

## ROBERTS RULES CHEAT SHEET

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn <small>not required at end of agenda</small>	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	"Point of privilege" <small>not to be used to insert unagendized items into meeting</small>	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate <small>"Call to question"</small>	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion <small>council often uses the "friendly amendment"</small>	"I move that this motion be amended by..." <small>"I'd like to suggest a friendly amendment."</small> <small>Must be approved by mover and seconder.</small>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion) <small>only on agendized items. No new businesses can be added by motion due to Brown Act</small>	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Object to procedure or personal affront <small>Generally, a point of order must be raised at the time the rules are broken or else it would be too late</small>	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decides
Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	None
Ask for vote by actual count to verify voice vote	"I call for a division of the house" <small>this is a physical dividing by vote, so you stand to vote Aye or move to one side of the room.</small>	Must be done before new motion	No	No	No	None unless someone objects
Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter <small>This would mostly be used if someone is making a motion that would violate the Brown Act or is irrelevant to the agendized topics.</small>	"I object to consideration of this question"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up matter previously tabled <small>you can't do this unless the item is agendized, in which case, this motion is not needed. you will not need this.</small>	"I move we take from the table..."	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of <small>Only a member of the prevailing side can make a motion to reconsider. clerk within 3 days of the meeting.</small>	"I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to..." <small>must be made at the meeting, or notice given to the clerk within 3 days of the meeting.</small>	Yes	Yes	Only if original motion was debatable	No	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules and consider..." <small>the City Council Chair will often do this without a vote. Generally do this at Orders of the Day</small>	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	"I appeal the Chair's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order of preference; any of them may be introduced at any time except when meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed from the first chart (Motion to Adjourn, Recess or Point of Privilege).

## PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A MAIN MOTION

**NOTE:** Nothing goes to discussion without a motion being on the floor.

### Obtaining and assigning the floor

A member raises hand when no one else has the floor

- The chair recognizes the member by name

In the City Council, staff presentation, public comment and Council discussion occur without a motion on the floor. You can discuss the item without a motion. Because the Brown Act requirements are so clear as to what is being discussed, this RRO rule is not needed.

### How the Motion is Brought Before the Assembly

- The member makes the motion: *I move that (or "to") ...* and resumes his seat.
- Another member seconds the motion: *I second the motion or I second it or second.*
- The chair states the motion: *It is moved and seconded that ... Are you ready for the question?*

### Consideration of the Motion

1. Members can debate the motion.
2. Before speaking in debate, members obtain the floor.
3. The maker of the motion has first right to the floor if he claims it properly
4. Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion.
5. Debate can be closed only by order of the assembly (2/3 vote) or by the chair if no one seeks the floor for further debate.

### The chair puts the motion to a vote

1. The chair asks: *Are you ready for the question?* If no one rises to claim the floor, the chair proceeds to take the vote.
2. The chair says: *The question is on the adoption of the motion that ... As many as are in favor, say 'Aye'. (Pause for response.) Those opposed, say 'Nay'. (Pause for response.) Those abstained please say 'Aye'.*

### The chair announces the result of the vote.

1. *The ayes have it, the motion carries, and ...* (indicating the effect of the vote) or
2. *The nays have it and the motion fails*

### WHEN DEBATING YOUR MOTIONS

1. Listen to the other side
2. Focus on issues, not personalities
3. Avoid questioning motives
4. Be polite



# HOW TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IN MEETINGS

## MAIN MOTION

You want to propose a new idea or action for the group.

- After recognition, make a main motion.
- Member: "Madame Chairman, I move that \_\_\_\_\_."

**AMENDING A MOTION** You can also ask for a friendly amendment which is less formal and most often used by the City Council. Both Mover and Seconder must concur.

You want to change some of the wording that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by adding the following words \_\_\_\_\_."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words \_\_\_\_\_."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words, \_\_\_\_\_, and adding in their place the following words \_\_\_\_\_."

## REFER TO A COMMITTEE

You feel that an idea or proposal being discussed needs more study and investigation.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the question be referred to a committee made up of members Smith, Jones and Brown."

## POSTPONE DEFINITELY

You want the membership to have more time to consider the question under discussion and you want to postpone it to a definite time or day, and have it come up for further consideration.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to postpone the question until \_\_\_\_\_."

**PREVIOUS QUESTION** The City Council often says "Call to Question."

You think discussion has gone on for too long and you want to stop discussion and vote.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move the previous question."

## LIMIT DEBATE

You think discussion is getting long, but you want to give a reasonable length of time for consideration of the question.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move to limit discussion to two minutes per speaker." In the City of San Jose, the Chair has this discretion without a motion being needed.

## RECESS

You want to take a break for a while.

- After recognition, "Madame Moderator, I move to recess for ten minutes."

## ADJOURNMENT

once the agenda items have been completed, the Chair may adjourn without a motion.

You want the meeting to end.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to adjourn."

## PERMISSION TO WITHDRAW A MOTION

in San Jose, you can just state "I withdraw my motion." No permission is needed.

You have made a motion and after discussion, are sorry you made it.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I ask permission to withdraw my motion."

## POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

this is not to add new items to the meeting, but to respond to an urgent, usually environmental, situation.

The noise outside the meeting has become so great that you are having trouble hearing.

- Without recognition, "Point of personal privilege."
- Chairman: "State your point."
- Member: "There is too much noise, I can't hear."

## POINT OF INFORMATION

You are wondering about some of the facts under discussion, such as the balance in the treasury when expenditures are being discussed.

- Without recognition, "Point of information."

RRO is used to facilitate a meeting, not to stop discussion. Brown Act and State law take precedence over RRO. If motion to accept the agenda is missed, it does not negate the actions taken at the meeting.