

Parliamentary Procedure An Overview

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General Principles

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- All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations
- Rules must be administered impartially
- The minority has rights which must be protected
- Full and free discussion of all motions, reports, and other items of business is a right of all members.
- In doing business, the simplest and most direct procedure should be used

General Principles

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- Only one question can be considered at a time
- Members may not make a motion or speak in debate until they have risen and been recognized by the chair
- No one may speak more than twice on the same question on the same day without permission from the assembly
- No member may speak a second time on the same question if anyone who has not spoken on the question wishes to do so

General Principles

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- Members must not attack or question the motives of other members
- All remarks are addressed to the presiding officer
- The will of the majority prevails
- In voting, members have the right to know at all times what motion is before the assembly and what the effect an affirmative and negative will have

Quorum

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- Minimum number of members who must be present at a meeting for business to be legally transacted.
- An organization, in its established rules, may define its own quorum
- In the absence of such a provision, the quorum is a majority of the entire membership

Standard Agenda

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- Call to order
- Reading and approval of minutes
- Reports of officers
- Report of standing committees
- Reports of ad hoc committees
- Unfinished business (if needed; should not be on the agenda if there is none)
- New business
- Announcements
- Adjournment

Duties of the Presiding Officer

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- To call the meeting to order at the appointed time, having determined that a quorum is present
- To announce in proper sequence the business to come before the assembly
- To recognize members who are entitled to the floor
- To state and to put to a vote all questions that come before the assembly as motions and announce the vote (or call it out of order)
- To protect the assembly from dilatory motions

Duties of Presiding Officer

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- To enforce the rules relating to debate and those relating to order and decorum
- To expedite the business
- To decide all questions of order, subject to appeal
- To respond to inquires
- To declare the meeting adjourned when the assembly so votes, or at the time prescribed


Duties of Presiding Officer

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- Serves as ex-officio of all committees except Nominating
- Appoints committee chairs except those chairs who serve by virtue of their offices
- Appoints special committees as needed

Classes of Motions

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- Main Motions
 - Subsidiary Motions
 - Privileged Motions
 - Incidental Motions
 - Motions that bring a question again before the assembly
- Secondary Motions
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Main Motion

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- Introduces new subject or business before the assembly
- Can only be made when no other motion is pending
- Has the lowest rank of all motions

Handling Motions

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- A member rises and addresses the presiding officer
- The presiding officer recognizes the member
- The member states the motion (I move that.....)
- Another member seconds the motion
- The presiding officer restates the motion, thus placing it before the assembly for consideration

Handling Motions

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- The assembly may discuss the motion if it is debatable and amend, if it is amendable
- The presiding officer restates the motion
- The presiding officer takes the vote
- The presiding officer announces the result

Subsidiary Motions

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- Assist the assembly in perfecting or disposing of the main motion
- Order of Precedence (highest to lowest)
 - Lay on the Table
 - Previous Question
 - Limit or Extend Limits of Debate
 - Postpone to a Certain Time (Postpone Definitely)
 - Commit or refer
 - Amend
 - Postpone Indefinitely

