



RULES OF DECORUM AND CIVILITY AT PUBLIC MEETINGS

The City of San Carlos is determined to provide safe, open, and fair access to all persons wishing to participate in its local public meetings ("Public Meetings") while ensuring that Public Meetings are not disrupted or impeded by behavior that violates City policies.

The City Council hereby establishes the following reasonable and lawful regulations:

The Council rules of procedure shall be Roberts Rules of Order.

Time Limitations on addressing the Council, Commissions, or Brown Act Committees

The time limit for individual public comment shall be two minutes per agenda item, which may be reduced at the discretion of the Mayor or the Chair of the City body (hereinafter "Presiding Officer") when more than ten persons are requesting to speak to an item on the agenda to allow more participants time to speak to an item.

The Presiding Officer, in order to provide for efficient use of public comment time at the meeting, may grant additional time for groups of persons who agree to pool their time to allow one speaker to present on their behalf on an agenda item up to a maximum of ten minutes.

For general public comment, on matters not on the posted agenda, the first five speakers will be allowed to speak. After the first five speakers the balance of public comment will occur at the end of the meeting, unless the Presiding Officer determines that the remaining public comment can be completed in a reasonable time.

The total time for public comment on any item may be set at the beginning of an agenda item by a vote of the council, board, or commission or as stated on the Agenda. Where a time limit for public comment is not set, the Presiding Officer may also conclude public comment on an item by announcing a last opportunity for members to indicate their intention to speak to an agenda item.

RULES OF DECORUM AND CIVILITY POLICY

Consistent with Government Code Sections 54957.3 and 54957.95 persons attending a Public Meeting covered under the Brown Act shall not engage in behavior during such a meeting that actually disrupts, disturbs, impedes, or renders infeasible the orderly conduct of a meeting.

All persons attending a Public Meeting are expected to adhere to the following standards of conduct:

- Treat everyone courteously.

- Listen to City Officials and other members of the public respectfully.
- Exercise self-control and avoid threats of violence and loud, insulting, demeaning, or offensive communications.
- Give open-minded consideration to all viewpoints.
- Focus on the issues and avoid personalizing debate.
- Allow all members of the public to speak without intimidation or interruption; and
- Embrace respectful disagreement and dissent as democratic rights that are inherent components of an inclusive public process and tools for forging sound decisions.

In furtherance of the foregoing standards of conduct, the rules of decorum set forth below shall be followed:

- No person attending a Public Meeting shall engage in disorderly or boisterous conduct, including, but not limited to, whistling, stamping of feet, booing, or making any loud, threatening, profane, abusive, personal, impertinent, or slanderous utterance, that disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- No person attending a Public Meeting shall speak for longer than their allotted time, in accordance with the time limits set forth above, without permission of the Presiding Officer.
- All remarks by members of the public shall be addressed to the Presiding Officer and not to any other member of the public or to any individual member of the City body unless in response to a question from that member.
- No person attending a Public Meeting shall engage in behavior that may interfere with the rights of other speakers.
- All persons attending a Public Meeting shall listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions at the meeting and avoid interrupting members of the public addressing the City body or City Officials.
- Signs, placards, banners, or other similar items shall not be permitted in the audience during a public meeting if the Presiding Officer determines that the presence of such items disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting or the ability of members of the public to view presentations.
- Members of the public while attending a Public Meeting shall refrain from abusive conduct, or verbal attacks upon the character of City Officials.
- All persons attending a Public Meeting shall obey any lawful order of the Presiding Officer to enforce the Rules of Decorum.
- It is the responsibility of the Presiding Officer to keep comments on topic during Public Meetings. Individuals should honor efforts by the Presiding Officer to focus discussion pertinent to the agenda item at hand and within the jurisdiction of the Council or Commission.
- All persons attending a Public Meeting shall not engage in behavior that constitutes a true threat of force as defined in Government Code 54957.95(b)(2).

Enforcement of Rules and Decorum and Civility Policy

The Presiding Officer shall be responsible for maintaining the decorum and civility at Public Meetings and enforcing the Rules of Decorum in a uniform and even-handed manner, as follows:

- In the event that an attendee of the Public Meeting breaches the Rules of Decorum and Civility in a manner that disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of a Public Meeting, the Presiding Officer shall provide an oral warning ordering that person to cease the offending conduct.

- If a member of the public does not improve his or her behavior in response to the verbal warning, the Presiding Officer may order the abusive individual or individuals to leave the premises for a short period of time (e.g., the remainder of the day).
- If a member of the Public makes a true threat of force as defined in Government Code 54957.95(b)(2), he or she may be removed from the meeting without a warning.
- The Presiding Officer may, but is not required to, call a recess at any time for a cooling off period or to adjourn the meeting before taking any specific action to remove individuals whose behavior is disrupting, disturbing, impeding or otherwise rendering the orderly conduct of a meeting infeasible.
- In the event that any meeting is willfully interrupted by a group or groups of persons so as to render the orderly conduct of such meeting unfeasible and order cannot be restored by the removal of individuals who are willfully interrupting the meeting, the members of the legislative body conducting the meeting may order the meeting room cleared and continue in session. If such a room clearing is ordered, only matters appearing on the agenda may be considered in such a session. Representatives of the press or other news media, except those participating in the disturbance, are allowed to attend the cleared session. If after the room clearing, the Presiding Officer in consultation with City Staff or law enforcement believes the orderly conduct of the meeting can resume without the attendees who willfully disrupted the meeting, the legislative body by motion may vote to readmit those who did not willfully disrupt the meeting.
- The Presiding Officer may engage the efforts of law enforcement as necessary to carry out lawful removal orders.
- The Presiding Officer may intervene to ensure that the Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy for Elected and Appointed Officials rules for conduct at meetings is followed.
- The above-described remedies for compliance with the Rules of Decorum and Civility are not exclusive and shall not preclude the application or use of other remedies provided by State law or the Municipal Code.
- A breach of the Rules of Decorum and Civility Policy shall in no event be a basis for the invalidation of any action taken by the City Council or any City board, commission, or committee.