Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order
(www.robertsrules.org)

What Is Parliamentary Procedure?

It is a set of rules for conduct at meetings that allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

Why is Parliamentary Procedure Important?

Because it's a time tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings. It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization. Today, Robert's Rules of Order newly revised is the basic handbook of operation for most clubs, organizations and other groups. So it's important that everyone knows these basic rules!

Organizations using parliamentary procedure usually follow a fixed order of business. Below is a typical example:

1. Call to order.
2. Roll call of members present.
3. Reading of minutes of last meeting.
4. Officers reports.
5. Committee reports.
6. Special orders --- Important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting.
7. Unfinished business.
9. Announcements.
10. Adjournment.

Motions

A motion is a proposal that the entire membership take action or a stand on an issue. Individual members can:

- Move a motion
- Second a motion
- Debate motions
- Vote on motions

Types of Motions

Main Motions introduce items to the membership for their consideration. They cannot be made when any other motion is on the floor, and yield to privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions.

Subsidiary Motions change or affect how a main motion is handled, and are voted on before a main motion.

Privileged Motions bring up urgent items about special or important matters unrelated to pending business.
Incidental Motions provide a means of questioning procedure concerning other motions and have priority.

Presenting a Motion
1. Obtaining the floor
   1. Wait until the last speaker has finished.
   2. Rise and address the Chair by saying, for example, "Mr. Chairman," or "Madam President."
   3. Wait until the Chair recognizes you.
2. Make Your Motion
   1. Speak in a clear and concise manner.
   2. Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we ..." rather than, "I move that we do not ...".
   3. Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.
3. Wait for Someone to Second Your Motion
   1. Another member will second your motion or the Chair will call for a second. If there is no second, your motion is lost.
4. The Chair States Your Motion
   1. The Chair will say, "it has been moved and seconded that we ..." Thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
   2. The membership then debates your motion, or may move directly to a vote.
   3. Once your motion is presented to the membership by the Chair it becomes "assembly property", and cannot be changed by you without the consent of the members.
5. Expanding on Your Motion
   1. The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time, rather than at the time you present it.
   2. The mover is always allowed to speak first.
   3. All comments and debate must be directed to the Chair.
   4. Keep to the time limit for speaking that has been established.
   5. The mover may speak again only after other speakers are finished, unless called upon by the Chair.
6. Putting the Question to the Membership
   1. The Chair asks, "Are you ready to vote on the question?"
   2. If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.
   3. Alternatively, a motion to "move the previous question", if adopted, brings the question to a vote.

Voting on a Motion
The method of vote on a motion depends on the circumstances and the by-laws of your organization. There are five methods used to vote by most organizations:

- **Voice.** The Chair asks those in favor to say, "aye", those opposed to say "no". Any member may move for an exact count.
- **Roll Call.** Each member answers "yes" or "no" as his name is called. This method is used when a record of each person's vote is required.
• **General Consent.** When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chair says, "if there is no objection ..." The membership shows agreement by their silence, however if one member says, "I object," the item must be put to a vote.
• **Division.** Members raise their hands or stand with the ayes or the noes. A count is not necessarily required.
• **Ballot.** Members write their vote on a slip of paper. This method is used to maintain secrecy in votes.

**Use It Properly**

• Allow motions that are in order.
• Have members obtain the floor properly.
• Speak clearly and concisely.
• Obey the rules of debate.
• Most importantly, *BE COURTEOUS.*