

Parliamentary Guide

For Members of a Deliberative Assembly

Fundamentals Parliamentary Law

1. The right of the majority to decide.
2. The right of the minority to be heard.
3. Regard for the rights of individual and absentee members.
4. Justice and courtesy to all.

What is a motion?

A motion is a formal proposal by a member that the assembly take action on a matter.

Handling of a motion

There are eight steps required for the proper presentation and consideration of a motion:

1. Rise and address the chair.
2. Be recognized by the chair.
3. Make the motion.
4. Another member seconds the motion.
5. The chair states the motion to the assembly.
6. The assembly discusses or “debates” the motion.
7. The chair takes a vote or “puts the question”.
8. The chair announces the results of the vote.

Purposes of motions

A **MAIN MOTION** brings a question before the assembly for consideration.

A **SUBSIDIARY MOTION** is for the purpose of modifying or disposing of the main motion under discussion.

A **PRIVILEGED MOTION** has no connection to the main motion but is of such importance to demand immediate attention.

An **INCIDENTAL MOTION** is a miscellaneous motion which cannot be placed in any of the three groups listed above.

Rank of Motions

The motions in the chart are arranged in the order of their precedence or rank.

The incidental main motions have no precedence.

No two main motion may be pending at the same time.

Incidental motions have no precedence among themselves.

Any of them may be proposed whenever a situation arises that requires it. They yield to privileged motions.

Chart of Precedence of Motions

Meaning of Symbols: *InSp* - may interrupt a speaker *SR* - second required? *D* - debatable? *A* - amendable? *VR* - vote required?

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS	InSp	SR	D	A	VR
1. Fix Time to Which to Adjourn	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
2. Adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
3. Recess	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
4. Rise to a Question of Privilege	Yes	No	No	No	Ruled by chair
5. Call for Orders of the Day	Yes	No	No	No	None
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS	InSp	SR	D	A	VR
6. Lay on the Table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
7. Call for the Previous Question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
8. Limit or Extend Limits of Debate	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
9. Postpone Definitely	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
10. Refer to Committee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
11. Amend	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
12. Postpone Indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
MAIN MOTIONS	InSp	SR	D	A	VR
13. a. Main Motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
b. Incidental Main Motion Take From the Table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Reconsider and Have Entered on the minutes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Rescind	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3
Expunge	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority of Membership
Adjourn (Qualified)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend Constitution etc.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	As in bylaws
INCIDENTAL MOTIONS	InSp	SR	D	A	VR
Suspend Rules of Order	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Suspend Standing Rules	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Withdraw a Motion	Yes	No	No	No	Majority
Read Papers	Yes	No	No	No	Majority
Object to Consideration	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Rise to a Point or Order	Yes	No	No	No	Ruled by Chair
Rise to a Parliamentary Inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	Response by Chair
Appeal from the Decision of the Chair	Yes	Yes	Ltd.	No	Majority
Call for a Division of the Assembly	Yes	No	No	No	None
Call for a Division of the Question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority

What would I like to do?

Privileged and Subsidiary Motions

Introduce Business.

13 - Main Motion

Kill a matter or defer it.

12 - Postpone Indefinitely

Change or modify a motion.

11 - Amend

Let a few attend to a matter.

10 - Refer to a Committee

Fix a time to attend to a matter.

9 - Postpone Definitely

Limit the time of a debate or extend the time.

8 - Limit, or Extend Limits, of Debate

Stop debate and have a vote.

7 - Call for the Previous Question

Defer action on a matter.

6 - Lay on the Table

Insist on the order of business being followed.

5 - Call for Orders of the Day

Ask a question relating to the rights of the assembly or a question of personal privilege.

4 - Rise to a question of Privilege

Have an intermission.

3 - Take a recess

Make an end to the meeting.

2 - Adjourn (unqualified)

Fix the time for an adjourned meeting.

1 - Fix a Time to which to adjourn

Incidental Main Motions

Consider a motion a second time.

Take from the Table, Reconsider, Rescind

Prevent a vote from being final.

Reconsider and Have Entered on the Minutes

Incidental Motions

Suspend the rules that interfere with another matter.

Suspend Rules (of Order).

