

Chatham House Rule

The Chatham House Rule reads as follows:

"When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed".

The world-famous Chatham House Rule may be invoked at meetings to encourage openness and the sharing of information.

EXPLANATION of the Rule

The Chatham House Rule originated at Chatham House with the aim of providing anonymity to speakers and to encourage openness and the sharing of information. It is now used throughout the world as an aid to free discussion. Meetings do not have to take place at Chatham House, or be organised by Chatham House, to be held under the Rule.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q. When was the Rule devised?

A. In 1927 and refined in 1992 and 2002.

Q. Should one refer to the Chatham House Rule or the Chatham House Rules?

A. There is only one Rule.

Q. What are the benefits of using the Rule?

A. It allows people to speak as individuals, and to express views that may not be those of their organisations, and therefore it encourages free discussion. People usually feel more relaxed if they don't have to worry about their reputation or the implications if they are publicly quoted.

Q. How is the Rule enforced?

A. Chatham House can take disciplinary action against one of its members who breaks the Rule. Not all organisations that use the Rule have sanctions. The Rule then depends for its success on being seen as morally binding.

Q. Who uses the Rule these days?

A. It is widely used in the English-speaking world - by local government and commercial organisations as well as research organisations.

<http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/about/chathamhouserule/>