

# Robert's Rules of Order for Senate and Standing Committees of Senate

Senate and Standing Committees of Senate meetings are conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order. The following document provides an overview of the main procedures for conducting Standing Committee meetings.

## Quorum

- Quorum for meeting is a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of voting membership.
- Normally the chair of a meeting does not vote and is not counted towards quorum unless the chair's participation is required to meet quorum. Leaves of absence reduce quorum requirements accordingly.
- Where there are vacancies on standing committees, quorum is 50% of available voting membership – vacant positions are excluded from the count.
- If a quorum does not exist at a meeting, any action taken in the absence of a quorum is invalid. Once quorum is declared the meeting continues.

## Motions

A motion is a formal proposal that the decision-making body will vote on.

- Motions are made by voting committee members, unless bylaws or committee rules state otherwise.
- See below for steps in a motion.

## Role of Mover and Second

Moving and seconding are steps that enable the introduction of motions to be put on the floor and debated.

The chair may ask the mover and second if they agree to amend or withdraw the motion they put on the table, assuming general support from the voting members of the committee.

## Main Motions

Motions introduce a new piece of business or propose a decision or action to be taken. The following are some aspects of main motions:

- There can be only one main motion on the floor at one time.
- They are debatable, amendable, and can be reconsidered.

## Steps in a Motion

- Member makes a **clearly worded motion to take action or a position**. The motion is almost always listed in the agenda package.
- Typically, the chair asks for mover and second.
- Discussion, questions, debate ensues.
- Chair checks in with committee to see if they are ready to vote or may decide themselves it's time to vote.
- For in-person or hybrid meetings: The chair calls for those in favor, opposed, and any abstentions.
- For virtual meetings: The chair asks if there are any opposed, then any abstentions. The rest are deemed to have voted in favour of the motion.
- Chair announces motion has passed or failed (requires majority in favour)