

# PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

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## BACKGROUND

- Parliamentary Procedure originated in English Parliaments.
- Came over with European settlers
- Henry M Robert published a manual on parliamentary law in 1876



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## WHY????

- Parliamentary procedure was developed to protect the rights
  - of the majority,
  - of the minority, especially a strong minority-greater than one third,
  - of individual members,
  - of absentees, and
  - of all these together.



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## A Great Definition...

Parliamentary Procedure is...

- a set of rules for conducting business at meetings and public gatherings that allows everyone to be heard and make decisions in an orderly manner.

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## BASIC MEETING FORMAT

- I. Call to order
- II. Opening Ceremonies
- III. Roll Call
- IV. Approval of Minutes
- V. Reports of Officers, Boards or Committees
- VI. Unfinished Business
- VII. New Business
- VIII. Announcements
- IX. Adjourn

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## CLASSES OF MOTIONS!!

- There are five classes of motions:
  - Main Motion
  - Subsidiary Motion
  - Privileged Motion
  - Incidental Motion
  - Motion that brings an item back before the assembly

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## MAIN MOTIONS

- The basis of all parliamentary procedure.
- Introduces business for consideration.
- Cannot be made when any other motion is before the assembly.

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## SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

- Motions that may be applied to another motion for the purpose of modifying it, delaying action on it or disposing of it.
- These motions change the way the main motion is handled.
- They must be voted on before the main motion.

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## Examples of Subsidiary Motions:

- **Postpone Indefinitely** - get rid of it!
  - "I move to postpone indefinitely Bill no. 7324" .....
  - The bill will not be put back on the agenda unless a motion to bring it back before the assembly is made.
  - Requires a second, is debatable and needs a majority vote.
- **Amend** - change or modify the main motion
  - "I move to amend bill no. 7234 by adding an additional stipulation" .....
  - the amendment must be voted on before the main motion can be voted on.
  - Requires a second, is debatable and requires a majority vote.
- **Refer to a Committee** - for additional information and report back to the assembly.
  - The presiding officer then will need to appoint a committee if one does not exist to review the issue and report back with a recommendation.
  - Requires a second, is debatable, can be amended and requires a majority vote.

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## Subsidiary Motions Cont...

- **Postpone to a time or date certain** – next agenda or a specific agenda in the future
  - This is used fairly often and when there is more time needed to gather more information or allow the petitioner some time to respond to questions.
  - Requires a second, is debatable, can be amended and requires a majority vote.
- **Limit or extend limits of debate** - Limit time of debate if it is consuming too much time or extend debate if more time is needed than the usual rules allow.
  - I move to limit the debate to 5 minutes per speaker ...
  - Requires a second and a 2/3 vote of the body.
- **Previous question** – close debate and amendment of a pending motion and bring the business to an immediate vote.
  - I move the previous question... takes the issue back to the main motion without the amendment if there is one on the table.
  - Requires a second and a 2/3 vote of the body.
- **Lay on the table** – set aside the motion temporarily – can be taken up again by a majority.
  - Requires a second and a majority vote.

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## PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

- Motions that are unrelated to the pending business.
- They are of such urgency or importance that they are considered immediately.
- These are motions related to special matters of immediate and overriding importance which should be allowed to interrupt the consideration of anything else.

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## Examples of Privileged Motions:

- **Call for the Orders of the Day**
  - If the order of business is not being followed calling for the orders of the day can require the schedule to be enforced
  - Does not require a second and can interrupt business
  - The Chair usually decides this matter but would be a majority if put to a vote.
- **Raise a Question of Privilege**
  - Complaint about heat, noise etc...
  - Does not require a second and can interrupt business.
  - The Chair usually decides this matter but would be a majority if put to a vote.
- **Recess**
  - A short intermission can be proposed for a specific period of time.
  - Requires a second, can be amended and requires a majority vote.

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## Privileged Motions cont....

### ■ Adjourn

- A member can propose to close the meeting entirely provided the unfinished business be carried over to the next meeting.
- Requires a second and a majority vote.

### ■ Fix the time to which to adjourn

- Schedule another meeting if one is not already scheduled to continue unfinished business.
- Requires a second, can be amended and requires a majority vote.

