

# Robert's Rules



Ancient Order of Hibernians



Florida State Board

# Parliamentary Procedure

## 1. What Is Parliamentary Procedure?

It is a set of rules for conduct at meetings, that allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

## 2. Why is Parliamentary Procedure Important?

Because it's a time tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings. It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization. Today, Robert's Rules of Order newly revised is the basic handbook of operation for most clubs, organizations and other groups. So it's important that everyone know these basic rules!

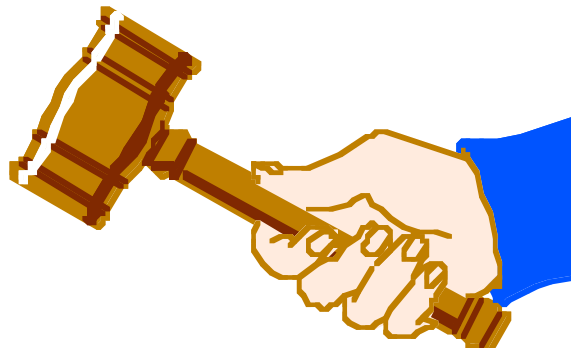
## 3. Example of the Order of Business:

1. Call to order.
2. Roll call of members present.
3. Reading of minutes of last meeting.
4. Officers reports.
5. Committee reports.
6. Special orders --- Important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting.
7. Unfinished business.
8. New business.
9. Announcements.
10. Adjournment.

## 4. Motions:

The method used by members to express themselves is in the form of moving motions. A motion is a proposal that the entire membership take action or a stand on an issue. Individual members can:

1. Call to order.
2. Second motions.
3. Debate motions.
4. Vote on motions.



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## 5. There are four Basic Types of Motions:

**Main Motions:** The purpose of a main motion is to introduce items to the membership for their consideration. They cannot be made when any other motion is on the floor, and yield to privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions.

**Subsidiary Motions:** Their purpose is to change or affect how a main motion is handled, and is voted on before a main motion.

**Privileged Motions:** Their purpose is to bring up items that are urgent about special or important matters unrelated to pending business.

**Incidental Motions:** Their purpose is to provide a means of questioning procedure concerning other motions and must be considered before the other motion.

## 6. How are Motions Presented?

1. Obtaining the floor
  - 1.1. Wait until the last speaker has finished.
  - 1.2. Rise and address the Chairman by saying, "Mr. Chairman, or Mr. President."
  - 1.3. Wait until the Chairman recognizes you.
2. Make Your Motion
  - 2.1. Speak in a clear and concise manner.
  - 2.2. Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we ..." rather than, "I move that we do not ...".
  - 2.3. Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.
3. Wait for Someone to Second Your Motion
4. Another member will second your motion or the Chairman will call for a second.
5. If there is no second to your motion it is lost.
6. The Chairman States Your Motion
  - 6.1. The Chairman will say, "it has been moved and seconded that we ..." Thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
  - 6.2. The membership then either debates your motion, or may move directly to a vote.
  - 6.3. Once your motion is presented to the membership by the chairman it becomes "assembly property", and cannot be changed by you without the consent of the members.

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## 7. Expanding on Your Motion

- 7.1. The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time, rather than at the time you present it.
- 7.2. The mover is always allowed to speak first.
- 7.3. All comments and debate must be directed to the chairman.
- 7.4. Keep to the time limit for speaking that has been established.
- 7.5. The mover may speak again only after other speakers are finished, unless called upon by the Chairman.

## 8. Putting the Question to the Membership

- 8.1. The Chairman asks, "Are you ready to vote on the question?"
- 8.2. If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.
- 8.3. On a motion to move the previous question may be adapted.

