



Parliamentary Procedure

October 17, 2013





PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

A. What is Parliamentary Procedure?

1. All of the laws and rules of an organization that govern its transaction of business.
2. Courts have held that all organizations are subject to the principles and rules of common parliamentary law.
3. Most associations also adopt language in their bylaws stating that they will follow a particular parliamentary procedure book.
 - a) “Robert’s Rules of Order” (the most widely used book).
 - b) “The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure” by Alice F. Sturgis. Considered to provide an easier introduction to parliamentary procedure than Robert’s Rules.





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B. The Principles of Parliamentary Law:

1. Designed to provide for democracy in action.
2. Meetings are run with fairness and in good faith.
3. All members, not just the most vocal, are represented.
4. All members have equal rights, privileges, and equal obligations.
5. Provide a way for groups to arrive at the general will of their members in a reasonable time period and climate.
6. To take up one item of business at a time.





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C. Types of Motions:

1. **“Main motions”** introduce new business at a meeting.
 - a) There can only be one main motion on the floor at a time.
 - b) Only motions that further the action of considering a main motion can be considered, i.e., motions to amend, reconsider, postpone, etc.
 - c) Motions create and regulate the actions of an organization, and authorize the spending of its funds.





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C. Types of Motions:

1. “Main motions” (cont’d.):

- e) Motions are the tools used to conduct business.
- f) A main motion made by a committee does not require a second. The “second” is presumed since there is more than one person on a committee.
- g) A main motion may be proposed just once during a meeting (but it can be brought up again at future meetings.
- h) If a motion is made but then withdrawn, it can be renewed later in the meeting.





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C. Types of Motions:

2. **“Subsidiary motions”**: direct or change how a main motion is handled.

a) **“Committing motion” or “referring motion”**:

- i. The motion must state to what committee the motion is being referred. It can be an established committee or an ad hoc or special committee.
- ii. If the motion is committed to an ad hoc or special committee, it must state how many members shall serve on the committee, if the membership or presiding officer shall name its members, and at what future meeting it will report back to the membership.



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C. Types of Motions:

2. “Subsidiary motions” (cont’d.):

- iii. The motion to refer to a committee must be seconded.
- iv. The committee members consider the motion and all amendments that are pending.
- v. The only thing that can be debated or amended is whether the issue should be referred to a committee, to which committee the issue will be referred, and when the committee will report.
- vi. Members cannot debate whether the motion is good or bad as long as the motion to commit is being debated.



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C. Types of Motions:

2. “Subsidiary motions” (cont’d.):

b) “Lay on the Table”:

- i. Is used to postpone discussion until the group decides by majority vote to resume discussion.
- ii. By adopting the motion to "lay on the table", a majority has the power to halt consideration of the question immediately without debate.
- iii. Requires a second, is not debatable, is not amendable.
- iv. Motion to “table an issue” is not correct. The motion is either postponed or killed.



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C. Types of Motions:

2. “Subsidiary motions”:

c) “Previous question or close debate”:

- i. Is used to bring the body to an immediate vote.
- ii. Closes debate and stops further amendment.
- iii. Requires a second, is not debatable, requires a two-thirds majority agreement.



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C. Types of Motions:

2. “Subsidiary motions”:

d) “Postpone to a definite time”:

Similar to tabling, except that the motion directs that the matter will be taken up again at some specific date and time.

e) “Postpone indefinitely”:

This motion effectively kills a motion, because, if adopted, a two-thirds vote is subsequently required to take the matter up again.



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C. Types of Motions:

3. “Incidental motions”:

- Occur at the same time or as a result of a motion that is being considered.
- Do not relate to the main motion.
- Make certain that the correct procedure is taking place while a main motion is being considered.

a) Point of order:

- Is made when something is not done according to the rules (lack of a second, lack of a quorum, etc.).
- A second is not necessary.
- There is not a vote.
- The presiding officer “rules” on the point of order.



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C. Types of Motions:

3. “Incidental motions” (cont’d.):

b) Appeal:

- i. When a member disagrees with the presiding officer’s decision (as on a point of order).
- ii. Requires a second.
- iii. Voted on by the membership.

c) **Division of the assembly** – used when a member questions the results of an election.

d) **Request to withdraw or modify a motion:**

- i. Must be by the member who makes the motion.
- ii. Must be done before the presiding officer states the motion to the assembly (otherwise the group has to approve the modification or withdrawal).



