

2017 Brief Glossary of Common Convention Terms

Convention business is conducted according to rules in the Constitution and Bylaws. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, governs procedures not otherwise addressed in them. Here are some brief descriptions of terms often used.

Bylaws	Rules of an organization adopted chiefly for the governance of its members (Locals) and the regulation of its affairs.
Caucus	A closed meeting among people of the same party, coalition, or other group to discuss its position on an issue. Local delegates sometimes "caucus" to discuss their position before a vote is taken on an issue.
Chair	As a verb, as in <i>to chair</i> , it is the act of presiding over a meeting. As a noun, it is the meeting's presiding officer. The presiding officer regulates the flow of business, much like a railroad dispatcher regulates the flow of trains through a switchyard. The authority of the chair is usually symbolized by a gavel.
Committee	A subgroup delegated the responsibility to consider, review and evaluate specific issues and report back a recommendation to the whole body.
Constitution	The statement of basic principles of a state, a group or an organization that sets forth the powers and duties of the governing body and officers, and the rights of the governed in the organization.
Debate	The formal discussion in support of, or in opposition to, a motion before action is taken on it.
Motion	A proposal for action by the group.
Move the Question	A motion to close debate. If two-thirds pass it, it formally ends all debate on the pending question, and a vote on the question is immediately taken.
Parliamentary Inquiry	Allows a delegate to ask a procedural question to find out how to do something procedurally or to determine if and when something would be in order.
Point of Order	A delegate concerned that a rule is being violated brings it to the attention of the chair, so the chair can rule whether the point is well taken or not, and enforce it.
Recess	A brief break in the meeting. Recesses may be part of the schedule, as at the end of a particular business session. Also, a recess may be requested during a session in the form of a motion, such as, "I move a ten minute recess."
Rules of Order	Because a body can consider only one matter at a time, these rules regulate the consideration of business before the body. The rules describe in what order matters may be considered.
Ruling	A decision by the chair on a matter of procedure.
Second	An endorsement of motion to allow consideration and debate on the merits. A "second" may be acting as a courtesy and not out of support of the merits.
Table	To suspend consideration of a matter by putting it aside ("on the table") without final action. Allows other business to proceed in the meantime. It remains "on the table" unless there is a motion and vote "to remove from the table."
Vote	The expression of opinion about the issue before the group. A vote most commonly is expressed by voice ("aye" or "no"). The chair will declare the outcome on the matter after the vote is expressed. At the time of the vote, a voter may call for "division," which means a count of votes should be made (e.g., by raising of hands; standing in place). Or, if the expression is unclear to the chair, the chair may ask for the expression again by voice or one of the other means. A delegate also may make a motion to conduct the vote by roll call in which each local casts the number of votes to which it is entitled.