

# PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

A B C'S OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

TYPES OF MOTIONS  
ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

# PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

- All have equal rights, privileges and obligations
- A quorum must be present for group to act
- Robert's Rules is handbook of operation
- Use of Motions (A proposal for assembly to take a stand or take action)

## FIVE TYPES OF MOTIONS

### MAIN MOTION

Introduce subjects for consideration  
Cannot be made when another motion is before assembly  
Yield to privileged, subsidiary, incidental motions  
**"I move that we purchase a..."**

### SUBSIDIARY MOTION

Change / affect main motion for consideration  
Voted on before the main motion  
**"I move to amend the motion by striking out..."**

### PRIVILEGED MOTION

Concern special matters not related to pending business  
Considered before other motions  
**"Because of the time, I move that we adjourn..."**

### RENEWAL MOTION

Allow certain items to be reconsidered  
Usually brought up when no business is pending  
**"I move to reconsider..."**

### INCIDENTAL MOTION

Questions of procedure  
Considered before other motions  
**"I move to divide the motion so that the question of purchasing ... can be considered separately."**

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# ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

Typically, organizations using Robert's Rules follow the prescribed order of business during meetings to provide a framework for conducting orderly meetings.

## TYPICAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

Each municipality has their own "typical" order of business

- The Chair calls the meeting to **order**.
- A **roll is called** of all present members.
- The secretary reads the **minutes** of the last meeting. **Sometimes**
- Each **officer** gives a **report**.
- Each **committee representative** gives a **report**.
- Special orders (by way of **motions**) are called for and consist of any **important business** that was previously set aside to discuss at the meeting.
- **Unfinished business** from a previous meeting is discussed.
- **New business** can be brought forth at this time.
- **Announcements** are made.
- The meeting is **adjourned**.

## MEETING GROUND RULES

- Meetings will start and end on time
- Every member's opinion is valuable
- Avoid sidebar conversations
- Focus on the meeting
- Decisions will be criteria-based
- Address any concerns

## WHEN DEBATING YOUR MOTIONS

- Listen to the other side
- Focus on issues, not personalities
- Avoid questioning motives
- Be courteous
- Keep cool
- Speak clearly and concisely

Meeting ground rules are an agreed upon list of behavior expectations for members while participating in a meeting. These are a few examples that should be established to ensure a successful meeting.

## VOCABULARY

Robert's Rules of Order and other parliamentary procedures contain specific vocabulary to be used at meetings.

<b>POINT OF PRIVILEGE</b>	This term refers to the right of the person speaking to have the floor and not be interrupted by others.
<b>PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY</b>	Method to raise a point of order or to ask how to proceed when unsure of the proper motion.
<b>POINT OF INFORMATION</b>	This term refers to the method used to ask the speaker a question.
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY (AGENDA)</b>	If the meeting is not following the agenda a member may call orders of the day to remind the assembly to adhere to the agenda. If the members would like to deviate from the agenda, "suspending the rules" is necessary.
<b>POINT OF ORDER</b>	Point of order is raised if a rule has been broken or a member is not using the proper meeting protocol to speak. A point of order needs to be raised right after the error occurs.
<b>DIVIDE THE QUESTION</b>	This term is used when a motion is split into two or more new separate motions.
<b>CONSIDER BY PARAGRAPH</b>	When considering adoption of a document, adoption of the full document can be postponed until each and every paragraph has been debated and if necessary amended.
<b>WITHDRAW / MODIFY MOTION</b>	After the question is stated; the person who made the motion may accept an amendment to the motion.
<b>COMMIT / REFER / RECOMMIT TO COMMITTEE</b>	Sometimes a committee is needed to research a motion. In this case, an already established committee is assigned the question or a new committee is appointed. If a new committee is necessary, the chairperson may indicate how many members are needed and how selection of committee members should occur.

**EXTEND DEBATE**

Calling to extend debate can be used for the question currently under debate and usually has a time limit.

**LIMIT DEBATE**

This term is used to refer to the time limit placed upon debate and when debate should be considered closed.

**POSTPONE**

If a motion or agenda item needs to be postponed, it is necessary to determine and state when it will be resumed.

**OBJECT TO CONSIDERATION**

Objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated.

**LAY ON THE TABLE**

This tool is used after a motion is closed to debate or is pending closure and can temporarily stop further consideration or action on the open motion.

**TAKE FROM THE TABLE**

If a motion has been previously "laid on the table," it can be opened and considered again by stating the motion to "take from the table."

