

Robert's Rules Cheat Sheet for Union Meetings

The basics for running a fair, orderly union meeting. Keep it at the head table.

HOW A MOTION WORKS

1 Get the floor

Raise your hand and wait for the chair to call on you.

2 Make the motion

Say "I move that..." and state exactly what you want the meeting to do.

3 Second

Another member says "Second." A motion with no second isn't discussed.

4 The chair states it

"It is moved and seconded that... Is there any discussion?"

5 Debate

Members speak through the chair, one at a time. The maker may speak first.

6 Vote and announce

"All in favor, say aye. Opposed, say no. The ayes have it, and the motion is adopted."

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to order
2. Roll call of officers and a quorum check
3. Reading and approval of the minutes
4. Treasurer's report
5. Reports of officers
6. Reports of committees
7. Unfinished business
8. New business
9. Good and welfare
10. Adjournment

Follow your bylaws if they set a different order.

PHRASES FOR THE CHAIR

"The meeting will come to order."

"Is there a second?"

"Is there any further discussion?"

"The question is on the motion to..."

"The ayes have it, and the motion is adopted."

"If there is no objection, ..." (to settle routine items without a vote)

"There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned."

QUORUM

A quorum is the smallest number of members who must be present to do business. Your bylaws set it; if they don't, Robert's Rules makes it a majority of the membership. Without a quorum, the meeting can only set a time to adjourn to, adjourn, recess, or take steps to get a quorum. Check for a quorum before any vote.

GOOD HABITS

- The chair stays neutral and usually votes only by ballot or when their vote would change the result.
- One motion at a time. Speak only after the chair recognizes you, and address the chair, not each other.
- The secretary writes down every motion exactly as stated, who made it, and the result.

Common Motions and Points

What to say, and what each motion needs. * Debatable only if the motion it applies to is debatable.

Motion	What you say	2nd	Debate	Amend	Vote
Main motion	"I move that..."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend	"I move to amend by striking... and inserting..."	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Majority
Refer to a committee	"I move to refer this to the ... committee."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone to a later time	"I move to postpone this until the next meeting."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone indefinitely	"I move to postpone the motion indefinitely." (kills it)	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Limit or extend debate	"I move to limit debate to two minutes per speaker."	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Previous question	"I move the previous question." (ends debate)	Yes	No	No	2/3
Lay on the table	"I move to lay the motion on the table." (sets it aside)	Yes	No	No	Majority
Take from the table	"I move to take from the table the motion to..."	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move to recess for ten minutes."	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Adjourn	"I move to adjourn."	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider	"I move to reconsider the vote on..." (winning side only)	Yes	Yes*	No	Majority
Rescind or change an earlier decision	"I move to rescind the motion adopted on..."	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 (see note)
Suspend the rules	"I move to suspend the rules and..."	Yes	No	No	2/3
Appeal the chair's ruling	"I appeal the decision of the chair."	Yes	Usually	No	Majority (tie keeps ruling)

Rescind or change an earlier decision: 2/3 with no notice, or a majority if notice was given at the previous meeting or in the call to this one, or a majority of the entire membership.

POINTS: NO SECOND, NO DEBATE

Point	What you say	What happens
Point of order	"Point of order."	The chair rules on whether a rule is being broken.
Point of information	"Point of information."	Ask the chair or a speaker for facts. No vote.
Parliamentary inquiry	"Parliamentary inquiry."	Ask the chair how to do something under the rules. No vote.
Point of personal privilege	"I rise to a point of personal privilege."	Raise an urgent comfort or rights issue, like noise or heat.
Division	"Division!"	Any member can require a standing vote after a voice vote.

Don't use "table" to kill a motion.

Lay on the table only sets a motion aside for now. To kill a motion without voting on it directly, move to postpone it indefinitely.