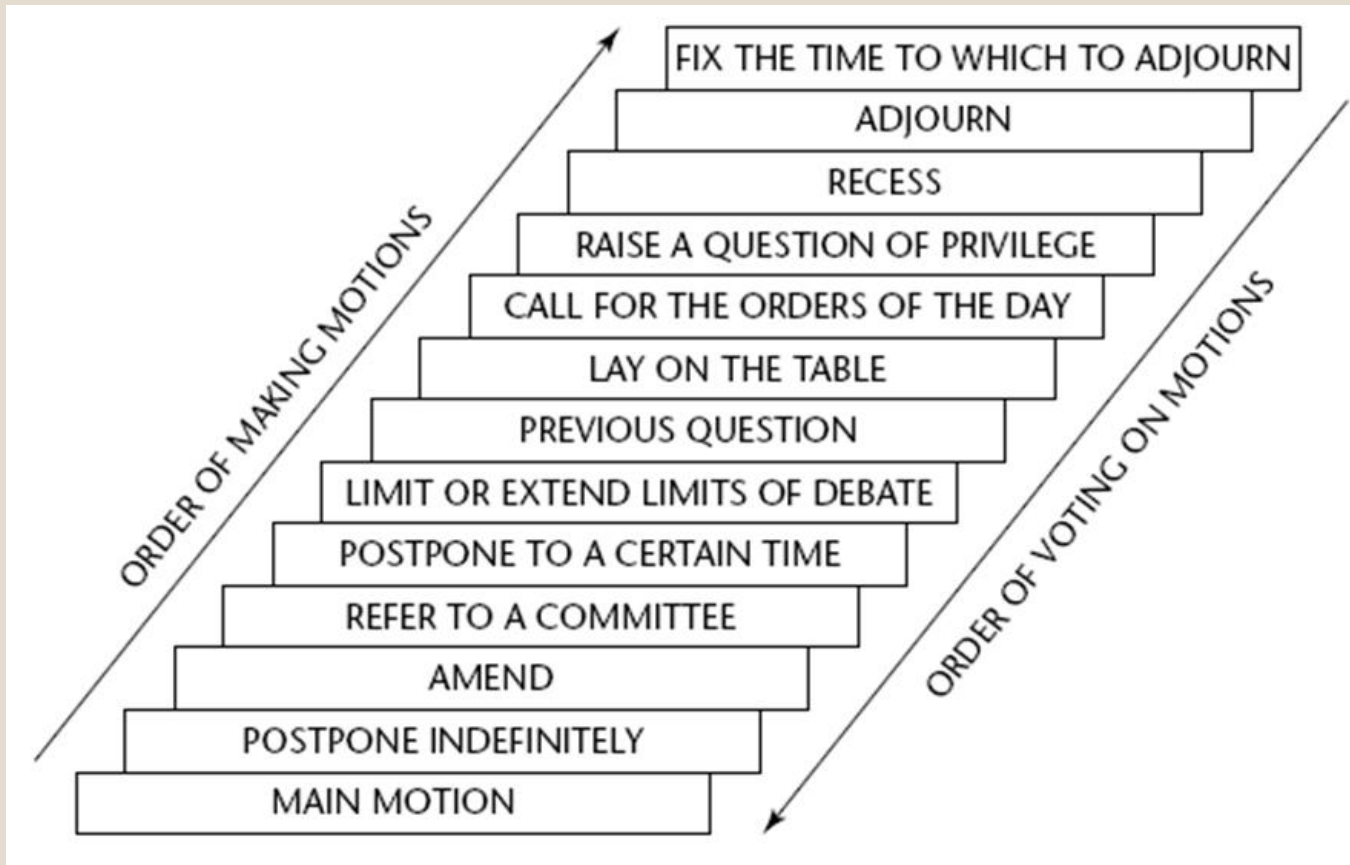
Privileged Motions

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- Do not relate to pending business but deal with matters of immediate importance
- Not debatable
- Can interrupt the business of the assembly
- Precedence (highest to lowest)
 - Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn
 - Adjourn
 - Recess
 - Raise a Question of Privilege
 - Call for Orders of the Day

Ranking of Motions

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Rules of Debate

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- Members must follow the proper procedures for obtaining the floor
- The maker of the motion has the right to be assigned the floor first in debate
- Each member may speak twice on the same question on the same day
- No one can speak longer than permitted by the rules without permission of the assembly

Rules of Debate

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- Debate must be germane
- Members must address their remarks to and through the Presiding Officer
- Members must maintain a courteous tone
- Members must never attack or make any allusion to another member's motives
- Members should avoid the use of other members' names

Rules of Debate

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- The Presiding Officer cannot interrupt any person who has the floor unless the member has violated a rule or disorder arises
- The Presiding Officer cannot interrupt someone even if she knows more about the subject than the speaker
- The Presiding Officer cannot close debate if a member still requests to discuss the subject

Rules of Debate

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- The presiding officer may participate in discussion, if she is a member of the society, as long as she relinquishes the chair during discussion of the entire motion for which she wishes to speak

Point of Privilege

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- While business is pending, this motion is a device that permits a request or main motion relating to the rights and privileges of the assembly or any of its members to be brought up immediately because of some urgency

Request for Information (Point of Information)

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- Request directed to the chair, or through the chair, to another officer or member, for information relevant to the business at hand
- Request is not related to parliamentary procedure

Parliamentary Inquiry

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- A member who wants to ask a question about the rules and how it applies to what is going on or to something they want to do, may make a Parliamentary Inquiry to the chair
- A second is not required
- The chair responds to the inquiry

Point of Order

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- Any member may call the attention of the chair to a violation of the rules through the motion Point of Order
- The member stands up, interrupts the chair or a speaker if necessary, and without waiting to be recognized, calls out “Point of Order!”

Point of Order

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- The chair says, “The member will state her point of order.”
- Upon hearing the member’s response,
 - the chair rules on the point of order, saying “The chair rules that the point of order is well taken.”
 - or “The chair rules that the point of order is not well taken.”

Appeal

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- Any member who disagrees with a ruling by the chair, may Appeal it to the group as a whole
- A second is required
- It is generally debatable by the member if, unless it
 - Involves a motion that is not debatable;
 - Relates to indecorum
 - Relates to priority of business
- During debate each member may speak one time; however, the chair may speak twice—once to open debate and second to close debate
- The assembly decides whether the ruling of the chair will be sustained

Resources



Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised in Brief (2nd edition)

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th edition)