## 7. Voting on a Motion:

The method of vote on any motion depends on the situation and the by-laws of policy of your organization. There are five methods used to vote by most organizations, they are:

1. By Voice -- The Chairman asks those in favor to say, "aye", those opposed to say "no". Any member may move for a exact count.
2. By Roll Call -- Each member answers "yes" or "no" as his name is called. This method is used when a record of each person's vote is required.
3. By General Consent -- When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chairman says, "if there is no objection ..." The membership shows agreement by their silence, however if one member says, "I object," the item must be put to a vote.
4. By Division -- This is a slight verification of a voice vote. It does not require a count unless the chairman so desires. Members raise their hands or stand.
5. By Ballot -- Members write their vote on a slip of paper, this method is used when secrecy is desired.

## 8. Two common motions used that relate to voting:

1. Motion to Table --
  - 1.1. This motion is often used in the attempt to "kill" a motion.
  - 1.2. The option is always present, however, to "take from the table", for reconsideration by the membership.
2. Motion to Postpone Indefinitely --
  - 2.1. This is often used as a means of parliamentary strategy and allows opponents of motion to test their strength without an actual vote being taken.
  - 2.2. Also, debate is once again open on the main motion.

# Parliamentary Procedure

## Parliamentary Procedure for Meetings

*Robert's Rules of Order* is the standard for facilitating discussions and group decision-making. Copies of the rules are available at most bookstores. Although they may seem long and involved, having an agreed-upon set of rules makes meetings run easier. *Robert's Rules* will help your group have better meetings, not make them more difficult. Your group is free to modify them or find another suitable process that encourages fairness and participation, unless your bylaws state otherwise.

Here are the basic elements of *Robert's Rules*, used by most organizations:

1. **Motion:** To introduce a new piece of business or propose a decision or action, a motion must be made by a group member ("I move that.....") A second motion must then also be made (raise your hand and say, "I second it.") After limited discussion the group then votes on the motion. A majority vote is required for the motion to pass (or quorum as specified in your bylaws.)
2. **Postpone Indefinitely:** This tactic is used to kill a motion. When passed, the motion cannot be reintroduced at that meeting. It may be brought up again at a later date. This is made as a motion ("I move to postpone indefinitely..."). A second is required. A majority vote is required to postpone the motion under consideration.
3. **Amend:** This is the process used to change a motion under consideration. Perhaps you like the idea proposed but not exactly as offered. Raise your hand and make the following motion: "I move to amend the motion on the floor." This also requires a second. After the motion to amend is seconded, a majority vote is needed to decide whether the amendment is accepted. Then a vote is taken on the amended motion. In some organizations, a "friendly amendment" is made. If the person who made the original motion agrees with the suggested changes, the amended motion may be voted on without a separate vote to approve the amendment.
4. **Commit:** This is used to place a motion in committee. It requires a second. A majority vote must rule to carry it. At the next meeting the committee is required to prepare a report on the motion committed. If an appropriate committee exists, the motion goes to that committee. If not, a new committee is established.
5. **Question:** To end a debate immediately, the question is called (say "I call the question") and needs a second. A vote is held immediately (no further discussion is allowed). A two-thirds vote is required for passage. If it is passed, the motion on the floor is voted on immediately.
6. **Table:** To table a discussion is to lay aside the business at hand in such a manner that it will be considered later in the meeting or at another time ("I make a motion to table this discussion until the next meeting. In the meantime, we will get more information so we can better discuss the issue.") A second is needed and a majority vote required to table the item being discussed.
7. **Adjourn:** A motion is made to end the meeting. A second motion is required. A majority vote is then required for the meeting to be adjourned (ended).

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*Note:* If more than one motion is proposed, the most recent takes precedence over the ones preceding it. For example if #6, a motion to table the discussion, is proposed, it must be voted on before #3, a motion to amend, can be decided.

In a smaller meeting, like a committee or board meeting, often only four motions are used:

- To introduce (motion.)
- To change a motion (amend.)
- To adopt (accept a report without discussion.)
- To adjourn (end the meeting.)

Remember, these processes are designed to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate and to share ideas in an orderly manner. Parliamentary procedure should not be used to prevent discussion of important issues.

