



Robert's Rules

An Introduction to Parliamentary Procedures

The goal of parliamentary procedure is to balance the competing interests of protecting the rights of the minority and allowing the body as a whole to make decisions in a transparent, rational and somewhat efficient manner.

- **PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**
- **GETTING PERMISSION TO SPEAK**
- **OBTAINING THE FLOOR**
- **PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY**
- **POINT OF ORDER**
- **BEING RESPECTFUL**
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PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Robert's Rules is a widely used and comprehensive method of parliamentary procedure, which is a set of rules used to run meetings in which a deliberative body makes formal decisions such as:

- **ELECTING OFFICERS**
- **ADOPTING BUDGETS**
- **APPROVING RESOLUTIONS**
- **ACCEPTING MOTIONS**

Keep in mind that all Boulder County Democratic Party meetings are also subject to:

Deliberative meetings are further subject to parliamentary procedure



[BCDP Bylaws](#)
[Colorado Democratic Party Rules](#)



[Colorado Revised Statutes](#)
[Democratic National Committee Charter and Bylaws](#)
[The Colorado Constitution](#)

GETTING PERMISSION TO SPEAK

Permission is required prior to speaking for several reasons, including being able to hear what people are saying. If several people start speaking or shouting at the same time, it can be difficult or impossible to hear any one of them and when that happens no one's point can be heard.

In order to speak in most cases, you must **get permission** before you can speak, this is called **Obtaining the Floor**. There are limited exceptions to this rule and common exceptions are covered on the next page.

Obtaining the Floor by one of two methods:

1. Ask permission by raising your hand or credential
2. Obtain permission when the presiding officer (the person running the meeting) points to you or calls your name



When Getting Permission is Not Required

Parliamentary Inquiry

If you have a question about the rules pertaining to the business being conducted you have an option to get more information:

1. You can call out **Parliamentary Inquiry**
2. The presiding officer recognizes you
3. You can ask your question
4. Presiding officer gives an opinion on your question



- Your question must be relevant to the current discussion. If not, it's **out of order** (not allowed) and the presiding officer has no obligation to give an opinion.
- When multiple people call out Parliamentary Inquiry at the same time, the presiding officer will pick one person to recognize and allow to speak.

Point of Order

If you believe that a member's rights are being violated or business is being derailed by a violation of the rules, you can call out **Point of Order** and the presiding officer should recognize you.

You can then state your case and the presiding officer can rule on your point.

RESPECT

When you speak, please be considerate of the time of your fellow members and keep your remarks brief and focused on the point.

- If you stray from the point, the presiding officer can and should interrupt you and remind you to stay on topic. You can continue speaking on topic after that interruption.

Attacking Others and Their Motives

When you speak, it is fine to attack ideas but is **unacceptable to attack people or their motives**. Any verbal attack on a person or their motives is **out of order** (not allowed) and the presiding officer can and should interrupt you to remind you not to do so.

1. You can continue speaking on topic after an initial interruption, however, if you persist in attacking someone or their motives, the presiding officer can and should interrupt you.
2. The presiding officer should clearly state the breach (what was wrong with how you were speaking)

MOTIONS

3. The presiding officer should ask the body if you should be allowed to continue speaking.
4. The body votes & if a majority vote **no** then your permission to speak has been withdrawn by the body.
5. You can no longer speak on that point.



Permission to speak is granted by the presiding officer but is withdrawn by the body.

A **motion** is any decision to be made formally by a deliberative body. For example, a decision to adopt a resolution would be a motion.

During debate on a motion to adopt a resolution, members make motions about how they want to handle the flow of debate and the body then decides about the flow. For example:

1. A member wants to amend a motion under debate so they **move to amend**
2. The body either **approves** the motion to amend and proceeds to debate the amendment
3. OR the body **rejects** the motion to amend and continues on with the original motion

Basic steps in handling motions

1. A member gets permission to speak
2. That member then makes a motion (see guide at end of this document)
3. Another member seconds the motion, if required
4. The presiding officer states the motion
5. Members debate the motion, if debatable
6. The presiding officer conducts a vote on the motion
7. The presiding officer announces the result of the vote

What is Considered an Unacceptable Motion (pp 110 – 113):

- Any main motion that conflicts with BCDP Bylaws, CDP Rules or procedures applicable to county political parties contained in either the Colorado Revised Statutes or in the Colorado Constitution is **out of order**.
- Any main motion that is essentially the same as another main motion made in the same meeting and that was either rejected, postponed indefinitely or successfully objected to consideration is **out of order**.
 - A motion to reconsider the earlier main motion made in the same meeting may be used but must be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side (p 315) and if it fails then the original vote is finalized (p113 footnote).
- Any main motion that conflicts with a motion previously adopted and still in force is **out of order**.
 - Unless an adopted main motion specifies a time for the termination of its effect, it remains in force until it is rescinded.
 - A motion to rescind or to amend something previously adopted could be used to rescind or modify the previously adopted main motion causing the conflict.
- Any main motion that is essentially the same as or that conflicts with another main motion that has been temporarily but not finally disposed of and remains in control of the body is **out of order**.

- The main motion causing the conflict can be brought before the body again.
- Any motion proposing action outside the scope of the BCDP Bylaws is **out of order**.
- Note that a 2/3 vote can authorize consideration but legality of any such action is suspect.

Informal Consideration & Friendly Amendments

Before the presiding officer has stated the question and at the discretion of the presiding officer, the presiding officer may provide a brief period of **informal consideration**, provided that the presiding officer maintains control and does not allow the informal consideration to become debate (pp 40-41).

