

## Decorum in debate contained in Roberts Rules of Order

### 1. Address all remarks through the Chair

Persons cannot address each other directly; they must address all remarks through the Chair. Wait to be recognized by the Chair before speaking or interrupting another person.

### 2. Confine remarks to the merits of the pending motion

A person's comments should be related to the motion on the floor - the comments must have a bearing on whether the motion should be adopted.

### 3. Refrain from attacking a person's motives

When a motion is pending, a speaker can condemn the nature or likely consequence of the proposed action in strong terms, but he/she must avoid personalities. Under no circumstances can the speaker attack or question the motives of another person.

### 4. Avoid the use of person's names

As much as possible in debate, avoid using a person's name. This assists in focussing the debate on the topic of the motion, rather than on a person or personalities. One might say "the previous speaker or speakers".

### 5. Refrain from speaking adversely on a previous action that is not part of the motion under discussion

In debate, do not speak adversely of previous actions or motions of the association that are not in the motion, unless you are making a motion or giving notice of a motion to reconsider, rescind or amend a previous action.

### 6. Refrain from speaking against your own motion

While you can vote against your own motion, you cannot speak against it. If you wish to speak to the motion, you must speak in favour of your own motion. If you felt compelled to make a motion, explain that you did so to allow the members to debate it.

### 7. Refrain from reading from reports or quotations etc. without permission of the meeting

Everyone has been asked to read reports before the meeting.

### 8. Be seated during an interruption by the Chair

If the Chair rises to make a ruling, give information or otherwise speak, any person who is speaking should sit down or stand back from the microphone until the Chair is finished. When recognized by the Chair, then the person can resume speaking to his/her maximum allowed time unless he/she is refused the right to speak again.

### 9. Refrain from disturbing the meeting

During debate or remarks by the Chair or a guest and during voting, a person should not disturb the meeting by whispering, walking across the floor or in any other way. (The key is – does it disturb the meeting or other persons in your vicinity?)

#### In other words:

- focus on the business
- show respect for all present and those absent in both comment and action

A person violating the Rules of Order or the Decorum in Debate contained in Roberts Rules of Order may be:

- a) refused the opportunity to speak to further motions
- b) removed from the meeting by a majority vote of the meeting.