

How to Make a Motion

(From "Rules of Order in Brief")

What is a motion . . .

A **motion** is a formal proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the group take certain action.

A **main motion** is one whose introduction brings business before an assembly. There should be no debate on a matter before a motion regarding it has been made. Only one main motion may be before the assembly for action at a time.

How you get to speak at a meeting . . .

You stand up immediately after the previous speaker has finished and call out "Madam President or Chair." The president or chair designates you as the next speaker, or **recognizes** you, normally by calling out your name.

When you are authorized to speak in this way, you are said to **have the floor**. When finished, you sit down, and thus **yield the floor**.

How a motion gets before a group . . .

How to Make a Motion:

To make a main motion, after obtaining the floor you simply say, "**I move that . . .**" and then clearly describe the proposal. It is important to say precisely what the words of the motion are to be. Each motion has to be written down in the minutes.

"Seconding" a Motion:

When one member has made a main motion, it must be seconded in order to be considered by the group. If there is no second, the motion is not put before the group for discussion or decision.

To second a motion, you call out "**Second!**" You may remain seated, and you do not have to be recognized by the president or chair to second a motion.

The President or Chair "States" the Question:

When a motion has been moved and seconded, the president or chair then **states the question** on the motion. To "state" a motion, the president or chair simply says, "**It is moved and seconded that**" and then repeats the exact words in which the motion was made.

How the group considers a motion . . .

Debate on the Motion:

When a main motion has been stated by the president or chair, it is said to be **pending** or "on the floor." It is then before the group for debate and action. **Debate** means discussion on the merits of the

question – that is, whether the proposed action should or should not be taken.

Right after stating the question on a motion, the president or chair turns toward the maker of the motion to see if he or she wishes to be assigned the floor.

During debate, there are also certain other motions that you may make relating to the main motion's consideration, or, in some cases, interrupting its consideration. These are called **secondary motions**. The most common secondary motion that relates to a pending motion is a motion to Amend it.

The President or Chair "Puts" the Question

When no one else seeks recognition to debate, the president or chair may ask, "**Are you ready for the question?**" This means, "Is everyone in the group ready to vote on the proposal immediately, or does anyone first want to speak about it, or offer amendments or other motions related to it? Then – if there is still no effort to get the floor for further debate – the president or chair stands and puts the question to a vote.

To do so, the president or chair begins by saying, "**The question is on the adoption of the motion that . . .**" and then repeats the exact wording of the motion to be voted on.

The simplest and most common type of voting is the voice vote. The president or chair says, "**Those in favor of the motion, say aye.**" Those in support, remain seated, then call out "aye." The president or chair then says, "**Those opposed, say no.**" The opponents, also seated, call out, "no." The president or chair judges whether more people called out "aye" or "no" and, based on this judgment, proceeds to announce the result of the vote.

The President or Chair Announces the Result of the Vote

When the voting is complete, the president or chair announces the result. Each announcement has four parts:

- reporting which side "has it";
- declaring that the motion is adopted or lost;
- indicating the effect of the vote, if needed or appropriate; and
- announcing the next item of business, when applicable.

Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance

Here are some motions you might make, how to make them, and what to expect of the rules.

TO DO THIS: ①	YOU SAY THIS: ①	May you interrupt the speaker?	Do you need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	What vote is needed?	Can it be reconsidered?
Adjourn meeting	"I move that we adjourn"	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
Call an Intermission	"I move that we recess for..."	NO	YES	NO	YES	MAJORITY	NO
Complain about heat, noise, etc.	"I rise to a question of privilege"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
Temporarily suspend consideration of an issue	"I move to table the motion"	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO ①
End debate and amendments	"I move the previous question"	NO	YES	NO	NO	2/3	YES ②
Postpone discussion for a certain time	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
Give closer study of something	"I move to refer the matter to committee"	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES ③
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..."	NO	YES	YES ④	YES	MAJORITY	YES
Introduce business	"I move that..."	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
THE MOTIONS LISTED ABOVE ARE IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE...BELOW THERE IS NO ORDER...							
Protest breach of rules or conduct	"I rise to a point of order"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE ⑤	NO
Vote on ruling of the chair	"I appeal from the chair's decision"	YES	YES	YES	NO	MAJORITY	YES
Suspend rules temporarily	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	NO	YES	NO	NO	2/3	NO
Avoid considering an improper matter	"I object to consideration of this motion"	YES	NO	NO	NO	2/3 ⑥	YES ⑦
Verify a voice vote by having members stand	"I call for a division" or "Division!"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
Request information	"Point of information"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
Take up a matter previously tabled	"I move to take from the table"	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
Reconsider an action or issue	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."	YES	YES	YES ⑧	NO	MAJORITY	NO
NOTES: ① Affirmative votes may not be reconsidered ② Unless vote on question has begun. ③ Unless the committee has already taken up the subject. ④ Unless the motion to be amended is not debatable. ⑤ Unless the chair submits to the assembly for decision. ⑥ A 2/3 vote in negative is needed to prevent consideration of main motion. ⑦ Only if the main question has not been debated yet. ⑧ Unless the motion to be reconsidered is not debatable.							