

Conducting a roll call vote

Voting by roll call means the vote of each member of a meeting body on a motion is recorded in the minutes of that meeting. Following [Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised](#), a roll call is conducted in the following manner:

1. Motion is made and seconded.
2. Members debate the motion.
3. When debate is finished, the chair directs the clerk/secretary to call the roll.
4. The clerk calls each individual member, in order, either by—
 - a. Alphabetical order, by members' last names
 - b. Numerical order, based on seats, geographic locations (e.g., districts), or similar type designations
 - c. A method established in the group's bylaws (if any)
 - d. Another pre-determined order
5. The clerk announces the result of the roll call; for example—

[In a body of 13 members]

 - a. "There are 13 ayes."
 - b. "There are 9 ayes and 4 nays."
 - c. "There are 4 ayes, 8 nays, and 1 abstention."
 - d. "There are 7 ayes, 3 nays, 1 abstention, and 1 absent."
 - e. "There are 5 ayes, 5 nays, and 3 abstentions."

The clerk should always announce results in this order (no exceptions):

 - Total number of affirmative votes
 - Total number of negative votes
 - Total number of abstentions, if any
 - Total number of those absent, if any
6. The chair declares the outcome of the result; using the examples above, this would be—

[In a body of 13 members]

 - a. "That motion carries."
 - b. "That motion carries."
 - c. "That motion fails."
 - d. "That motion carries."
 - e. "The result is a tie, so the motion is lost."

How to answer

According to Robert's Rules, the following are considered appropriate responses to a roll call:

To respond in the affirmative:
Aye, Yea, or Yes

To respond in the negative:
Nay or No

To indicate an abstention:
Abstain or Present (less common)

Use a separate roll call sheet to record each vote. Add the completed sheets to the meeting file as proof of the votes. Include the roll call results in the meeting minutes. Below is a sample, you can use to show a roll call vote in the meeting minutes.

On roll call, the vote was as follows:

AYES: Appleton, Jones, George, Harrison, Rosen, Smith, Turner, Katz, Wilson, Johnson (10)

NAYES: Ali, Lincoln, Washington (3)

ABSTAIN: Bush (1)

ABSENT: (0)

The motion passed.

ROLL CALL SHEET

Meeting: _____ Meeting Date: _____ Meeting Type: ☐ Regular ☐ Special
☐ Adjourned ☐ Closed
Agenda Item(s): _____ ☐ Other: _____
Motion: _____ Second: _____ ☐ Primary ☐ Amendment

Members	Present	Absent	Yeas	Nays	Abstain
CHAIR					
TOTALS:					

VOTE CALCULATOR

MEMBERS	—QUORUM— MAJORITY OF MEMBERSHIP	SIMPLE MAJORITY [assuming quorum]	2/3 VOTE
15	8	5	10
14	8	5	10
13	7	4	9
12	7	4	8
11	6	4	8
10	6	4	7
9	5	3	6
8	5	3	6
	4	3	5