

Comparing Rosenberg’s Rules of Order and Robert’s Rules of Order

[Robert’s Rules of Order](#) is an 816-page manual of parliamentary procedure originally published in the 19th Century by Henry M. Robert. [Rosenberg’s Rules of Order](#) is a simplified and streamlined seven-page version of the rules of parliamentary procedure prepared by Superior Court Judge Dave Rosenberg, who served as a councilmember of the City of Davis, including two terms as Mayor. In many respects, Rosenberg’s Rules parallels Robert’s rules; however, there are several distinctions that are addressed in the table below.

TABLE 1.

		Rosenberg’s Rules of Order	Robert’s Rules of Order
		Comparison	
1.	Fundamental Structure	Set of parliamentary rules.	Same
2.	Quorum	The minimum number of members of the body who must be present at a meeting for business to be legally transacted.	Same
3.	Role of the Chair	It is the chair of the body who is charged with applying the rules of conduct of the meeting.	Same
4.	Format for Agenda Item Discussion	- Description of how agenda items are processed. - More detail than is provided in Robert’s Rules regarding conduct of meeting. - The chair may limit the time of public speakers. - A second is not an absolute requirement. This is a matter left to the discretion of the chair.	- Power to limit the time of public speakers is subject to the decision of the body. - Robert’s Rules state that a second is not required on small boards.
5.	Motions in General	Motions are made in a simple two-step process. First, the chair should recognize the member of the body. Second, the member of the body makes a motion.	Same
6.	Motion to Amend	A motion to amend takes the basic motion that is before the body and seeks to change it in some way.	Much more detail/process about how to amend.
7.	Substitute Motion	- Allows members to propose a completely different motion as a substitute motion. - Gives the chair discretion to rule on whether a motion is a “motion to amend” or a “substitute motion.”	To substitute is a type of amendment. There are somewhat complex rules governing how substitutions are handled.

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8.	Friendly Amendment	Allows the common practice of a "friendly amendment" and states that the maker and seconder have the right to accept it or not.	"Friendly amendments" are in essence treated like any other amendment, and thus more formally.
9.	Multiple Motions Before the Body	In restricting motions to three total, Rosenberg rejects the customary system of "precedence of motions."	Robert allows up to 13 ranking motions.
10.	Motion to Recess	Allows the chair to determine the length of the recess.	The length is included in the motion made by a member (amendable but not debatable), so it is within the control of the body.
11.	Motion to Table	This motion must be justified by urgent other business and cannot be debated.	- Motion to table "until a specific time" corresponds to Robert's "postpone to a certain time." - Both are debatable.
12.	Motion to Limit Debate	- When a member makes this motion, the chair can expedite matters by treating it as a "request" rather than as a formal motion. - The chair can inquire of the body if there are any further questions and if there are none, then the chair can go right to the pending motion that is on the floor. - If one person wishes to discuss the pending motion further, then at that point, the chair treats it as a formal motion, and proceeds to it.	- Motion to limit debate corresponds to Robert's "previous question." - It is undebatable, and cannot be amended or have any other subsidiary motion applied to it. - Motion brought to bring the assembly at once to a vote on the immediately pending question and on such other pending questions as may be specified in the demand. - Both require two-thirds vote of the body.
13.	Motion to Suspend the Rules	Allows debate.	- Motion is not debatable. - Some rules cannot be suspended.
14.	Counting Votes	- For a simple majority vote, "one vote more than 50% of the body is required." - In addressing what it means to vote "absent," Rosenberg leaves the determination up to the chair.	- When a quorum is present, a majority vote is sufficient for the adoption of any motion that is in order. - The responsibility of announcing, or declaring, the vote rests upon the chair. - Any member may call for, or demand, a count of the votes, and, if seconded, the chair must order a count of the votes.
15.	Motion to Reconsider	- A member who voted "with the majority" has the right to move to reconsider at the same meeting. - If the motion to reconsider passes, "a new original motion is in order." - Motion can be brought at a later meeting if rules are suspended.	- A member who voted "with the prevailing side" has the right to move to reconsider. - If the motion to reconsider passes, debate is resumed at the point it had reached just before the vote was taken.

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			▪ Motion can only be brought on the day the vote to be reconsidered was taken, or, in the case of a multi-day session, on the next day within the session in which business is conducted.
16.	Courtesy and Decorum	▪ Need for courtesy and decorum, and the chair's right to cut off discussion that is too personal, too loud, or too crude.	▪ Same
17.	Interruptions: Privilege	▪ Allows interrupting to raise a question of privilege by members of the body.	▪ Interruption for question of privilege should be done only if unavoidable.
18.	Interruptions: Point of Order	▪ Appropriate points of order relate to anything that would not be considered appropriate conduct of the meeting.	▪ Same
19.	Interruptions: Appeal	▪ If the chair makes a ruling that a member of the body disagrees with, that member may appeal the ruling of the chair to the entire body. ▪ If the motion making the appeal is seconded, and after debate, if it passes by a simple majority vote, then the ruling of the chair is deemed reversed.	▪ Gives a special process of debate for those appeals that are debatable. ▪ Some appeals cannot be debated.
20.	Interruptions: Call for the Orders of the Day	▪ Allows interrupting in order to bring everyone back to the agenda.	▪ Same
21.	Interruptions: Withdraw a Motion	▪ Allows a member to interrupt debate and withdraw a motion at any time.	▪ Once a motion has been made, seconded and stated by the chair, it belongs to the body itself, not to the original maker. ▪ If a member wishes to withdraw the motion, the member asks permission of the body. ▪ Does not allow interruption for this purpose and does not allow a member to withdraw a motion unilaterally.
22.	Abstention and Voting	▪ Abstention generally does not count towards majority vote. ▪ As a result, a 2-2 vote plus one abstention would mean a motion fails.	▪ The effect of abstention is the same as if a member voted on the prevailing side.