



March Quiz

The procedure to *Stand at Ease* was first placed into the 10th edition of *RONR* and remains in the 11th edition. How familiar are you with this procedure?

What may be wrong with the following scenario's dialogue attempting to employ this process?

Chair: "We will *stand at ease* while the chair confers with the parliamentarian on the matter of germaneness of the amendment."

Member A: "I object."

Chair: "An objection has been raised. The chair will assume a motion that we *stand at ease*. Those in favor, say 'aye' . . . those opposed say 'no.' The ayes have it and we will *stand at ease*."

The answer from Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised 11th edition (underlining added for emphasis):

This is the wrong response by the chair to the objection. The chair should have done nothing in response to Member A except to allow the meeting to continue without further interruption. When even a single objection is raised to standing at ease, the meeting should go on with no pause. This answer is based on *RONR's* explanation of the procedure. The underlining is not in *RONR* but shows emphasis here:

[p.82, II.26-33] A meeting is said to *stand at ease* if the chair without objection, simply permits a brief pause, without a declaration of recess. In such a case there is technically no interruption of the meeting, and members remain in their places. Quiet conversation among neighboring members may take place, but it must cease immediately when the chair declares the meeting again in order or any member objects to continuing to stand at ease.

To stand at ease is allowed only with unanimous consent, and the group ceases to stand at ease when any one member (including the chair when ready to resume) so requires. The motion to *Recess*, on the other hand, is a formal interruption in the meeting. Consider this use: if there is an objection to standing at ease, any member may propose a formal motion to recess which would then be processed the same as any motion to so recess. If passed and a recess is declared, it is clearly different than standing at ease as members may take a break, leave the area and return at the end of the specified duration of the recess.