

Rules of Debate.

1.0 Preamble

It is important that the President or Chairman of a meeting has a clear knowledge and understanding of the Rules of Debate, but it is also equally important for each participating member to know the rules under which the meeting is being conducted.

In a Lions Club the basic objective is to harness and direct the collective “know how” of the group into meaningful discussion, leading to effective and efficient decision-making and action.

Lions International Multiple District 201 accepts as a standard “Law and Procedure at Meetings in Australia” by Joske. This book, however, has a legal background and is unnecessarily complicated for an ordinary Lions meeting. While still accepting Joske as the authority, the following abridged rules are recommended for use by your club. They are not for the purpose of scoring points against each other, or for long debates on technicalities, but rather to ensure uncomplicated and efficient processing of business.

Good fellowship must be the keynote of all our meetings and when all else fails the “Rule of Commonsense” must prevail.

2 Rules of Conduct

- 2.1 No member shall address the assembly without first obtaining permission and direction from the President or Chairman, and he shall address himself to the Chair.
- 2.2 The President or Chairman may remain seated during normal business, but members addressing the meeting shall stand. The exception is when the President is making a specific report or introducing guests.
- 2.3 Members speaking shall confine themselves to the question under debate and avoid personalities and indecorous language.
- 2.4 The mover of a motion shall be allowed a maximum of 4 minutes, and his right of reply shall not exceed 3 minutes. All other speakers, including the seconder, shall be limited to 3 minutes, provided that an extension may be given to any speaker by resolution of the meeting.
- 2.5 No new matter shall be introduced in the reply and all speakers should avoid tedious repetition and trivia.
- 2.6 Questions must be directed to the Chairman and he may direct the mover to reply, provided such reply must not exceed 2 minutes and shall be confined to the question alone and shall not be considered his right of reply.
- 2.7 Members wishing to move a motion or address the meeting must advise the President before the meeting to ensure that such intention has the approval of the President and is placed on the agenda.

3 The Motion

- 3.1 A motion is usually positive in nature beginning with the word “that”. It should be carefully researched and worded, and where possible a copy submitted to the President and Secretary in writing.

- 3.2 The motion must be moved and seconded before discussion and the motion lapses if a seconder is not forthcoming. It is acceptable for a member to second a motion in order to hear the proposal. He is not committed to vote for the motion.
- 3.3 After the motion has been formally moved and seconded, the proposer may speak to the motion for a maximum of four minutes.
- 3.4 The seconder shall then be invited to speak for a maximum of three minutes. He may request a deferment but loses this right if the debate is terminated before he speaks.
- 3.5 If the above two speakers, ie mover and seconder, speak for the motion, the Chairman must then call for two speakers against the motion. Thereafter, speakers for and against must be selected alternately until the debate is exhausted or terminated.
- 3.6 If there are no speakers against the motion, it may be put to the meeting immediately.
- 3.7 No person shall speak more than once on a question, but a motion and an amendment are considered to be different questions. A member therefore who has spoken to the motion may speak again to an amendment.
- 3.8 If an amendment is moved and debated, the mover of the original motion is given right of reply before a vote is taken on the first amendment.
- 3.9 If any member feels more time or investigation is needed, provision is made later in these rules under formal motions for the debate and consequent decision to be adjourned.

4 Amendments

- 4.1 Amendments are the main cause of confusion at meetings, as members, and even the chairman can easily lose the thread of the debate. The Golden Rule therefore is one step at a time, and good sense suggests only one amendment at a time.
- 4.2 In matters of a complex nature, it helps if every member has a copy of the motion in front of him. The simple rules governing amendments are:-
- 4.3 An amendment must not be a direct negative to the motion. The simplest way to negate a motion is to vote against it and indicate your intention and reason for doing so in the course of the debate.
- 4.4 An amendment is an alteration to the wording of a motion. It may leave out certain words, change certain words or add certain words, but the basic intention of the motion must remain and the amended motion must stand up to common sense interpretation.
- 4.5 More than one amendment may be made to the original motion but amendments to amendments are not permitted. For example, a motion may contain several elements such as a basic purpose or intention, a method, a time, a place and a cost. While maintaining the basic purpose or intention, any or all of the other elements may be altered by amendment either singly or collectively.
- 4.6 The wording of a motion may also be amended to assist common sense interpretation of its intent.
- 4.7 Further amendments [plural] may be foreshadowed to indicate a direction for debate, and the chairman, in his/her wisdom may decide the order of debate to ensure continuity.
- 4.8 After debate, each amendment must be voted upon, and if passed, the amended motion becomes the motion.
- 4.9 The mover of an amendment has no right of reply.
- 4.10 When all required amendments are in position, the amended motion is known as “The Substantive Motion”, and this must be finally voted upon to become a resolution of the club.

