

Meeting Procedure Myths

Myth: The presiding officer can only vote to break a tie

Fact: The presiding officer should only vote when his vote will influence the result or if the vote is by ballot.

Myth: A motion adopted without a second is void.

Fact: If the presiding officer places a motion before the assembly, and the members debate or vote on it, the action taken is not invalid based on their being no second.

Myth: Abstentions count as YES votes. Or: Abstentions count as NO votes.

Fact: Abstentions do not count as votes. Period. Abstentions may have the same EFFECT as a vote on one side or the other depending on the voting **rules**. But they never count as votes.

Myth: The chair should always ask for unfinished business.

Fact: The chair should know whether there is unfinished business and proceed accordingly.

Myth: The chair must call for nominations three times.

Fact: The chair should proceed to election when nominations have been properly closed, or when it is apparent that no further nominations are to be made.

Myth: If an election winner declines to serve, the second-place candidate gets the job.

Fact: Robert considers this situation to be an incomplete election, and a new election is the solution.

Myth: Officers must be members of the organization.

Fact: Robert provides that the membership is free to select anyone to serve as an officer unless specific qualifications are established in bylaws.

Myth: Ex officio members cannot vote.

Fact: Any member can vote, regardless of how he comes to hold membership, unless voting rights are specifically limited or excluded in the bylaws.

Myth: Motions don't take effect until minutes are approved.

Fact: Motions take effect when adopted unless another time is specified in the motion.

Myth: Robert's Rules are just a guide. You don't have to follow them.

Fact: **If** you have adopted Robert as your parliamentary authority, it is binding.

Myth: The parliamentarian makes rulings and decides procedural questions.

Fact: The presiding officer makes **rulings** and decides procedural questions subject to the appeal process. In meetings, the parliamentarian advises the chair and members on request.

Myth: Only one motion can be on the floor at any one time.

Fact: Only one motion can be under consideration at any one time

Ten Motion Mistakes to Avoid

1. **Speaking** without being recognized
2. Moving to 'table'
3. Calling (for) the question
4. Tabling it until next month
5. Reconsidering a vote
6. **Making a point of information**
7. Offering friendly amendments
8. Making motions to accept reports
9. Dispensing with the minutes
10. Saying, "I so move!"

Robert's Rules of Order for the Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislature (Senate)

RANKING MOTIONS (Highest to lowest)	Can interrupt Speaker	Need Second	Can be debated	Can be amended	Vote required
<i>Privileged motions</i>					
Fix the time to which to adjourn	N	Y	N	Y	Majority
Adjourn	N	Y	N	N	Majority
Take a recess	N	Y	N	Y	Majority
Raise a question of privilege	Y	N	N	N	Chair rules
Call for the orders of the day	Y	N	N	N	Chair rules
<i>Subsidiary motions (when main motion is pending)</i>					
Lay on the table	N	Y	N	N	Majority
Previous question	N	Y	N	N	Two-thirds
Limit or extend debate	N	Y	N	Y	Two-thirds
Postpone definitely	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
Commit or refer	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
Amend	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
Postpone indefinitely	N	Y	Y	N	Majority
Main motions	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
<i>Motions that bring a question again before the assembly (same rank as main motions)</i>					
Take from the table	N	Y	N	N	Majority
Rescind or amend something previously adopted	N	Y	Y	Y	*
Discharge a committee	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
Reconsider	*	Y	Y	N	Majority

NON-RANKING MOTIONS					
<i>Incidental motions (procedural)</i>					
Appeal the decision of the chair	Y	Y	Y	N	Majority
Consideration by paragraph or seriatim	N	Y	N	Y	Majority
Division of a question	N	Y	N	Y	Majority
Division of the assembly	Y	N	N	N	None
Objection to the consideration of a question		N	N	N	Two-thirds
Parliamentary inquiry	Y	N	N	N	None
Point of information	Y	N	N	N	None
Point of order	Y	N	N	N	Chair rules
Request permission to withdraw a motion	•	*	N	N	Majority
Suspend the rules	N	Y	N	N	Two-thirds

* Note -- See Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (1990) for special rules.