

WHAT ARE THE MISTAKES MOST COMMONLY MADE BY PRESIDING OFFICERS?

- Taking unnecessary votes on noncontroversial matters instead of using general consent
- Cutting off discussion arbitrarily
- Refusing to permit the making of a motion with which the chair disagrees
- Failure to remain impartial (or to relinquish the chair) when a controversial matter is being discussed
- Failure to stifle promptly out-of-order remarks, such as nongermane discussion or derogatory comments about another member.
- Allowing discussion to become too informal, by passing the chair, thereby causing the chair to lose control
- Failure to call for a final vote on a motion after it has been amended
- Failure to restate each motion carefully before taking a vote, so that every member understands what is being voted on
- Failure to confirm, after a vote, what has been decided, so that the secretary and the assembly understand clearly what was done

The most common mistake of presiding officers, is trying to "play it by ear", conducting a meeting that he or she is unprepared to conduct. The presiding officer must be prepared to use an agenda and parliamentary procedure.