

From the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) Convention booklet. These rules have been used for more than 30 years

# Convention Rules

## I. The Convention Rules

The rules are based on Robert's Rules of Order, but there are some important differences. The most important is that the TDU Constitution (Article 9) provides that:

“All votes taken within the organization shall be decided by a simple majority (50% plus one).”

## II. The Convention Committee

The Convention Committee should be established and accepted by the convention at the beginning of the first session. It is responsible for making recommendations to the convention for changes in the agenda. Also, at the beginning of each session, the Chairperson will propose to the convention a procedure for handling of that session. These recommendations will be voted upon by the convention.

The purpose of the Convention Committee is to help make it possible for the convention to spend as much time as possible on the issues and as little as necessary on the procedural hassles.

1. Whenever possible, all proposals to change the agenda should first be brought to the Convention Committee.

2. Any new resolution not already on the agenda should first be brought to the Convention Committee so it may make a recommendation on where the resolution should be placed on the agenda.

## III. Voting

Votes are carried out in several ways:

1. Voice Vote.
2. Member Card Showing (at the discretion of the Chair or on demand from any member).
3. Member Card Count (“Division of the House”). Because this takes so much of the convention's time, this will only be done when the chair finds a card showing too close to call, or when at least 30 delegates think that it is necessary.

## IV. Discussion

1. Unless otherwise provided, each speaker will be limited to three minutes and no speaker will speak twice on the same motion when others are

waiting to speak for the first time. The chair may ask someone who has already spoken to answer a question if it would clarify things and the person who made the motion may be allowed to sum up.

2. Where no time limit for the total discussion has been proposed, the chair must propose one.

3. The discussion should be relevant to the motion on the floor.

## V. Motions and Resolutions

Unless otherwise provided, the general procedure in Robert's Rules of Order will be followed. One motion is considered at a time. If someone makes an amendment, it will then be discussed and voted upon before going back to the main motion or other amendment. (There may be an amendment to an amendment, but there may be no amendments to amendments.) However, when two or more motions or amendments are directed to the same point, it sometimes makes a lot more sense to discuss them together so people may compare them directly. In these cases, procedures may be proposed by the Convention Committee or chair, for approval by the convention, to consider two or more motions or amendments together.

## VI. Miscellaneous Motions

As in all other motions, these require only a simple majority to pass. Where a motion is described as not debatable, the chair may suggest some limited discussion if there appears to be some confusion.

1. To Table: not debatable.
2. To Refer (e.g. to a committee) or To Postpone (to a specific time): should have limited debate (e.g. two speakers for and two against a proposal).
3. To Reconsider: Must be made by someone on the winning side. Should have limited debate unless the procedure is suspended.
4. Procedural: For suggesting a procedure to handle a certain point (e.g. to extend the time for discussion or to consider two motions together); not debatable.
5. To End Debate and Come to a Vote (“To call or move the question”): Must be made by someone who has not yet spoken on this motion;

not debatable. Before taking the vote on ending debate, the chair should first ask for a hand showing of those who do not wish to end debate so members may make an informed decision.

## VII. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of 50 percent of the number of members registered for the convention. A call for a quorum may not be shouted out or interrupt a speaker, but must come after being recognized by the chair. A call for a quorum is out of order for one hour after a previous quorum call. If a quorum is lacking, the following business is still in order:

- motions about when to meet again
- motions directed toward getting enough delegates for a quorum
- motions to refer business to the International Steering Committee
- good and welfare
- motions to adjourn and recess

## VIII. Miscellaneous Points

Normally people will be recognized to speak by lining up at the microphones or in some other fair manner. There are certain occasions when it is nec-

essary to get recognized more quickly. This is accomplished with one of these points. All may be made by shouting out. Except for “personal privilege,” you may not interrupt someone while they are talking. Following Robert’s Rules of Order, if the chair feels an individual is abusing these points, the chairperson does not have to recognize the abuser.

1. **Point of Personal Privilege:** To be used only when there is difficulty in participating in the meeting, such as inability to hear, too much commotion, smoke, draft, etc. This point may not be used as a way of getting the floor to answer a verbal criticism if you believe you were misunderstood or misquoted.

2. **Point of Procedure:** To be used when you wish to make a motion to change the procedure (e.g. to propose that we have two speakers for and two against this motion).

3. **Point of Order:** To be used to call attention when it is felt that the chair or the body is deviating from the previously adopted procedure. (e.g., “Our procedure calls for our coming to a vote at this time.”) May be used to challenge a ruling of the chair.

4. **Point of Information:** To ask a question of the chair. May not be used to “give information” or ask a question directly of another member.