Board and committee chairpersons and other leaders may want to get some training in meeting facilitation and in using parliamentary procedure. Additional information on meeting processes, dealing with difficult people, and using *Robert's Rules* is available from district office staff and community resources such as the League of Women Voters, United Way and other technical assistance providers. *Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance*, by O. Garfield Jones, is an excellent and useful guide for neighborhood association chairs.

# Parliamentary Procedure

## Tips in Parliamentary Procedure

The following summary will help you determine when to use the actions described in *Robert's Rules*.

- **A main motion must be moved, seconded, and stated by the chair before it can be discussed.**
- **If you want to move, second, or speak to a motion, stand and address the chair.**
- **If you approve the motion as is, vote for it.**
- **If you disapprove the motion, vote against it.**
- **If you approve the idea of the motion but want to change it, amend it or submit a substitute for it.**
- **If you want advice or information to help you make your decision, move to refer the motion to an appropriate quorum or committee with instructions to report back.**
- **If you feel they can handle it better than the assembly, move to refer the motion to a quorum or committee with power to act.**
- **If you feel that there the pending question(s) should be delayed so more urgent business can be considered, move to lay the motion on the table.**
- **If you want time to think the motion over, move that consideration be deferred to a certain time.**
- **If you think that further discussion is unnecessary, move the previous question.**
- **If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a motion referred to a quorum or committee, move the motion be recalled.**
- **If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a matter already voted upon, move that it be reconsidered.**
- **If you do not agree with a decision rendered by the chair, appeal the decision to the assembly.**
- **If you think that a matter introduced is not germane to the matter at hand, a point of order may be raised.**
- **If you think that too much time is being consumed by speakers, you can move a time limit on such speeches.**
- **If a motion has several parts, and you wish to vote differently on these parts, move to divide the motion.**

# Parliamentary Procedure

## Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance

To Do This	You Say This	May You Interrupt The Speaker?	Must You Be Seconded?	Is The Motion Debatable?	VOTE REQUIRE D
Adjourn meeting*	I move that we adjourn...	No	Yes	No	Majority
Recess meeting	I move that we recess until...	No	Yes	No	Majority
Complain about noise, room temperature, etc...*	Point of privilege	Yes	No	No	No vote
Suspend further consideration of something*	I move we table it	No	Yes	No	Majority
End debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	$\frac{2}{3}$ vote
Postpone consideration of something	I move we postpone this matter until...	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Have something studied further	I move we refer this matter to committee	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	I move this motion be amended by...	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	I move that...	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Object to procedure or personal affront*	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No vote Chair decides
Request information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No vote
Ask for actual count to verify voice vote	I call for a division of the house	No	No	No	No vote
Object consideration of undiplomatic vote*	I object to consideration of this question	Yes	No	No	$\frac{2}{3}$ vote
Take up a matter previously tabled*	I move to take from the table...	No	Yes	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of*	I move we reconsider our action relative to...	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Consider something already out of its schedule*	I move we suspend the rules and consider...	No	Yes	No	$\frac{2}{3}$ vote
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	I appeal the Chair's decision	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

\* **Not amendable**



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## Parliamentary Motions in Order of Precedence

		Debatable	Amendable	Can Be Reconsidered	Requires $\frac{2}{3}$ Vote
<b>Privileged Motions</b>	Fix Time at Which to Adjourn	No	Yes	No	No
	Adjourn	No	No	Yes	No
	Question of Privilege	No	Yes	Yes	No
	Call for Order of Day	No	No	Yes	No
<b>Incidental Motions</b>	Appeal	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Objection to Consideration of a Question	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Point of Information	No	No	No	No
	Point of Order	No	No	No	No
	Read Papers	No	No	Yes	No
	Suspend the Rules	No	No	No	Yes
	Withdraw a Motion	No	No	Yes	No
<b>Subsidiary Motions</b>	Lay on the Table	No	No	Yes	No
	The Previous Question (close debate)	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Limit or Extend Debate	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Postpone to a Definite Time	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Refer to Committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Amend the Amendment	Yes	No	No	No
	Amendment	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Postpone Indefinitely	Yes	No	Yes	No
<b>Main Motion</b>	Main or Procedural Motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

This table presents the motions in order of precedence. Each motion takes precedence over (i.e. can be considered ahead of) the motions listed below it. No motion can supersede (i.e. be considered before) any of the motions listed above it.

