded by another (or from a committee, where no second is required) and must be stated by the presiding officer, after which it is open to debate and amendment.
- No one can make a motion or speak in debate until they have come to the Pro or Con microphone have been "recognized" by the presiding officer.
- No member can speak a second time on the same question provided anyone desires to speak who has not spoken on that question.
- Remarks should not be addressed to another member; they must be addressed to the presiding officer.
- When a question is before the assembly it must be adopted or rejected by a vote, or disposed of in some other way before any other subject can be introduced (except for certain privileged motions).
- All members are equal. Every member has the same rights.
- A quorum (minimum number of members) must be present to transact business.
- A question once settled may not be presented again in the same form in the same session. The only way to bring it back in the same meeting is to move to reconsider (some motions may not be reconsidered).
- A majority vote decides a question except in cases where basic rights of members are involved.
- A two thirds vote is necessary for any motion that deprives a member of their rights – such as changing rules of debate, cutting off debate, closing nominations, closing polls, rescinding action without notice, etc.
- Silence gives consent. Those who do not vote when a vote is taken, by their silence, agree to go along with the decision of the majority.

## Basic Principles (continued)

A motion is the means by which all business is introduced to an Assembly. There are six (6) steps necessary to putting a motion on the floor and disposing of it:

1. Make the Motion ("I move that...")
2. Second the Motion (a seconder need not rise or address the chair)
3. Chair states the motion
4. Chair calls for debate and questions
5. Chair puts the question to a vote
6. Chair announces the results.

## The 'Rules'

**Point of Privilege:** Pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc. - may interrupt only if necessary!

**Parliamentary Inquiry:** Inquire as to the correct motion - to accomplish a desired result.

**Request for Information:** Ask a question. If the chair feels that the question is actually debate (i.e. Asking "Is it not true...") followed by a statement is probably not a question), he/she may choose not to answer.

**Orders of the Day (Agenda):** A call to adhere to the agenda (a deviation from the agenda requires Suspending the Rules).

**Point of Order:** Infraction of the rules, or improper decorum in speaking. Must be raised immediately after the error is made.

**Main Motion:** Brings new business (the next item on the agenda) before the assembly.

**Divide the Question:** Divides a motion into two or more separate motions (each must be able to stand on their own).

**Consider by Paragraph ('in Seriatim'):** Adoption of multiple similar motions (or a single, highly complex motion) may be considered at the same time. Adoption is held until all parts of the motions are debated and amended.

**Amend:** Inserting or striking out words or paragraphs, or substituting whole paragraphs or resolutions.

**Withdraw/Modify Motion:** Applies only after question is stated; mover can accept an amendment without obtaining the floor.

**Commit /Refer/Recommit to Committee:** State the committee to receive the question or resolution; if no committee exists include size of committee desired and method of selecting the members (election or appointment).

**Extend Debate:** Applies only to the immediately pending question; extends until a certain time or for a certain period of time.

**Limit Debate:** Closing debate at a certain time, or limiting to a certain period of time.

## The 'Rules' (continued)

**Postpone to a Certain Time:** State the time the motion or agenda item will be resumed.

**Object to Consideration:** Objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated.

**Lay on the Table:** Temporarily suspends further consideration/action on pending question; may be made after motion to close debate has carried or is pending.

**Take from the Table:** Resumes consideration of item previously "laid on the table."

**Reconsider:** Can be made only by a member who voted on the prevailing side of a question who has changed position or view.

**Postpone Indefinitely:** Kills the question/resolution for this session - exception - the motion to reconsider can be made this session.

**Previous Question:** Closes debate if successful - may be moved to "Close Debate" if preferred.

**Informal Consideration:** When the assembly goes into a "Committee of the Whole," a (possibly time-limited) discussion [chaired by someone other than the R5 Chair] is held. All votes if taken during an informal consideration are considered recommendations. NOTE: Robert's Rules of Order prohibits straw polls calling them "meaningless and dilatory" as they neither adopt nor reject a measure (RONR 11<sup>th</sup> ed. p 429).

**Appeal from the Decision of the Chair:** Appeal for the assembly to decide - must be made before other business is resumed; NOT debatable if relates to decorum, violation of rules or order of business.

**Suspend the Rules:** Allows a violation of the assembly's own rules (except Bylaws); the object of the suspension must be specified.

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