Rules of order for members' meetings - Quick Tips

Motions

- motion made and seconded before discussion
- only one main motion before the meeting at any one time

Amendments

- must by moved and seconded
- speak only to the amendment until it has been voted on

Friendly amendments

- only if mover and seconder agree to it

Withdrawing a motion

- member who moved a motion may withdraw it at any time
- seconder should be asked for permission

Voting majority

- simple majority unless the Co-operative Corporations Act or the co-op's by-laws say otherwise
- new by-laws or amendments to existing by-laws always need a two-thirds majority

Calling the question

- only a member who has not spoken on the motion being discussed may call for an immediate vote by saying "I call the question"
- needs a seconder
- no discussion
- two-thirds majority is needed.

Motion to defer the question

- needs a seconder
- must state the date or time at which the members will discuss the question

Motion to refer the question

- needs a seconder
- members may debate it
- must state to whom the question is referred

Motion to table the motion

- motion needs a seconder
- members do not debate it.

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Motions that waste time

- chairperson may rule a motion out of order on the grounds that it is absurd or wasting time, and not worth the members' attention

Point of order

- chairperson will rule whether it is correct or not, and act accordingly

Point of information

- members who have an important piece of information, or a question which will save time in the discussion may raise it

Appeal

- members may appeal when they think a ruling of the chairperson is not correct
- needs a seconder, and is not discussed
- both the chairperson and the member who makes the appeal may give their reasons
- the question: "Shall the decision of the chairperson be upheld?" is put to the vote
- if the vote is tied, the chairperson's ruling is upheld

Question of privilege

- does not need a seconder
- not discussed
- chairperson rules on the question without calling for a vote

A point of order

Members who think that

- the meeting is following an incorrect procedure, or
- there is a better procedure, or
- there is not a quorum

may raise a point of order.

A point of information

A member who wants to raise a point of order or a point of information stands up, and politely says that they have a point of order or information.

An appeal

If the majority of members support an appeal, the chairperson need not resign. Members have the right to decide how their meetings should run. An appeal is not a vote of confidence. It is simply a way for members to control their meeting.

A question of privilege

A member who feels that there is a risk to the rights, safety or comfort of the members (or of one member) may raise a question of privilege. It may be a simple matter, such as the need for better ventilation, or for the use of a microphone. There is no need of a seconder or discussion. The chairperson gives a ruling on the question of privilege.