**PLEASE NOTE:** many organizations use only the Main Motion and Subsidiary Motions, handling other matters on an informal basis.

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## ***TO INTRODUCE A MOTION:***

Stand when no one else has the floor. Address the Chair by the proper title. Wait until the chair recognizes you.

- Now that you have the floor and can proceed with your motion say "I move that..." state your motion clearly and sit down.
- Another member may second your motion. A second merely implies that the seconder agrees that the motion should come before the assembly and not that he/she is in favor of the motion.
- If there is no second, the Chair says, "The motion is not before you at this time." The motion is not lost, as there has been no vote taken.
- If there is a second, the Chair states the question by saying "It has been moved and seconded that ... (state the motion). . ., is there any discussion?"

## ***DEBATE OR DISCUSSING THE MOTION:***

- The member who made the motion is entitled to speak first.
- Every member has the right to speak in debate.
- The Chair should alternate between those "for" the motion and those "against" the motion.
- The discussion should be related to the pending motion.
- Avoid using a person's name in debate.
- All questions should be directed to the Chair.
- Unless there is a special rule providing otherwise, a member is limited to speak once to a motion.
- Asking a question or a brief suggestion is not counted in debate.
- A person may speak a second time in debate with the assembly's permission.

## ***VOTING ON A MOTION:***

- Before a vote is taken, the Chair puts the question by saying "Those in favor of the motion that ... (repeat the motion)... say "Aye." Those opposed say "No." Wait, then say "The motion is carried," or "The motion is lost."
- Some motions require a 2/3 vote. A 2/3 vote is obtained by standing
- If a member is in doubt about the vote, he may call out "division." A division is a demand for a standing vote.
- A majority vote is more than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote.
- A 2/3 vote means at least 2/3 of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote.
- A tie vote is a lost vote, since it is not a majority.

## ***ANY MAIN MOTION OR RESOLUTION MAY BE AMENDED BY:***

- Adding at the end.
- Striking out a word or words.
- Inserting a word or words.
- Striking out and inserting a word or words.
- Substitution

# Parliamentary Procedure

## To Make a Motion

A member rises, addressed the chair, receives recognition, and states the motion:

“I move that...”

Another member seconds the motion.

The Chair repeats the motion and says,  
“Is there any discussion?”  
Must be germane to the main motion.

To improve the motion, a member rises,  
receives recognition and say, “I move  
to amend the motion by...”

Another member seconds the amendment.

The Chair repeats the amendment and says,  
“Is there any discussion on the amendment?”  
Must be germane to the Primary amendment.

To improve the amendment, a member rises,  
receives recognition, and says, “I move to  
amend the amendment by ...”

Another member seconds the amendment.

The Chair repeats the amendment to the  
amendment and says, “Is there any discussion  
on the amendment to the amendment?”

- When discussion ceases, the Chair says, “Those in favor of the amendment to the amendment say ‘Aye.’ Those opposed say ‘No.’”
- If the vote was in the affirmative, the amendment is included in the primary amendment. The Chair then says, “Is there any discussion on the amended amendment?”
- If there is no discussion, a vote is taken on the amended amendment. If the vote was in the affirmative, the amendment is included in the main motion. The chair then says, “Is there any discussion the amended motion?”
- At this place, the motion can again be amended.
- If there is not further discussion, a vote is taken on the amended motion.
- Even though the amendments carried in the affirmative, the main motion as amended can be defeated.

