

▶ Checklist » How to run a meeting

Whether you are running a Neighbourhood Watch meeting, community association meeting or committee meeting—say, for planning an event—here's how to do it:

- 1 Plan and follow a basic order for the meeting:
 - a call to order
 - b minutes
 - c reports
 - d old business
 - e new business
 - f adjournment
- 2 Encourage participants to contact you with things they want to discuss before the agenda is made instead of at the meeting.
- 3 Notify everyone in advance of the meeting.
- 4 Be prepared. Distribute the agenda and any relevant materials before the meeting to give people enough time to prepare.
- 5 Keep a record of the meeting. Take proper minutes that record the date, time and location of your meeting along with the names of all attendees. Capture the points discussed and assignments or tasks. Avoid going into details.
- 6 Use your agenda to focus the meeting. Refer to the minutes from the last meeting for items of old business on your agenda.
- 7 Limit your time for the meeting. If it runs smoothly, it should address all major issues without taking more than two hours.
- 8 Call the meeting to order, and run down your agenda with as little comment as possible.
- 9 Stay on topic. Stick to your agenda and gently guide people who are speaking off-topic back to the agenda. Discourage irrelevant side conversations.
- 10 If a motion is being put forward, limit discussions to the motion at hand. Before it is voted upon, repeat it. After the vote, summarize what decision has been made and assign tasks to members for implementation.
- 11 Stick to a schedule. Start your meeting on time, keep a consistent flow and end on time.
- 12 End the meeting with a clear statement about next steps. Ask for a motion to adjourn.