



What's a Snippet? Glad you asked! A Snippet is short article about meetings or parliamentary procedure. New snippets are released on the first day of every month at www.agreatmeeting.com.



Snippet #132 The Speaker's List

When people feel comfortable knowing that their turn is coming they tend to listen more carefully to the person who is speaking, rather than thinking about how to get the chair's attention as soon as the current speaker has finished. The speaker's list is a great way to provide a balanced discussion and keep track of who has asked to be recognized.

- The person who made the motion has the right to speak first, if he wishes. If the maker chooses not to speak first, he is given the floor ahead of the rest of the members when he is ready to speak.
- Every member has the right to speak once to each debatable motion.
- Alternate between those in favor and opposed for a balanced discussion.
- A member wishing to speak a second time on a motion yields to anyone who has not yet spoken on that motion.
- Members who have spoken twice on a motion may not speak again on that motion for the rest of the day, unless the rule is suspended by a two-thirds vote.

Creating a Speaker's List

1. Take a small pad of paper and draw a line down the middle. If you are using motion forms, put the motion number at the top of the page for easy reference. After the motion is made and seconded, write the maker's name on the top of the page on the left side of the line. Ask who wants to speak to the motion, writing down the names on the list under the maker's name in the order that you see them. Announce those names to ensure you have everyone, and then ask the maker if he wishes to speak to his motion.
2. If the maker speaks, place a line through his name. If the maker has chosen not to speak, recognize the next person on your list, and place a line through his name, leaving the maker's name at the top of the list.
3. When the previous speaker has finished, ask the next person on the list if they are speaking in favor or against the motion. If speaking to the opposite point of view from the previous speaker, give him the floor and place a line through his name. If not, tell him you'll come back to him and ask the next person on the list until you get to someone who wants to speak to the opposite side. Come back to the first person you skipped as the next speaker. Refresh the list between speakers as necessary by asking if anyone else wishes to speak on the motion.
4. If someone wants to speak a second time, his name goes on the right side of the page. So long as there are any names remaining on the left side of the line, do not recognize anyone whose name is on the right side of the line. This helps keep things balanced and focused, and helps prevent someone with a strong personality from taking over the meeting.
5. Use a new sheet for the next motion or for any motions that have priority. If necessary, come back to the sheet when the motion is again pending and you'll be able to pick up where you left off.