**RECONSIDER**

If a member on the prevailing side of a debate changes their view, they can state they have reconsidered.

**POSTPONE INDEFINITELY**

Postponing a motion indefinitely stops the motion from proceeding forward just in that particular session, unless a motion to reconsider is made.

**INFORMAL CONSIDERATION**

This term refers to changing the debate to an informal format similar to that of a committee. To move to an informal consideration format a member moves that the assembly go into "Committee of the Whole." Voting is still done formally and is still valid while the meeting is in an informal mode.

**APPEAL DECISION OF THE CHAIR**

The membership may appeal a decision made by the chair if the appeal does not relate to the violation of order of business or parliamentary rules. Appeals must also take place prior to other unrelated business.

**SUSPEND THE RULES**

This allows specific, stated rules with the exception of the assembly's constitution to be suspended.

## Procedure for Handling a Main Motion

### Obtaining and Assigning the Floor

1. A member rises when no one else has the floor and addresses the chair: "Mr./Madam President, Mr./Madam Chairman" or by other proper title.
  - A. In a large assembly, the member gives name and identification.
  - B. The member remains standing and awaits recognition by the chair.
2. The chair recognizes the member by announcing his name or title, or in a small assembly, by nodding to him.

### How the Motion is Brought Before the Assembly

1. The member makes the motion: "I move that (or 'to')..." and resumes his seat.
2. Another member, without rising, seconds the motion: "I second the motion" or "I second it" or even "second."
3. The chair states the motion: It is moved and seconded that ... Are you ready for the question?"

### Consideration of the Motion

1. Members can debate the motion.
  - A. Before speaking in debate, members obtain the floor as stated above.
  - B. The maker of the motion has first right to the floor if he claims it properly.
  - C. All remarks must be addressed to the chair.
  - D. Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion.
  - E. Debate can only be closed by order of the assembly (2/3 vote) or by the chair if no one seeks the floor for further debate.
2. The chair puts the motion to a vote.
  - F. The chair asks: "Are you ready for the question?" If no one rises to claim the floor, the chair proceeds to take the vote.
  - G. The chair says: "The question is on the adoption of the motion that... As many as are in favor, say 'Aye'. (Pause for response.) Those opposed, say 'No'. (Pause for response.)"
3. The chair announces the result of the vote.
  - A. "The ayes have it, the motion is adopted, and ... (indicating the effect of the vote)" or
  - B. "The noes have it, and the motion is lost."

## Thirteen Ranking Motions

**Privileged Motions** are such that, while having no relation to the pending question, are of such urgency, or importance that they are entitled to immediate consideration; relate to members, and to the organization, rather than to particular items of business.

**Subsidiary Motions** are those that may be applied to another motion for the purpose of *modifying* it, *delaying* action on it, or *disposing* of it.

**Main Motion** is the basis of all parliamentary procedure--provides method of bringing business before the assembly for consideration and action. Can only be considered if no other business is pending.

## A Member's Guide to Motions

<b>Order of Precedence Motions</b>	
<u>To Do This</u>	<u>Say This</u>
Adjourn meeting	"I move to adjourn."
Call an intermission	"I move to recess for ..."
Complain about heat, noise, etc.	"I rise to a question of privilege."
End debate and amendments	"I move the previous question."
Postpone discussion for a certain time	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."
Give closer study of something	"I move to refer the matter to committee."
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..."
Introduce new business	"I move that..."
<b>Incidental Motions</b>	
<u>To Do This</u>	<u>Say This</u>
Request Information	"Point of information..."
Protest breach of rules or conduct	"I rise to a point of order."
Verifying a voice vote by having members stand	"I call for division."
Vote on a ruling of the chair	"I appeal from the chair's decision."
Suspend the rules temporarily	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."
Avoid considering an improper matter	"I object to consideration of this motion."

# PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

Privileged motions are in a class of motions that are important enough to warrant interrupting all other motions. Because they are urgent issues, debate is not allowed. Their content doesn't relate to the main motion or the pending business. It relates to the members and the organization. This is why it is called a privileged motion.

The privileged motions are usually secondary motions, meaning they are made when a main motion is already on the floor. For example, if the group is debating a main motion to purchase a copier and you have to go to the bathroom and can't wait for the debate to end, you move for a 10-minute recess.

