

Robert's Rules (10th edition): Selected Items of Interest
Compiled by Patrick Wilson, January 2008 (revised January 2009)

Debating

- Anyone wishing to speak rises to obtain the floor when it is open and, after being recognized by the chair, remains standing while speaking. Hands aren't raised, nor is a queue of speakers kept.
- At the risk of being called to order, speakers address the chair only and address other members through the chair. To preserve decorum and objectivity, members never address one another directly and avoid referring to each other by name. It is perfectly permissible to rise and ask the chair if a speaker will yield for a question.
- The chair alone entertains and rules on all parliamentary inquiries and points of order, all rulings on the latter being a matter of record.
- No speaker who is in order can be interrupted by the chair (even to provide information) or by a call for the previous question (in order to cut off debate).
- Principal motions and amendments must be in writing if so requested by the chair or clerk.
- No one can speak to a question a second time if anyone who hasn't spoken to it seeks recognition to do so.
- No one can speak more than twice to a question (even after it has been amended), nor for more than ten minutes at a time.
- "Friendly amendments" have no special status and are debated and voted on just as are any other amendments. Any informal suggestion of a minor modification to a motion must be made before the chair states the question.

"Tabling"

- The motion to *Lay on the Table* may be made only for a temporary interruption by urgent business and cannot be used to postpone or defeat a pending question. The motion to *Postpone Indefinitely* accomplishes these latter purposes.
- Anyone can move to *Take from the Table* a question laid on the table earlier in a given meeting or at the previous meeting.

Voting

- "Division!" is a call for a rising (standing) vote, not a counted vote. A counted vote can be ordered only by the chair or by a majority vote on a motion to that effect. Verification by show of hands is not used in assemblies as large as ours.
- No single member can require that a vote be taken by ballot; a vote by ballot can be ordered only by a majority vote on a motion to that effect.
- The full results of votes by ballot are publicly read by the teller and again by the chair before being entered in full in the minutes.