

Guidelines to Using Robert's Rules

Duties of the Chairman

To acquire a working knowledge of parliamentary law and procedure and a thorough understanding of the Constitution, By-laws, and standing rules of the organization.

To preside and maintain order.

To explain and decide all questions of order.

To entertain only one main motion at a time and state all motions properly.

To permit none to debate motions before they are stated and seconded; to encourage debate and assign the floor to those properly entitled to it. (No member may speak twice on the same questions if there are others who wish to claim the floor.)

To stand while stating the question and taking the vote.

To remain seated while discussion is taking place or reports are being given.

To enforce the rules of decorum and discipline.

To talk no more than necessary when presiding.

To be absolutely fair and impartial.

To extend every courtesy to the opponents of a motion even though the motion is one that the presiding officer favors.

To perform such others duties as are prescribed in the bylaws.

The chairman should be careful to ABSTAIN from the appearance of partisanship, but he has the right to call another member to the chair while he addresses the assembly on a question.

Do not take part in debate while you are in the Chair. If you must speak, turn the chair over to the vice president. Do not return to the chair until the vote has been taken.

Do not allow members to deal in personalities while debating.

Duties of the Members

To obtain the floor before speaking.

To stand when speaking and identify yourself before speaking.

To avoid speaking upon any matter until it is properly brought before the assembly by a motion.

To keep upon the question then pending.

To yield the floor to calls for order (also known as point of order)

To abstain from all personalities in debate.

To avoid disturbing, in any way, speakers of the assembly.

Rights of the Members

To offer any motion that is germane to the organization.

To explain or discuss that motion, or any matter properly before the meeting.

To call to order, if necessary. (A point of order can interrupt a speaker. It is raised to ensure orderly procedures, particularly when there is a breach of violation of rules or bylaws, or when a member is not speaking on the motion before the assembly).

To hold the floor, when legally obtained, until through speaking.

It is also the right of every member, who notices a breach of a rule, to insist upon its enforcement.

It is highly recommended that each chapter obtain a copy of "Robert's Rules of Order" so that all officers understand and use the information contained therein.