- **Before** the presiding officer has stated the question, any member may rise and without recognition ask the maker of the motion if they would accept a modification (p 40, 114).
 - The motion maker may then accept or decline the modification.
- **After** the presiding officer has stated the question, the main motion is before the body and debate on the motion is in order (p 32).
 - At this point, the **motion no longer belongs to the maker of the motion but to the body**.
 - The motion maker can ask unanimous consent to make a modification of the motion but if any member objects then the usual motion to amend must be used to make a change (p 114).
 - All other changes to the motion handled under the same rules as amendments (p 162).

Ending Debate on Motions

Debate is the discussion about the motion currently under consideration.



- *Members must obtain permission to speak in order to move to end debate*
- Moving to end debate is sometimes referred to as “**calling the question**” but the motion is called **Previous Question**

Steps to Ending Debate

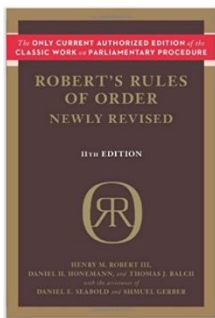
1. If a member moves to end debate
2. The presiding officer states that a member has moved to end debate
3. The Presiding officer may ask if any member objects to ending debate
4. If **no member objects**, then all members have agreed to end debate and debate is ended
5. However, if any member **does** object, then the presiding officer asks for a second
6. If another member seconds (agrees that ending debate is a good idea by calling out second)
7. The presiding officer calls for a vote
8. If two-thirds of the votes cast are to end debate, then debate is over

Recap -- Motion to End Debate

- A motion to end debate is made by one member and seconded by another member
- Debate ends only if no member objects or a two-thirds supermajority of votes cast vote to end debate
- No single member can end debate on their own
- No presiding officer can end debate on their own
- The body decides to end debate

SENDING BUSINESS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

If there is a matter that the Central Committee wants the Executive Committee to take up, the motion “Refer” should be used and should specify the Executive Committee.



Page numbers cited herein refer to:
Robert’s Rules of Order
Newly Revised
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ROBERTS RULES QUICK GUIDE

You Want To	You Should	Conditions / Notes
Make a motion (Must be seconded) Speak for a motion Speak against a motion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise your hand or credential 2. Wait for presiding officer to recognize you 3. Then speak 	You can NOT interrupt someone You may attack ideas but not people You must stay on topic MAX 10 minutes (Robert's Rules p43)
Kill a motion without rejecting it	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise your hand or credential 2. Wait for presiding officer to recognize you 3. Say "I move to Postpone Indefinitely" 	You can NOT interrupt someone Must be seconded Is not amendable
Divide a motion into separate pieces	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise your hand or credential 2. Wait for presiding officer to recognize you 3. Say "I move to divide the question" 	You can NOT interrupt someone Must be seconded
Amend a motion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise your hand or credential 2. Wait for presiding officer to recognize you 3. Say "I move to amend the motion" 	You can NOT interrupt someone Must be seconded You should be succinct
Amend an amendment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise your hand or credential 2. Wait for presiding officer to recognize you 3. Say "I move to amend the amendment" 	You can NOT interrupt someone Must be seconded Is not amendable You should be succinct
Change number speeches allowed Change duration of speeches allowed Or change duration of debate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise your hand or credential 2. Wait for presiding officer to recognize you 3. To Increase say "I move to Extend Debate" 4. Or to Decrease say "I move to Limit Debate" 	You can NOT interrupt someone Must be seconded Is not debatable Requires 2/3 vote
End debate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise your hand or credential 2. Wait for presiding officer to recognize you 3. Say: "I move to end debate" or "I move the Previous Question" 	You can NOT interrupt someone Must be seconded Is not debatable Is not amendable Requires 2/3 vote

Temporarily suspend consideration to deal with an urgent situation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise your hand or credential 2. Wait for presiding officer to recognize you 3. Say "I move to Lay on the Table" 	<p>You can NOT interrupt someone</p> <p>Must be seconded</p> <p>Is not debatable</p> <p>Is not amendable</p> <p>Whatever is tabled should be considered next</p>
Contest the result of a voice vote	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call out "Division" 	<p>You CAN interrupt someone</p> <p>Is not debatable</p> <p>You should be succinct</p>
Ask a question about the rules pertaining to the business currently being conducted	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call out "Parliamentary Inquiry" 2. Wait for presiding officer to recognize you 	<p>You CAN interrupt someone</p> <p>Is not debatable</p> <p>Is not amendable</p> <p>You should be succinct</p>
Respond to a violation of the rules	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call out "Point of Order" 2. Wait for presiding officer to recognize you 	<p>You CAN interrupt someone</p> <p>Is not debatable</p> <p>Is not amendable</p> <p>You should be succinct</p>
Appeal a decision of the chair	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call out "Appeal" <i>at the time of the ruling</i> 2. Wait for presiding officer to recognize you 	<p>You CAN interrupt someone</p> <p>Must be seconded</p> <p>Is debatable with some exceptions</p> <p>Is not amendable</p> <p>You should be succinct</p>
Suspend the rules	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise your hand or credential 2. Wait for presiding officer to recognize you 3. Say "I move to Suspend the rules" 	<p>You can NOT interrupt someone</p> <p>Must be seconded</p> <p>Is not debatable</p> <p>Is not amendable</p> <p>Requires 2/3 vote</p>