

Parliamentary Procedure

Definitions and Examples of Motions

A. Privileged Motions:

Motions which do not relate to the pending question but have to do with matters of such urgency or importance that, without debate, they are allowed to interrupt the consideration of anything else.

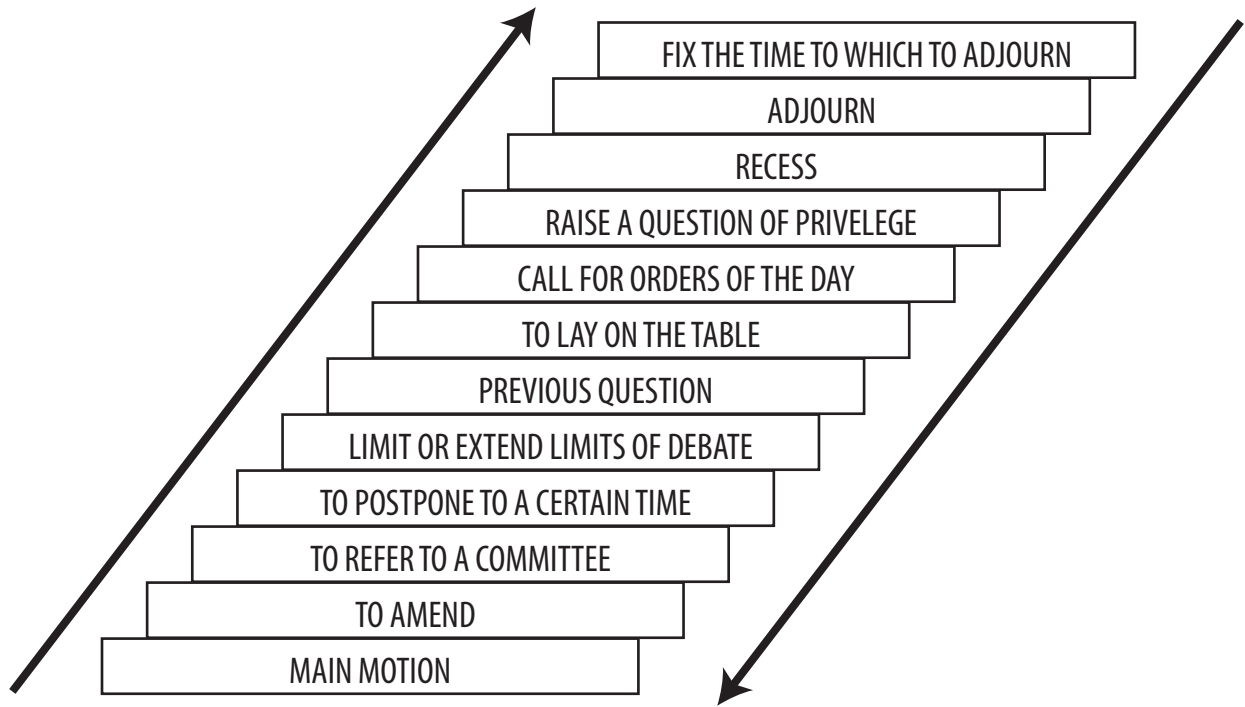
- a. **Adjourn:** Terminates the meeting. "I move that we adjourn."
- b. **Recess:** Permits a short intermission in a meeting. "I move that we recess for 10 minutes" or ". . . until 2:00" or ". . . until called to order by the chair."
- c. **Raise a question of privilege:** Permits a request or main motion relating to the rights and privileges of the assembly or any of its members to be brought up for immediate consideration because of its urgency. "I rise to a question of privilege affecting the assembly."
- d. **Call for the orders of the day:** Requires that the adopted agenda or order of business be followed. "Mr. Chairman, I call for the orders of the day" or "Madam President, I demand the regular order."

B. Subsidiary Motions:

Motions which assist the assembly in treating or disposing of a main motion. They have the effect of hastening action upon, delaying action upon, or modifying the main motion.

- a. **Lay on the table:** Lays a pending question aside temporarily when something more urgent has arisen. "I move to lay the question on the table" or "I move that the motion be laid on the table."
- b. **Previous question:** Ends debate and orders an immediate vote. "I move the previous question" or "I move we vote immediately on the motion."
- c. **Limit or extend debate:** Modifies debate by limiting or extending the number or length of speeches. "I move that debate be limited to one speech of two minutes for each member" or "I move that the speaker's time be extended three minutes."
- d. **Postpone to a certain time:** Defers consideration to a definite day, meeting, or hour, or until after some particular event. "I move that the question be postponed until the next meeting" or "I move to postpone the motion until after the address by our guest speaker."
- e. **Refer to a committee:** Gives a motion more detailed attention or permits it to be handled in privacy. "I move to refer the matter to the Program Committee."

