

# You Can't Talk About That!

What are the *real* rules?



Members often hear from other Toastmasters that speeches concerning **politics, religion and sex** are forbidden by Toastmasters International because “such controversial subjects are not appropriate.”

This is not true. **Toastmasters International does not prohibit any speech topic, content or language.**

Toastmasters International recognizes that club members may learn much about the world around them from listening to others’ speeches on a variety of subjects. This variety can add interest to club meetings and stimulate thoughts and ideas. For these reasons, Toastmasters International does not place restrictions on topics, content or language of any speeches. TI also recognizes that a club is comprised of a diverse group of people and recommends members be sensitive to this diversity and use good taste and responsibility when selecting speech topics, content and language.

**While Toastmasters International has no organizational restrictions along these lines, each individual club does have the right to limit speech subjects, content and/or language, with the consensus of its members.** Club leaders should guide their members on how to observe good taste and sensitivity in the context of that particular club. To accomplish this, it’s a good idea for clubs to use their Web sites to advise members and guests of any policies that have been decided.

# Toastmasters Club Constitution for Member Clubs of Toastmasters International

## Article I

### Mission and Purposes:

The mission of a Toastmasters Club is to provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every individual member has the opportunity to develop oral communication and leadership skills, which in turn foster self-confidence and personal growth.

In order to carry out this mission, this Club shall:

1. Help its individual members improve their abilities to communicate effectively;
2. Provide for its individual members' instructions, educational materials and opportunities which will give them skill and experience in the preparation and delivery of speeches;
3. Encourage its individual members to read and to listen analytically;
4. Provide for its individual members' fair and constructive evaluation of their efforts toward self-improvement;
5. Increase its individual members' knowledge of the rules of parliamentary procedure and their skills in conducting meetings and participating in group discussions;
6. Afford leadership training for its individual members; and
7. Provide opportunities and encouragement for its individual members to appear before audiences and to express their thoughts creditably.

## Section VI A 1

### ***Toastmasters International*** ***POLICIES AND PROCEDURES***

*Origin Date:* August 17, 1982  
*Last Updated:* August 17, 1982

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Toastmasters International is the leading movement devoted to making effective oral communication a worldwide reality.

Through its member clubs, Toastmasters International helps men and women learn the arts of speaking, listening and thinking - vital skills that promote self-actualization, enhance leadership potential, foster human understanding, and contribute to the betterment of mankind.

It is basic to this Mission that Toastmasters International continually expand its worldwide network of clubs, thereby offering ever-greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from its programs.

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## Section VI F 1

### ***Toastmasters International*** ***POLICIES AND PROCEDURES***

*Origin Date:* November 4, 1967  
*Last Updated:* February 9, 1996

#### **CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

It is the intent of Toastmasters International that membership in a Toastmasters club shall satisfy individual members' desire for self-improvement while furthering their opportunity for community service in a framework of high ethical standards. Thus, all programs, activities, publications, speeches and conduct of Toastmasters clubs and their individual members shall be represented in a highly ethical manner, focusing on a standard of excellence which will reflect credit to the organization.

Maintaining high ethical standards in any form of communication or actions by any and all individual members of a club is the responsibility of the respective clubs. If at any time the actions of any individual member or club are in conflict with the basic principles, ideals or standards of Toastmasters International, the club may be subject to suspension or expulsion by Toastmasters International and/or the individual member may be subject to suspension or removal from good standing, or other appropriate action.

Individual members of clubs shall not use any form of communication in a derogatory or personally damaging way, nor conduct or condone any programs, activities, publications,

speeches and conduct which are offensive or in poor taste or otherwise considered detrimental to the best interests of Toastmasters International. For a clarification of policy regarding one form of offensive conduct -- harassment, including sexual harassment -- see Policies and Procedures VI F 1.1. In addition, no such person or entity shall publish or distribute any newsletter or other publication which contains defamatory remarks, malicious and derogatory charges, or false or libelous statements.

Activities in support of candidacy for international or district office shall be conducted in a responsible manner consistent with the importance and dignity of the office. A candidate shall take the initiative in keeping the activities of supporters within the established guidelines. In addition, material soliciting support of, or offering candidates for, international or district office shall be in good taste both as to content and appearance. Individual members shall, at all times, observe the regulations of the hotels acting as hosts at conventions and conferences and shall not display materials in any fashion that would bring discredit to the organization.

In addition, no individual member, club, district or other group shall engage in any activity or campaign by use of threats, restrictions, intimidations, "deals," pressures, or other unethical means which would or might prevent or dissuade any individual member from competing in any nomination or election process at any level or from exercising his or her voting franchise in any particular manner. No person or entity shall use any such method to attempt to dictate to any district officer, or district council, or member club in any respect or to any degree.

No Toastmaster shall assist, support, aid, facilitate, invite, or condone any conduct by any former Toastmaster, or any other non-Toastmaster, which has the purpose or effect of interfering in the programs, proceedings, or affairs of Toastmasters International or its member clubs. For example, former Toastmasters who appear at a Toastmasters event and who attempt to exercise undue influence on the proceedings shall not be aided or supported by any Toastmaster. On the other hand, non-Toastmaster spouses of Toastmasters are welcome to accompany their spouses at Toastmasters functions where spouse participation is customary and appropriate.

Violation of any of the above principles concerning prohibited activities by an individual member of any club, or by any club, will subject: a) the offending club to suspension or expulsion in accordance with Article III, Section 4, of the Bylaws of Toastmasters International, unless the club expels the offending individual member and/or removes the person from any club office held or ends the club's own violations; and/or b) the individual member to suspension or removal from good standing, or other appropriate action, in accordance with Article III, Section 8, of the Bylaws of Toastmasters International. If the person is a district officer, he/she may be subject to removal from office under Article VII, paragraph (g), of the District Administrative Bylaws of Toastmasters International. Likewise, international officers and directors are subject to removal under the Bylaws of Toastmasters International.

This Policy shall be made known to all Toastmasters clubs, district administrations, and to candidates for international and district offices.

Reference: Policies and Procedures VI F 1.1  
Policies and Procedures VI F 1.2  
Bylaws of Toastmasters International, Article III, Section IV  
Bylaws of Toastmasters International, Article III, Section 8  
District Administrative Bylaws, Article VII, Paragraph (g)