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C. Types of Motions:

3. “Incidental motions” (cont’d.):

- e) **Division of the question** – used to break up long or complicated motions.
- f) **Objection to consideration of a question:**
 - i. Does not require a second.
 - ii. Is not amendable.
 - iii. Is not debatable.
 - iv. Prevents a motion from being considered.
 - v. Requires immediate vote (before discussion).



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C. Types of Motions:

3. “Incidental motions” (cont’d.):

g) Suspend the rules:

- i. When a member wants to do something that is contradictory to the rules of the organization, i.e., allow someone to continue speaking when their time has expired, adopt a motion without debate, etc.
- ii. Requires a second.
- iii. Cannot be amended or debated.
- iv. Requires a two-thirds vote.
- v. Cannot be used to change bylaws or corporate charters.



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D. Amending a Motion:

1. Maker of the motion can amend up to the time it is stated by the chair. After that, the membership has to agree to any changes.
2. Must be amended before the motion goes to debate.
 - a) The person making the main motion and the person who seconds the main motion cannot amend the motion.
 - b) They can vote against the amendment(s).
3. Can amend a motion by:
 - a) Adding words, phrases, or paragraphs.
 - b) Removing words, phrases, or paragraphs.
 - c) Substituting some words, phrases, or paragraphs.



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D. Amending a Motion:

4. Amendments are intended to clarify or improve the main motion.
5. If an amendment is not approved, the original motion stays in its original wording.
6. Amendments must be seconded and require a majority vote.





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D. Amending a Motion:

7. Can only have two amendments at a time.
 - a) The first amendment must modify the main motion.
 - b) The second amendment relates to the first amendment.
 - c) Only the amendments may be debated.
8. First amendment is the primary amendment, any subsequent amendments are secondary.
9. Voting is done on the secondary amendment, then the primary amendment, then the main motion.





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E. Debating a Motion:

1. The rules for debate (how long a member can speak) can be established in your bylaws.
2. There cannot be a debate until a motion is made. If there is not a second then there is no reason to have a debate.
3. The person who makes the motion gets to speak first in the debate.
4. A motion can be made to limit the debate to one/three/ten minutes for each member. Must establish a timekeeper if time limits are set.





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E. Debating a Motion:

5. The subsidiary motion to limit or end a debate can be made.
6. If a group does not have a rule in its bylaws to limit debate then members should not be allowed to speak for more than ten minutes unless they have the consent of the membership.
7. Members can give unanimous consent or make a motion to extend the limits of debate, which needs a two-thirds majority vote to pass.
8. The maker of a motion cannot debate against their motion but they can vote against it. Better to amend it or withdraw the motion.



Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th Edition)*

The motions below are listed in order of precedence. Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2 ND ?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§21 Close meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§20 Take break	I move to recess for	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§19 Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
§18 Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
§17 Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§16 Close debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§15 Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
§14 Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§13 Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§12 Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§11 Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
§10 Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that [or "to"] ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)*

Incidental Motions - no order of precedence. Arise incidentally and decided immediately.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT	2 ND ?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§23 Enforce rules	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	None
§24 Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
§25 Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rules which ...	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§26 Avoid main motion altogether	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
§27 Divide motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§29 Demand rising vote	I call for a division	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33 Parliamentary law question	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33 Request for information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No	None

Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly - no order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else pending.

§34 Take matter from table	I move to take from the table ...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§35 Cancel previous action	I move to rescind ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 maj. w/ notice
§37 Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider the vote ...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority

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F. Resources:

- “Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised In Brief”, 2011, Henry M. Robert III, Daniel H. Honemann, and Thomas J. Balch, Da Capo Press
- “The Everything Robert’s Rules Book”, 2004, Barbara Campbell, Adams Media, Avon, MA
- *Matching Parliamentary Procedure to Needs*, www.jimslaughter.com Jim Slaughter, Certified Professional Parliamentarian & Professional Registered Parliamentarian



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F. Resources:

- www.parliamentaryprocedure.org
- www.parliamentarians.org
- www.southflorida.edu/_documents/SGA_Roberts-Rules-Support-Sheet.pdf