5.0 Voting.

- 5.1 Voting by proxy is not permitted..

- 5.2 An affirmative vote shall consist of a simple majority of members present providing they constitute a quorum.
- 5.3 A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of members in good standing [i.e. more than half the members must be present]
- 5.4 If a motion is passed it becomes a resolution.
- 5.5 Most resolutions require action of some sort and before the matter is closed, the President must ensure that responsibility for such action is clearly defined and delegated.

6.0 Formal Motions

When a debate is becoming tedious, time consuming or perhaps heated, or when a member feels more investigation is required or more pressing business is on the agenda, several options are available in the form of Formal Motions as follows:-

All formal motions are subject to acceptance by the President or the Chairman and are not open to debate.

- 6.1 Point of order. [No seconder required]
No speaker shall be interrupted except on a “point of order”, when he shall sit down until the President or Chairman, whose decision shall be final in such matters, settles the point of order.
- 6.2 The closure. [no seconder required]
“I move the motion be now put”. This motion has priority if accepted by the Chairman and terminates the discussion if passed.
- 6.3 Adjourn the meeting. [seconder required]
“I move that the meeting be adjourned until....” This motion terminates the meeting and applies to motions and amendments under discussion.
- 6.4 The previous question. [seconder required]
“I move that the question be not put now.” This motion prevents a vote being taken and shelves the motion for that meeting. It applies to motions – not amendments.
- 6.5 Proceed to the next business. [seconder required]
“I move that the meeting proceeds to the next business”.
- 6.6 Adjourn the debate. [seconder required]
“I move the debate be adjourned”.
- 6.7 Lie on the table. [seconder required]
“I move that the question lie on the table until....” Defers the matter to a more convenient time, which may be later in the same meeting or at a later date.
- 6.8 Raise motion from the table. [seconder required]

“I move motion [description] be raised from the table”. Raises the motion, which was previously laid on the table and reintroduces it to the meeting. The President or Chairman should have the secretary read the motion and then invite speakers to the motion.

MEETING PROCEDURES: A QUICK GUIDE TO ACCEPTANCE OF MOTIONS & AMENDMENTS & DEBATE.

	To do this	You say This	May you interrupt the speaker?	Is a seconder needed?	Is your motion debatable?	Is your motion amenable?	Vote Needed
1	Introduce new business for discussion	"I move that....."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Amend a motion	"I move that the motion be amended by"	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
3	End debate on a matter for a vote.	"I move that the question be now put".	Yes	Yes, unless the Chairman declares otherwise	No	No	Yes
4	Suspend debate on a matter for the, present meeting	"I move that the meeting proceed to the next business.	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
5	Suspend debate on a matter either indefinitely or until later in the meeting.	"I move that the question lie on the table"	No	Yes	Yes	No	yes
6	Re-introduce debate on a matter laid on the table.	"I move that the question of be now raised from the table".	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
7	Adjourn debate on a matter until a later time or later meeting	"I move that debate on this matter be adjourned until"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Adjourn a meeting.	"I move that this meeting adjourn until"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	Ensure that a matter is placed on the agenda for a later meeting	I wish to give notice of motion to be moved [when] that"	No	No	No	No	No
10	Draw attention to a breach of procedure.	"Point of order. [e.g.] "There is no quorum present Mr Chairman".	No	No	No	No	No
11	Strike out or cancel a motion previously passed.	"I move we rescind the motion that	"No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
12	Withdraw a motion.	"I request leave to withdraw the motion"	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
13.	Have a matter investigated further.	"I move we refer this matter to a committee:	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes