

# BASIC PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

## HOW TO USE MOTIONS EFFECTIVELY

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The PRINCIPLES of parliamentary law: order, equality and justice, courtesy, rule of the majority, right of the majority.

The PURPOSE of parliamentary law: to expedite business and control the members.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Eight Steps Necessary to Adopt (or reject) a Motion:

1. Rise and address the Chair (Madam/Mr. President/Chairman)
2. Receive recognition (Chair speaks name or nods)
3. Make the motion (I move that...or, I move to....)
4. Someone seconds (seconders need not rise nor address the Chair)
5. Chair states the motion
6. Discussion or debate is called for by the Chair
7. Chair puts the question to vote
8. Result of the vote is announced by the Chair

### TO INTRODUCE BUSINESS

Make a Motion – When the Chair asks for new business, rise and address the Chair. After being recognized say, for example: “I move that we buy a new carpet.” (someone else seconds the motion)

### TO CHANGE A MOTION

Amend it – When you wish to ADD word at the end of a motion say: “I move to amend the motion by adding the words ‘for the clubhouse’.”

When you wish to STRIKE OUT a word, or words, between two words already in motion say: “I move to amend the motion by striking out the word ‘new’ before the word ‘carpet’.”

When you wish to STRIKE OUT a word or words say and insert (put another) word, or words, in the same place say: “I move to amend the motion by striking out the word ‘new’ before ‘carpet’ and insert the word ‘used’.”

When you just want to INSERT a word, or words say: “I move to amend the motion by inserting the word ‘shag’ before the word ‘carpet’.”

When you wish to SUBSTITUTE a whole new paragraph, as when amending the bylaws say: “I move to amend ART. IV. Sec. 1 by substitution...(read substitute paragraph).”

## TO REJECT OR “KILL” A QUESTION

Postpone it Indefinitely – Say: “I move to postpone consideration of this question indefinitely.” If adopted, it kills the question without bringing it to a vote. Tests the strength of the opposition and still leaves one in a position to try and defeat the question in a final vote, if this motion is not adopted.

## TO DEFER ACTION

Refer it to a Committee – When you feel the assembly needs more information before voting, say: “I move this question be referred to a committee of three, appointed by the Chair; that the committee investigate and report at the next meeting.”

When you want the committee to definitely make some recommendation say: “... and the committee investigate and bring in a recommendation at the next meeting.”

When you want the committee to go ahead and act (arrange for a meeting, buy a gift, etc.) say: “...and the committee be empowered to act”, or “...the committee make any arrangements which they think are best.” When this motion is used, the committee reports to the assembly but no further vote is taken on the matter.

Postpone it Definitely – When you feel the assembly needs time to think about the matter, or when they need more information which will soon be available, or when you may wish to wait until more members arrive say: “I move to postpone this question until after lunch” or “...until three o’clock” or “... until the next meeting.”

Table it – When you wish to temporarily delay the vote on a question so that another matter may be taken up, or until the assembly is ready to discuss it say: “I move that the question be laid on the table.” (Use of this motion to kill a question is incorrect usage.)

The question may be taken from the table any time after intervening business has been completed. If not taken from the table by the end of the next meeting, it dies. To take a question from the table say: “I move to take from the table the question that we buy a new carpet.”

## TO LIMIT OR STOP DEBATE

Limit Debate – If time is short, and members make long speeches or if new points are not being made say: “I move to limit debate to one speech per member.” Or “I move to limit debate to one minute for each person.” Or “I move to limit debate on this question to 15 minutes.”

Move the Previous Question – When you wish to stop debate on a question, or prevent further amendments, and bring it immediately to a vote, say: “I move the previous question.” which means, “Let’s quit talking about it and vote at once.”

## FURTHER EFFECTIVE USE OF MOTIONS

Object to Consideration – To keep irrelevant and unprofitable questions from coming up for discussion. Must be made before any discussion begins. If too late to use this motion, move to postpone indefinitely, and then immediately move the previous question.

Withdraw a Motion – To get a question off the floor, without vote, when further discussion is useless or time consuming and apparently not in favor.

Accept an Amendment – The maker of a motion may accept an amendment with consent of the assembly if Chair has stated motion. Usually general consent.

Point of Order – To call attention to something being done incorrectly. The point must be raised at the time a breach of rules occurs.

Reconsider – To bring a question back to the floor after a vote, in order to get additional information before the assembly, or have another vote taken because you think the result will be difficult. To make this motion you must have voted on prevailing (winning) side.

Reconsider and Enter in the Minutes – To stop an action being taken until the next meeting. To keep a temporary majority from putting something over. It only takes the make of a motion and a second – no vote is taken.

Rescind – To undo some action already voted and adopted. Give previous notice and it takes only a majority vote – 2/3 vote without notice.

Give Notice of Intent – To let others know that you have something else to offer which they may prefer, encouraging them to vote down what is on floor.

Adjourn – To stop everything and have the meeting closed at once.

## PROCEDURE IN SMALL MEETINGS

Members are not required to stand nor to obtain recognition before motions or speaking. Motions need not be seconded. Chair may make motions and vote subject to special rules.

No limit on debate – members may speak more than twice to a question.

Informal discussion is permitted while no motion is pending.

When a proposal is perfectly clear to all, an actual motion is not required, but such proposals must be agreed upon by general consent or vote.

The chairman does not need to stand while speaking, and rather than being impartial, he is usually the leader in discussions and action in committee meetings.

Reconsideration can be moved at any time by anyone who did not vote with the minority – requires 2/3 vote unless all present or all notified. (Committees only).