Ranking of Parliamentary Motions



Thirteen ranking motions from Robert McConnell Productions (1999). Webster's New World Robert's rules of order: simplified and applied. New York: Macmillan General Reference.

What Parliamentary Motion is Needed?

Meeting objectives and the parliamentary motions used to fulfill them

Objective	Appropriate motion
Present an idea for consideration or action	Main motion or Resolution; Consider subject informally
Improve a pending motion	Amend; Division of the question
Regulate or cut-off debate	Limit or extend debate; Previous question (vote immediately)
Delay a decision	Refer to committee; Postpone definitely ; Postpone indefinitely (kills motion)
Suppress a proposal	Object to consideration; Postpone indefinitely; Withdraw a motion
Meet an emergency	Question of privilege; Suspend rules; Lay on the table
Gain information on a pending motion	Parliamentary inquiry; Request for information; Question of privilege; Request to ask member a question
Question the decision of the chair	Point of order; Appeal from decision of chair
Enforce rights and privileges	Division of assembly; Division of question; Parliamentary inquiry; Point of order; Appeal from decision of chair
Consider a question again	Resume consideration; Reconsider; Rescind
Change an action already taken	Reconsider; Rescind; Amend motion previously adopted
Terminate a meeting	Adjourn; Recess

This table was based on a table in Alice Sturgis's *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* (3rd edition), but modified for motions in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

- f. **Amend:** Modifies a main motion by inserting, adding, striking, striking and inserting, striking and adding, or substituting some specific language. "I move to amend by adding the words . . ." or "by striking . . ." or "I move to substitute for the pending motion the following:"
- g. **Postpone indefinitely:** Disposes of a question without bringing it to a direct vote. "I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely."

C. Main Motion:

A motion which brings business before the assembly and which can be made only while no other motion is pending. "I move we have a banquet."

D. Motions that Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly:

Motions which bring up a previously considered question.

- a. **Reconsider:** Allows a question previously disposed of to come again before the assembly as if it had not previously been considered. The motion to reconsider can be made only by a member who voted on the prevailing side and only on the same day the original vote was taken. The motion is debatable only if the motion to be reconsidered is itself debatable. "I move to reconsider the vote on the motion relating to the annual banquet."
- b. **Discharge a committee:** Takes a matter out of a committee's hands and places it again before the assembly as a whole. "I move that the committee considering what band to hire for the benefit dance be discharged."
- c. **Rescind a motion previously adopted:** Voids a motion previously passed. "I move to rescind the motion passed at the last meeting relating to where we will go on the ski trip."
- d. **Take from the table:** Allows the assembly to resume consideration of a motion previously laid on the table. "I move to take from the table the motion relating to presenting plaques to graduating members."

E. Incidental Motions:

Motions which deal with questions of procedure and arise out of another pending motion or item of business. With the exception of the motion to appeal from the ruling of the chair, they are not debatable.

- a. **Point of information:** Inquires as to the facts affecting the business at hand and is directed to the chair or, through the chair, to a member. "I rise to a point of information" or "A point of information, please."
- b. **Parliamentary inquiry:** Requests the chair's opinion-not a ruling-on a matter of parliamentary procedure as it relates to the business at hand. "I rise to a parliamentary inquiry" or "A parliamentary inquiry, please."
- c. **Division of the assembly:** Calls for a verification when a member doubts the accuracy of a voice vote or show of hands. "Division!" or "I call for a division."

- d. **Division of a question:** Permits a motion to be divided into two or more parts in order that they may be considered separately. "I move to divide the motion so that the question of purchasing decorations can be considered separately."
- e. **Withdraw a motion:** Permits a member to remove his or her question from consideration even after the motion has been restated by the chair. "Mr. Chairman, I move that I be allowed to withdraw the motion."
- f. **Objection to consideration:** Suppresses business that is undesirable or that might prove damaging to the organization. "Madam President, I object to the consideration of the question."
- g. **Suspend the rules:** Temporarily sets aside a rule to permit the assembly to take an action it could not otherwise take. "I move to suspend the rules which interfere with considering the motion to hold a get-acquainted happy hour for new members."
- h. **Appeal from the ruling of the chair:** Challenges a ruling of the chair. A majority vote sustains the ruling. "I appeal from the decision of the chair."
- i. **Point of order:** Challenges an error in procedure and requires a ruling by the chair. "I rise to a point of order" or "Point of order!"