There are five privileged motions. They are:

1. **Fix the time to which to adjourn** – this motion sets the time for another meeting to continue business of the session. Adoption of this motion does not adjourn or set the time for its adjournment.
2. **Adjourn** – A motion to close the meeting.
3. **Recess** – A short interruption which does not close the meeting. After the recess, business resumes at exactly the point where it was interrupted.
4. **Questions of privilege** – To Bring an urgent request or a main motion relating to the rights of either the assembly or an individual up for immediate consideration.
5. **Call for the orders of the day** – By the use of this motion, a single member can require the assembly to follow the order of business or agenda, or take up a special order that is scheduled to come up, unless two-thirds of the assembly wishes to do otherwise.

Privileged motions have special privileges only when they are offered as secondary motions. When they are main motions, they are treated like any other main motion and must follow the rules for a main motion.

For additional reading about **Privileged Motions**, consult your *RONR* pgs. 64-65.

# SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

Subsidiary motions aid the assembly in treating or disposing of a main motion. They are in order only from the time the main motion has been stated by the chair until the chair begins to take on that main motion. These motions help you get the main motion into its best form before you have to vote on it.

You may want to change the main motion (amend it); or send it back to a committee to do more research on it (commit or refer); or put off the decision on it to the next meeting (postpone to a certain time); or you may just want to kill it (postpone indefinitely).

There are seven subsidiary motions. They are:

1. **Lay on the table** – This motion places in the care of the secretary the pending question and everything adhering to it. A group holding regular monthly meetings, the question laid on the table remains there until taken off or until the end of the next regular session. This motion should not be used to kill a motion.
2. **Previous question** – The effect of this motion is to immediately end debate and any amendments and to move immediately to a vote on the pending motion. It must be seconded, no debate is allowed, and a two-thirds vote is needed.
3. **Limit or extend limits of debate** – This motion can reduce or increase the number and length of speeches permitted or limit the length of debate on a specific question.
4. **Postpone to a certain time** – (postpone definitely). If the body needs more time to make a decision or if there is a time for consideration of this question that would be more convenient, this motion may be the answer. If a group meets quarterly or more frequently, the postponement cannot be beyond the next session.
5. **Commit or refer** – This motion sends the main motion to a smaller group (a committee) for further examination and refinement before the body votes on it.
6. **Amend** – This motion is used to modify the pending motion before it is voted on.
7. **Postpone indefinitely** - This motion is sometimes used to kill the main motion for the duration of the session without the group having to take a vote on the motion.

For more detailed information about Subsidiary Motions, see *RONR* pgs. 121-160.

# INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

The class of motions called incidental motions usually relate to matters of the business meeting rather than directly to the main motion. They may be offered at any time when they are needed.

All incidental motions are secondary motions, meaning that they are made when a main motion is already on the floor. Some of these motions, such as suspend the rules or point of order, can be made while nothing is pending; in those situations they are called incidental main motions.

The following six motions are classified as incidental motions. They are:

1. **Point of order** – If a member feels the rules are not being followed, she can use this motion. It requires the chair to make a ruling and enforce the rules.
2. **Appeal from the decision of the chair (appeal)** – a motion to take a decision regarding parliamentary procedure out of the hands of the presiding officer and place the final decision in the hands of the assembly.
3. **Object to the consideration of a question** – The purpose of this motion is to prevent the assembly from considering the question/motion because a member deems the question as irrelevant, unprofitable, or contentious.
4. **Suspend the rules** – This motion is used when the assembly wants to do something that violates its own rules. This motion does not apply to the organization's bylaws; local, state, or national law; or fundamental principles of parliamentary law.
5. **Division of the assembly** – The effect of this motion is to require a standing vote (not a counted vote). A single member can demand this if she feels the vote is too close to declare. This motion can only be used after a voice vote or hand vote.
6. **Division of the question** – This motion is used to separate a main motion or amendment into parts to be voted on individually. It can only be used if each part can stand as a separate question.

For more detailed information about Incidental Motions, see *RONR* pgs. 240 – 261.

## PARLIMENTARY PROCEDURES

Amendments – Amendment to Amendment may not be in book but is legal.

The original motion becomes changed with each addition of an amendment. Votes on each motion are to be taken in reverse order. In Roselle, if an amendment is made to an original motion through the course of discussion, we typically go right to a vote if the members who made the motion and second are in agreement. (Versus going through a vote for each change or amendment to the original motion).

*Lay on the Table* – After a motion is made, debate follows. If a consensus isn't evident, a motion to "lay on the table" can be used to set this motion and discussion aside for a **short time**. There must be a motion **before the end of the same meeting** to "take from the table". This motion brings the motion and discussion back to the group for further discussion and a vote. Used when more information is forthcoming to aid in the decision. This motion is often misused as board members think the item is "tabled" and the item disappears.

