

Parliamentary Procedure Guide

MAIN MOTIONS To Introduce New Business

Obtaining and Assigning the Floor

- A member raises their hand (or rises, depending on your rules) and waits to be acknowledged
- The chair recognizes the member by name

Note. It is never proper to raise your hand or rise to be acknowledged while another is speaking. If your point or motion is one of the kind that can interrupt the speaker, make your point or motion without waiting for recognition.

How the Motion is Brought Before the Assembly

- The member makes the motion: I move that (or "to") ... and resumes his seat.
- Another member seconds the motion: "I second the motion," or "I second" it or "second."
- The chair states the motion: It is moved and seconded that ... Are you ready for the question?

Consideration of the Motion

- Members can debate main motions before the question is voted on or otherwise decided.
- Before speaking in debate, members must obtain the floor.
- The maker of the motion has first right to the floor.
- Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion.
- Debate can be closed only by order of the assembly (2/3 vote) or by the chair if no one seeks the floor for further debate.

The chair puts the motion to a vote

- The chair asks: Are you ready for the question?
- If no one rises to claim the floor, the chair proceeds to take the vote.
- The chair says: The question is on the adoption of the motion that ... As many as are in favor, say 'Aye.' (Pause for response.) Those opposed say 'Nay'. (Pause for response.) Those abstained please say 'Aye'.
- Depending on your rules, some kinds of business may call for a vote by show of hands.

The chair announces the result of the vote.

- The ayes have it, the motion carries, and ... (indicating the effect of the vote) or
- The nays have it, and the motion fails

If the count may be incorrect, a member calls for division

- If any member feels that the tally of voice votes is incorrect, they may call for division.
- Any call for division, unless the result of the previous vote was obvious (e.g. a unanimous or nearly-unanimous vote) must be honored.
- The chair will instruct the body on how to vote (e.g., by show of hands or by standing), and the body will vote accordingly.

When Debating Your Motions

- Listen to the other side
- Be polite
- Focus on issues, not personalities
- Avoid questioning motives

MOTIONS, GENERALLY

Main Motion

You want to propose a new idea or action for the group.

- After recognition, make a main motion.
- Member: "Mister Chairman, I move that..."

Amending a Motion

You want to change some of the wording that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Mister Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by adding the following words _____."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words _____."
- After recognition, "Mister Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words _____ and adding in their place the following words _____."

Refer to a Committee

You feel that an idea or proposal being discussed needs more study and investigation.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the question be referred to _____ committee."

Postpone Definitely

You want the membership to have more time to consider the question under discussion and you want to postpone it to a definite time or day, and have it come up for further consideration.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to postpone the question until..."

Limit Debate

You think discussion is getting long, but you want to give a reasonable length of time for consideration of the question. After recognition, "Mister President, I move to limit discussion to two minutes per speaker."

Postpone Indefinitely

You want to kill a motion that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to postpone the question indefinitely."

Recess

You want to take a break for a while.

- After recognition, "Mister Chairman, I move to recess for ten minutes."

Adjournment

You want the meeting to end.

- The Chairman asks if there is any further business. Upon hearing no further business, Chairman states, "Seeing no other business, we are adjourned"; or
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to adjourn."

Neither a second on the motion, or a vote is required for adjournment.

Permission to Withdraw a Motion

You have made a motion and after discussion, are sorry you made it.

- After recognition, "Mister Chairman, I ask permission to withdraw my motion."

Call for Orders of the Day

At the beginning of the meeting, the agenda was adopted. The chairman is not following the order of the approved agenda.

- Without recognition, "Call for orders of the day."

Suspending the Rules

The agenda has been approved and as the meeting progressed, it became obvious that an item you are interested in will not come up before adjournment.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to suspend the rules and move item 5 to position 2."

Point of Personal Privilege

The noise outside the meeting has become so great that you are having trouble hearing, or the temperature in the room is uncomfortable, or some other concern.

- Without recognition, "Point of personal privilege."
- Chairman: "State your point."
- Member: "There is too much noise, I can't hear."

Point of Order

It is obvious that the meeting is not following proper rules. E.g. a motion is passed without the right kind of vote, or a member is breaking the rules of debate.

- Without recognition, "I rise to a point of order," or "Point of order."

Point of Inquiry

You are wondering about some of the facts under discussion, such as the balance in the treasury when expenditures are being discussed.

- Without recognition, "point of inquiry."

Point of Parliamentary Inquiry

You are confused about some of the parliamentary rules.

- Without recognition, "Point of parliamentary inquiry."

Appeal from the Decision of the Chair

The Chair has made a decision that you wish the body to vote on.

- Without recognition, "I appeal from the decision of the Chair."