See that order is restored.

Rise to a Point of Order.

Temporarily set aside standing rules.

Suspend Standing Rules.

Make an inquiry as to correct parliamentary procedure.

Rise to a Parliamentary Inquiry.

Prevent a vote from being taken on a motion.

Withdraw a motion.

Object to a decision made by the Chair.

Appeal from the Decision of the Chair.

Have a paper read that is not on the program.

Read Papers.

Have the assembly divided in voting.

Call for a Division of the Assembly.

Suppress a question.

Object to Consideration (must be before debate).

Have a question divided into parts.

Call for a Division of the Question.

Agenda/Program/Order of Business

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|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Call to Order | 5. Unfinished business. |
| 2. Approval of minutes. | 6. New business. |
| 3. Reports from officers and standing committees. | 7. Adjournment. |
| 4. Reports from special committees. | |

Fundamentals of Debate

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|---|---|
| 1. Confine remarks to the merit of the question. | 6. Refrain from speaking against one's own motion. |
| 2. Refrain from attacking another member's motives. | 7. Do not read from reports, etc. without permission. |
| 3. Address all remarks through the chair. | 8. Be seated during an interruption from the chair. |
| 4. Avoid using a member's name. | 9. Refrain from disturbing the assembly. |
| 5. Refrain from speaking adversely on a prior action of the assembly. | 10. Do only one thing at a time. |

Parliamentary Procedure Definitions

- ACCEPT:** Accepting a report is the same as adopting it.
- AGENDA:** An outline of the order of business followed by the chair in conducting a meeting.
- AMENDMENT:** An alteration to the main motion by substituting, adding or deleting a word or words without material altering the basic intent of the main motion.
- CHAIR:** The presiding officer.
- COMMIT OR REFER:** To refer the main motion to a committee for investigation and/or study.
- COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:** The entire body of an assembly, meeting as a committee under a chair other than the Speaker or regular chair. Its purpose is to facilitate discussion by using less strict rules than those used in a formal meeting of the assembly.
- MOTIONS:** A substantive or main motion is a formal proposal placed before a meeting by one member, the mover of the motion for debate and decision. Most but not all motions must be supported by a second member - the seconder - before they can be debated and decided. A subsidiary motion is one that delays or defers the decision on a main motion or brings it to an immediate vote.
- MOVER:** person who presents or proposes a motion or amendment.
- POINT OF ORDER:** This motion is used to enforce the rules and order of the assembly. The point must be raised at the time the breach occurs: after the discussion is too late. A point of order must be decided by the chair, and any 2 members may appeal the decision of the chair.
- POSTPONE INDEFINITELY:** Its purpose is to reject a motion without taking a direct vote on it. Usually the motion to postpone is made by members opposed to the motion when they have doubts as to whether they are strong enough to defeat it. The form to use is, "I move that the question be postponed indefinitely."
- PRIVILEGE:** The member's right to correct inaccuracies or explain circumstances they believe will affect themselves adversely or reflect improperly on the organization as a whole. The question as to whether a matter is properly one of privilege is determined by the chair.
- OBTAIN THE FLOOR:** Secure recognition in order to speak.
- QUESTION:** The issue before the meeting on which the decision has to be made. A question cannot be debated, amended or voted on until it has been properly proposed as a motion. To "put the question" ends debate and submit the motion to a vote.
- QUORUM:** In an assembly a quorum is the number that must be present by Constitution for the legal transaction of business.
- RECEIVE:** To receive merely for information, any recommendations are subject to debate and amendment.
- RESOLUTION:** A formal motion that should be in writing.
- TABLE OR LAY ON THE TABLE:** To lay aside an item of business temporarily in order to consider business of an urgent nature. A tabled motion may be brought back at the same meeting after some business has taken place or at the next regular meeting. After the next meeting it is dead.
- UNANIMOUS VOTE:** No dissenting vote; unanimous or general consent.
- WITHDRAW A MOTION:** Before a motion has been stated by the chair, the maker may withdraw or modify it, without the consent of the seconder. After stated by the chair the motion belongs to the assembly and may be withdrawn only by general consent.
- YIELD:** Give precedence to; give way to.