The motion "*Postpone indefinitely*" is the motion used to make an item disappear.

Typically, the person who makes a motion should have the first opportunity to speak to the motion....not so much in Roselle!

A 2<sup>nd</sup> means the item should be discussed. If you 2<sup>nd</sup> a motion, you are not required or expected to vote in favor, you are simply saying it should be discussed. If no 2<sup>nd</sup> is made to a motion, but discussion starts anyways, this is the same as a second.

The person who makes the motion (first) is the ONLY one who can withdraw the motion.

*Parliamentary Inquiry* – Questions the Chair about the order of precedence. Makes sure we are following R.R.O.

*Point of Information* – Questions the substance of the motion.

*Point of Order* – The discussion of off topic – this should be done at the moment it happens – don't wait until the end of the meeting.

## Basic Meeting Procedure: 5 steps

The chair leads the meeting.

- 1) **Get the meeting started.** - Get a motion on the floor before the debate starts (this does not typically happen in Roselle). State the motion with proper language, get a second (means I think this is worth discussing)
- 2) **Direct the debate.** – In Roselle we raise our hand to be noticed by the chair. The chair will call your name, notifying you of your time to speak. If you have multiple items to address, note this before you start your discussion. Ex: “I have 3 things I would like to mention” or “I have 2 items that concern me”. This gives the chair and other board members notice that you want to continue speaking after your first issue. You can raise your hand to be recognized again if you need to speak further to a motion. No one is supposed to speak twice before everyone has had an opportunity to speak once. You should ONLY be speaking to the topic in the motion.
- 3) **The Amending Process** – There are 3 ways to amend or modify a motion.
  - a) Add or insert words
  - b) Strike words
  - c) Add and strike words

The motion to amend is a 1<sup>st</sup> degree motion

The motion to amend the amendment is a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree motion.

There are no 3<sup>rd</sup> degree motions

The “*Refer to Committee*” motion ENDS discussion (when voted on) and closes any previous motions to amend.

If a board votes YES on a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree motion – the 1<sup>st</sup> degree motion and main motion are closed.

If the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree motion fails, the board must go back and vote on the 1<sup>st</sup> degree motion. If this passes, the main motion is closed. If the 1<sup>st</sup> degree motion fails, the main motion must be voted on.

- 4) **Closing the Debate** – To bring an end to discussion (when a board member will not stop debating their opinion), anyone except for the Chair can say “I Call for the Previous Question”. This will immediately bring forward the motion that was on the table for a vote. It can also be said as “I move to close debate”.

The Chair CANNOT move to close debate but CAN ask "Is there any further debate", or, "Hearing no further debate I move to vote on...".

- 5) **Voting** – No Board member is forced to vote. A board member may **Abstain** or vote **Present**, both of which means his vote goes with the majority. He can **Pass**, which means the Clerk will come back to him for his vote.  
Voice Vote: yea or nay. If it appears there is a division of the assembly, then a roll call can be called.  
Tie Vote: must be a majority to pass, so the vote fails.  
Majority is more than half the votes cast.

Resources:

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. and In Brief  
Jon Ericson, [Notes and Comments on Robert's Rules](http://edocs.uis.edu/mchen1/parlipro/memberguide.doc)  
<http://edocs.uis.edu/mchen1/parlipro/memberguide.doc>

### Motion Guide for Minute Taking

RANK	Motion	Record at the meeting	Keep in the minutes	
			If adopted	If rejected
<b>Privileged Motions</b>				
1	Fix the time to which to adjourn	Yes	Yes	No
2	Adjourn	Yes	Yes	No
3	Recess	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>	No
4	Raise a question of privilege	Yes	Yes	No
5	Call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Subsidiary Motions</b>				
6	Lay on the table	Yes	Yes	No
7	Previous question	Yes	No	No
8	Limit debate	Yes	No	No
9	Postpone to a certain time	Yes	Yes	No
10	Refer to committee	Yes	Yes	No
11	Amend the amendment	Yes	Incorporate in amendment	No
12	Amend the motion	Yes	Incorporate in main	No
13	Postpone indefinitely	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Main Motion</b>				
14	Main motion	Yes	Yes, final wording	Yes, final wording
<b>Motions That Bring Business Again Before the Assembly</b>				
	Take from the table	Yes	In passing <sup>2</sup>	Yes
	Rescind (or repeal, or annul)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Amend previously adopted	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Discharge a committee	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Reconsider	Yes	In passing <sup>3</sup>	In passing <sup>4</sup>
<b>Incidental Motions</b>				
	Point of order	Yes	Chair's ruling	Chair's ruling
	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No
	Point of information	Yes	No	No
	Appeal from decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Suspend the rules of order	Yes	Yes	No
	Suspend standing rules	Yes	Yes	No
	Choose the method of voting	Yes	No <sup>5</sup>	No
	Division of a question	Yes	In passing <sup>5</sup>	No
	Division of the assembly	Yes	No	No
	Object to consideration	Yes	Yes <sup>7</sup>	Yes
	Permission to withdraw a motion	Yes	No <sup>8</sup>	No
	Consider by paragraph	Yes	No	No
	Blank, to create by striking out	Yes	No	No
	Permission to read papers	Yes	No	No

