

TIPS FOR CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

1. **Always Start on time.** Those who arrive promptly will appreciate your consideration in not wasting their time. Those who arrive late will soon learn that your meetings *do* start on time and will plan accordingly in the future.
2. **Keep oral reports brief.** Whenever possible, prepare concise, written reports which can be duplicated and distributed either by mail or as members arrive. Limit oral reports to any recommendations for action, the main reason(s) for them, and questions and answers for clarification.
3. **Stick to the agenda.** Keep the meeting on target. Speakers who wander from the current topic should be called to order by the Chair, and reminded to limit their remarks to the subject under consideration.
4. **Make use of unanimous consent.** Instead of calling for a vote on a routine non-controversial motion, the Chair can frequently save time by declaring that under consideration.
5. **Be fair and impartial.** When a controversial issue is under debate, try to call upon proponents and opponents of the motion alternately. If you don't know which side people are on, ask. If several speakers are seeking recognition at one time, give first opportunity to those who have not yet spoken.
6. **Never allow a debate to degenerate into a donnybrook.** Insist that all speakers wait to be recognized by the Chair before speaking and require that they direct their remarks to the Chair, not each other. Members must speak to issues, not personalities. Don't let anyone make derogatory remarks about another member of the group.
7. **Help members do what they're trying to do.** If you must rule someone's motion or remark out of order, tactfully explain why and, if possible, explain how the speaker can accomplish his/her purpose.
8. **Encourage brevity.** If members insist on making long-winded speeches, appoint a time-keeper and announce that *unless the group objects*, the Chair will require that all speakers limit their remarks to three minutes.
9. **Adjourn on time.** If an adjournment time has been printed on the agenda, you should adjourn at the stated hour. As adjournment time draws near, it's perfectly legitimate for you to point out which items must be handled before adjournment, and ask if the group will vote to extend the meeting. Nobody likes a meeting that seems to drag on forever.