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## INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

- Motions that are related to the business at hand but do not modify the main motion.
- Most are not debatable.
- Each of the incidental motions is applicable only in its own type of special circumstance.

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## Examples of Incidental Motions:

### ■ Point of Order

- protest of breach of rules or conduct
  - Does not require a second, can interrupt.
  - The Chair usually decides but a majority would be required if it is put to a vote.

### ■ Appeal

- Two members can require a vote of the assembly if they do not agree with a ruling of the chair.
  - Can interrupt but does require a second and a majority vote.

### ■ Suspend the rules

- When allowing an action would be in violation of the rules of the assembly.
  - Requires a second and 2/3 vote of the assembly.

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## Incidental Motions cont...

### ■ Division of a Question

- If a pending main motion has two separate parts capable of standing as separate questions.
  - One member may demand a division
  - Requires a second and can be amended

### ■ Division of the Assembly or "Division"

- A member can move that a vote be taken by ballot, roll call or counted standing vote.
  - Can interrupt business, does not require a second and no vote is taken.

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## MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY

- Allow the assembly to reopen a completed question during the same session.
- Take up one that has been temporarily disposed of .
- To change something previously adopted and still in force.

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## Examples of Motions that Bring a question again before the Assembly:

### ■ Take from the table

- Resume consideration of a main motion that lies on the table...or has been "tabled"
  - Requires a second and a majority vote.

### ■ Rescind or Repeal

- To strike out an entire main motion, resolution, ordinance, section or paragraph that has been adopted.
  - Requires a second, is debatable, can be amended.
  - Requires a majority vote if notice has been given otherwise a 2/3 vote is needed.

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## Motions that Bring a question again before the Assembly cont...

### ■ Discharge a Committee

- Taking a matter previously referred to a committee out of the committee's hands.
  - Requires a second, is debatable, can be amended and requires a majority vote.

### ■ Reconsider

- In the same session or the next day on which a business meeting is held a member who voted with the prevailing side can reconsider the vote.
  - Requires a second and a majority vote.

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Thirteen Ranking Motions

Name of Motion	Is it in order when another has the floor?	Does it require a second?	Is it debatable?	Is it amendable?	What vote is required for adoption?	May it be reconsidered?
Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn*	No	Yes	No	Yes	M	Yes
Adjourn**	No	Yes	No	No	M	No
Recess**	No	Yes	No	Yes	M	No
Raise a Question of Privilege	Yes	No	No	No	(1)	No
Call for the Orders of the Day	Yes	No	No	No	(2)	No
Lay on the Table	No	Yes	No	No	M	No
Previous Question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes
Limit or Extend Limits of Debate	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3	(3)
Postpone to a Certain Time (Definitely)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	M(4)	Yes
Commit (Refer to a Committee)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	M	(5)
Amend	No	Yes	(6)	Yes	M	Yes
Postpone Indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	M	(7)
Main Motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	M	Yes

Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR)  
 \* A main motion if made when no business pending  
 \*\* Check RONR for specific rules  
 (1) Chair grants  
 (2) No vote: demand  
 (3) Yes, the unexecuted part may be reconsidered  
 (4) 2/3 vote required if made a special order  
 (5) Yes, if the committee has not started work  
 (6) Yes, if applied to a debatable motion  
 (7) Only an affirmative vote may be reconsidered

PRIVILEGED  
SUBSIDIARY

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## HOW TO PRESENT A MOTION???

- Obtain the floor from the President, Mayor or Chair of the Assembly.
- Make your motion in the affirmative.
- Wait for a second.
- The Chair restates your motion.
- Discussion
- The Chair puts the motion to a vote.

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## METHODS OF VOTING ON A MOTION

- **Voice vote** – The chair asks those in favor to say “aye” and those opposed to say “no”
- **Roll Call vote** – a record of each vote is needed, each member answers when their name is called
- **Show of hands** – raising hands to verify a voice vote or as an alternative to it.
- **Ballot** – when secrecy is desired the members vote on a slip of paper.
- **General Consent** - when a motion is not likely to be opposed. “if there is no objection.....”

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## QUESTIONS????

- [www.Parliamentarians.org](http://www.Parliamentarians.org)
  - Resources, books, cards for boards.

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