### Basic Characteristics of Motions

Motion	Purpose	Interrupt speaker?	Second Needed?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Vote Needed
<b>Fix the time to which to adjourn</b>	Sets the time for a continued meeting	No	Yes	No <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Majority
<b>Adjourn</b>	Closes the meeting	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
<b>Recess</b>	Establishes a brief break	No	Yes	No <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Majority
<b>Raise a Question of Privilege</b>	Asks urgent question regarding to rights	Yes	No	No	No	Ruled by chair
<b>Call for orders of the day</b>	Requires that the meeting follow the agenda	Yes	No	No	No	One member
<b>Lay on the table</b>	Puts the motion aside for later consideration	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
<b>Previous question</b>	Ends debate and moves directly to the vote	No	Yes	No	No	Two thirds
<b>Limit or extend limits of debate</b>	Changes the debate limits	No	Yes	No	Yes	Two thirds
<b>Postpone to a certain time</b>	Puts off the motion to a specific time	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority <sup>3</sup>
<b>Commit or refer</b>	Refers the motion to a committee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
<b>Amend an amendment (secondary amendment)</b>	Proposes a change to an amendment	No	Yes	Yes <sup>4</sup>	No	Majority
<b>Amend a motion or resolution (primary amendment)</b>	Proposes a change to a main motion	No	Yes	Yes <sup>4</sup>	Yes	Majority
<b>Postpone indefinitely</b>	Kills the motion	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
<b>Main motion</b>	Brings business before the assembly	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

1 Is debatable when another meeting is scheduled for the same or next day, or if the motion is made while no question is pending

2 Unless no question is pending

3 Majorly, unless it makes question a special order

4 If the motion it is being applied to is debatable

Motions above are in the Order of Precedence of Motions.

### Basic Characteristics of Motions

Motion	Purpose	Interrupt speaker?	Second Needed?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Vote Needed
<b>Point of order</b>	Requests that the rules be followed	Yes	No	No	No	Ruled by chair
<b>Appeal from the decision of the chair</b>	Challenges a ruling of the chair	Yes	Yes	Depends <sup>4</sup>	No	Majority <sup>5</sup>
<b>Suspend the rules</b>	Allows the group to violate the rules (not bylaws)	No	Yes	No	No	Two thirds
<b>Objection to consideration</b>	Keeps the motion from being considered	Yes <sup>6</sup>	No	No	No	Two thirds <sup>7</sup>
<b>Division of the question</b>	Separates consideration of the motion	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
<b>Division of the assembly</b>	Requires a standing vote	Yes	No	No	No	One member
<b>Parliamentary inquiry or point of information</b>	Allows a member to ask a question about business at hand	Yes	No	No	No	Responded to by chair
<b>Withdraw a motion (after stated by chair)</b>	Removes a motion from consideration	Yes	Depends <sup>8</sup>	No	No	Majority
<b>Take from the table</b>	Resumes considering a motion that was laid on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
<b>Reconsider</b>	Considers a motion again	Yes <sup>9</sup>	Yes	Depends <sup>10</sup>	No	Majority
<b>Rescind or amend something previously adopted</b>	Repeals a previously adopted motion or amends it after it has been adopted	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Depends <sup>11</sup>

5 Majority in negative required to reverse chair's decision

6 When another member has been assigned the floor, until debate has begun or a subsidiary motion has been stated by the chair

7 Two thirds against consideration sustains objection

8 Yes, if motion is made by person requesting permission; no, if made by another member

9 When another has been assigned the floor, but not after he has begun to speak

10 Only if motion to be reconsidered is debatable

11 a) a majority with notice; b) two thirds; or c) majority of entire membership