

How the Area Operates

Generally speaking, Area 41 follows Robert's Rules of Order, and proceeds on as informal a basis as possible consistent with the rights of all concerned. It is important to remember that the purpose of rules of order is to make it easier for the Area to conduct its business; rules exist to allow the Area to do what it needs to do to carry out the will of the Fellowship by reaching an informed group conscience. Over the years the Area has adopted some exceptions to Robert's Rules, which help it to proceed more closely in accord with the spirit of A.A. Tradition.

General Rules of Debate and Voting

- People who wish to speak line up at the microphones and address their comments to the chair. Give your name and service position.
- Each person may speak for two (2) minutes.
- No one may speak for a second time on a topic until all who wish to have spoken for the first time.
- Full discussion of a recommendation should take place before each vote.
- Everyone is entitled to express their opinion. However, if your perspective has already been stated by someone else, it is not necessary to go to the mic and say it again.
- Keep all comments related to the business at hand.
- Our experience is that premature actions such as amending motions early in the discussion or hastily calling the question can divert attention from the subject at hand, confusing and/or delaying Area business.
- All A.A. members present have a voice in discussion of Agenda Items, but only those registered may vote.

Committee System

To the extent possible, important matters to come before the Area will be handled via the "Committee system." This assures that a large number of questions can be dealt with during an Area weekend. Members are encouraged to trust the process. Each Committee has considered carefully the items before it and presents its recommendations to the Area as a whole for acceptance or rejection.

Minority Opinion

After each vote on a matter of policy, the side which did not prevail will always be given an opportunity to speak to their position. When a motion passes or fails, the minority may speak. Remember that saving "minority opinions" for after the vote, when there is no rebuttal, is a time-waster, for it can force the Area body to reconsider a question that might well have been decided the first time around if it had been thoroughly examined from all sides.

Quorum

The voting membership of Area 41, as determined by roll call, shall constitute a quorum and shall be the count of registered voters.

Submitting an Agenda Item

The agenda item can be presented to Area 41 in two ways:

1. It can be communicated (with factual background*) in writing to the Agenda Committee Chairperson.
 2. It can be presented from the mic at an Area Business Meeting, when new agenda items are accepted, and submitted in writing (with factual background*) to the Agenda Committee Chair.
- *see the Area 41 Service Handbook, Section VIII - The Business Agenda Process

Motions Made During Area

When making a motion, come to the microphone and address the chair. There are various types of motions we use to help reach an informed group conscience.

Tabling a Motion

Tabling a motion postpones discussion to the next Area business meeting (if specified), or indefinitely (if not specified).

Motion to Recommit (Commit)

The motion to recommit returns a motion or proposal back to a committee for further consideration, while a motion to commit sends it to another committee. Both motions must be seconded, is debatable and can be amended.

Calling the Question

Calling the question brings debate to a halt while Area members decide whether to proceed directly to a vote (the question) or go on with the debate.

Motion to Reconsider

A motion to reconsider a vote may be made only by a member who voted with the prevailing side, but it can be seconded by anyone. If the majority votes to reconsider, full debate is resumed. There is no minority opinion after the second vote.

Floor Actions

In Area 41, there are Emergency and Non-Emergency Floor Actions. For Emergency Floor actions, the Area 41 Chairperson must first be notified. Non-Emergency Floor Actions may only be made by the originator of an item that was resolved in committee by "take no action." For further clarifications on Floor Action procedures, see the Area 41 Service Handbook, Section VII - Area 41 Meetings (B.3.)

Motion to Consider a Floor Action

A motion to consider a floor action is made without comment.

Summary of Procedures

Remember:

- Motions must be made in order at the microphone.
- Address motions to the chair.
- When making a motion, you may say either “I Make A Motion That...” or “I Move That We...”

MOTION		You Say...	Requires a “Second”?	Is Debatable?	Vote Required for Approval	Minority Voice Heard?
Committee Recommendation			YES	YES	Simple Majority	YES
To Make A Motion		I Make a Motion or I Move That...	YES	YES	Simple Majority	YES
Amending a Motion	A motion on the floor is owned by the entire Area body, no longer by the Committee which recommended it. The amendment is discussed and voted on.	I Move That the Motion Be Amended to Read....	YES	YES	Simple Majority	YES
Tabling a Motion	Made without comment.	I Move That We Table This Item Until...	YES	NO	Simple Majority	NO
Moving to Recommit or Commit	Made without comment.	I Move That We (Re)commit This Item to...	YES	YES	Simple Majority	NO
Calling the Question	Made without comment.	Call the Question	YES	NO	Two-Thirds	NO
Reconsidering a Vote	May only be made by a member who voted with the prevailing side. No action may be reconsidered twice.	I Make a Motion That We Reconsider...	YES May be seconded by either side	NO	Simple Majority	NO
Making a Floor Action	Made without comment. There are Emergency & Non-Emergency Floor Actions. Please see the Area 41 Service Handbook, Section VII - Area 41 Meetings (B.3.)		YES	YES	Simple Majority	YES
Withdrawing a Motion		I Wish to Withdraw My Motion	NO	NO	Simple Majority	NO
Objecting to an Error in Procedure		Point of Order	NO	NO	Chairperson Decides	NO

Clarify Agenda Items in Committee

WHERE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● After each Committee Report.
WHAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To give everyone a chance to comment and/or ask questions on Agenda Items that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are tabled or still in committee. ○ Are killed in committee via “take no action.” ○ Are approved within the scope of the committee.
WHY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To reduce potential confusion before an item comes out of committee for a vote. ● For additional input from members that are not able to attend that particular committee meeting (in addition to calling or emailing comments to committee chairs and/or committee members).
HOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Types of comments that can be made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We were wondering if _____ was considered? ○ We hope you consider _____. ● We do NOT discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Items that will be voted on this weekend. ○ Items that will be moved out of committee this weekend.
WHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General Rules Apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce yourself in the usual manner. ○ Address comments or questions to the Area 41 Chairperson. ○ If your view has been expressed, there is no need to repeat it. ○ Two-minute time limit.
OTHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is recommended that Committee Chairs take notes on the comments presented, for further discussion at the next Committee Meeting.