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Point of Order Definition:

A term of parliamentary law and procedure which refers to an interjection during a meeting by a member, who does not have the floor, to call the attention of the chair to an alleged violation or breach of the assembly's or meeting's rules of order.

Related Terms: Question of Privilege

A point of order takes precedence once alleged and is ruled upon by the chair right away, to whom it is submitted for decision.

From *Horsley's Meetings – Procedure, Law and Practice*, at page 63:

"It (a point of order) is not a **motion**. It is an allowable interjection which directs the chairman's attention to an apparent or alleged breach of order. In effect it is an appeal to the chairman for his ruling."

It is not a matter for the whole assembly to debate unless the chair defers to the assembly on the point or if the chair's ruling is appealed to the assembly (some organizations provide for an appeal of the chair's decisions on points of order or questions of privileges — some explicitly disallow such an appeal).

It is the chair's responsibility to ensure that the rules are adhered to. But for any number of reasons, the chair might not react to a breach. In those instances, individual members may raise the alleged error or omission by claiming aloud "point of order".

A point of order must be raised at the relevant time and not later or it will risk being dismissed as untimely, except where the alleged breach is of a continuing nature.

Points of order are often challenging for chairs not familiar with the intricacies of parliamentary procedures or corporate rules of procedures and meetings.

If the chair is uncertain, he or she ought to recess the meeting (a brief intermission) to consult with other members more familiar with meeting procedures, before making a ruling.

REFERENCES:

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- Robert, H., *Robert's Rules of Order*, 10th Edition (Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Publishing, 2000)
- Taggart, W. J., *Horsley's Meetings – Procedure, Law and Practice*, 2nd Edition (Sydney: Butterworth, 1983)

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