



State Council on Developmental Disabilities

HOW TO DO THINGS¹ UNDER ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER PLAIN LANGUAGE

1. You want to bring up a new idea before the group.

- In order to make a motion or talk during the discussion, you must be “given the floor” by being called on by the Chair.

- Take a New Action (“Make a Motion”):

After being called on by the chair, tell people what you think the Council should do and what action it should take.

Be specific. Sometimes it helps to write out the motion and read it.

- A Second Person Must Agree:

A second person must agree with you and say that he or she “**seconds**” your idea or motion in order for the group to talk about and consider your motion.

¹ Adapted from Cornell University Faculty publication: <http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/meetings/RobertsRulesSimplified.pdf>

2. You want to change some of the wording in a motion already being discussed.

- In order to make a motion or talk during the discussion, you must be “given the floor” by being called on by the Chair.

- Suggest a Change (“Move to Amend”):

After being called on by the chair, suggest a change by saying “I move to amend,” AND

- Tell How Your Change Will Be Made

Tell the group, you wish to amend by:

- adding words,
- removing words, or
- removing and inserting words.

- A Second Person Must Agree:

Another person must “second” your idea.

3. You want more study and/or investigation given to the idea being discussed.

- In order to make a motion or talk during the discussion, you must be “given the floor” by being called on by the Chair.
- “Move to refer to a committee.” Try to be specific and explain exactly what you think the responsibility of the committee should be.
- A Second Person Must Agree: Another person must “second” your idea.

4. You want more time personally to study the proposal being discussed.

- In order to make a motion or talk during the discussion, you must be “given the floor” by being called on by the Chair.
- “Move to postpone” to a definite time or date. Provide an *exact time* later on during the meeting, or at a future meeting on a *specific date*, to continue discussion on the proposal.
- A Second Person Must Agree: Another person must “second” your idea.

5. You have heard enough discussion.

- In order to make a motion or talk during the discussion, you must be “given the floor” by being called on by the Chair.

- “Move the previous question.”

This cuts off discussion and brings the group to a vote on the question being discussed **only**.

★ ★ Robert’s Rules of Order require a 2/3rds vote for this motion. However, your Bylaws may say that **only a majority vote is necessary**. You should follow your Bylaws

- Or “move to close the debate” in order to end the discussion.

★ ★ Robert’s Rules of Order require a 2/3rds vote for this motion. However, your Bylaws may say that **only a majority vote is necessary**. You should follow your Bylaws.

- A Second Person Must Agree:

Another person must “second” each of the above motions.

6. You believe the discussion has drifted away from the agenda and want to bring it back.

- In order to make a motion or talk during the discussion, you must be “given the floor” by being called on by the Chair.

- “Call for orders of the day.”

This motion asks the group to follow its agenda or order of business. It does not require a second. The Chair may then go back to the scheduled business.

➡ No second is required.

7. You are confused about what is being discussed and want clarification.

- In order to make a motion or talk during the discussion, you must be “given the floor” by being called on by the Chair.

- “Call for a point of information.”

The Chair will ask you what your question is and attempt to clarify the situation.

➡ No second is required.

8. You want to take a short break.

In order to make a motion or talk during the discussion, you must be “given the floor” by being called on by the Chair.

- “Move to recess” for a set period of time.

Tell the group how long of a recess you are requesting.

The Chair must call on you before you make this motion. The motion requires a second and a majority vote. If the group votes for a recess, it goes into effect immediately.

- A Second Person Must Agree:

Another person must “second” this motion.

9. You want to end the meeting before the scheduled end time or before agenda is finished.

In order to make a motion or talk during the discussion, you must be “given the floor” by being called on by the Chair.

- “Move to adjourn.”

If the Chair has called on you, you make a motion to close the meeting even if there is still business pending. This motion requires a second and a majority vote. The Chair announces adjournment.

- A Second Person Must Agree:

Another person must “second” this motion.

10. You have changed your mind about something that was voted on earlier in the meeting *and* you were on the winning side.

In order to make a motion or talk during the discussion, you must be “given the floor” by being called on by the Chair.

- “Move to reconsider.”

You can make a motion to reconsider a decision made by the group, but **only if you were on the winning side.**

If this motion is approved by a majority vote, the decision can be discussed and voted on again as though a vote had not been taken before.

- A Second Person Must Agree:

Another person must “second” this motion.

You may INTERRUPT a speaker for these reasons only:

- To get information about business – **point of information**
- To get information about rules – **parliamentary inquiry**
- If you can't hear, safety reasons, comfort, etc. – **question of privilege**
- If you see a breach of the rules – **point of order**