The a-b-c's of PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

CHI EPSILON
National Civil Engineering Honor Society
WHAT IS PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE?

It's a set of rules for conduct at meetings. It allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

Parliamentary procedure has a long history.

It originated in the early English Parliaments (discussions of public affairs).

It came to America with the first settlers.

It became uniform in 1876, when Henry M. Robert published his manual on Parliamentary Law.

Today, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is the basic handbook of operation for most clubs, organizations and other groups.

WHY IS PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE IMPORTANT?

Because it's a time-tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings.

Parliamentary procedure means:

- Democratic Rule
- Flexibility
- Protection of Rights
- A fair hearing for everyone.

It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization.

So it's important that everyone know these basic rules!

For additional information, contact the National Association of Parliamentarians, 6601 Winchester Ave., Suite 260, Kansas City, MO 64133-4600.
Organizations using parliamentary procedure usually follow a fixed

**AGENDA.**

Here's a typical example:

I. **CALL TO ORDER**
The chair says, "The meeting will please come to order!"

II. **QUORUM**
The chair notes if a quorum is present.

III. **MINUTES**
The secretary reads a record of the last meeting.

IV. **OFFICERS’ REPORTS**
Often limited to a report from treasurer, but others may report at this time.

V. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
First come reports from standing (permanent) committees, then from special (temporary) committees.

VI. **SPECIAL ORDERS**
Important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting.

VII. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
Business left over from previous meetings.

VIII. **NEW BUSINESS**
Introduction of new topics.

IX. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
Informing the assembly of other subjects and events.

X. **ADJOURNMENT**
The meeting ends by a vote, or by general consent (or by chair’s decision if time of adjournment was pre-arranged by vote).

*QUORUM...*
The number of members that must be present for business to be conducted legally. The actual number is usually stated in the bylaws.

---

**HOW DO MEMBERS GET THEIR SAY?**

**THEY MAKE MOTIONS!**

A motion is a proposal that the assembly **TAKE A STAND or TAKE ACTION** on some issue.

Members can:

**PRESENT MOTIONS**
(make a proposal)

> "I move..."

**SECOND MOTIONS**
(express support for discussion of another member’s motion)

> "Second"

**DEBATE MOTIONS**
(give opinions on the motion)

> "I think..."

**VOTE ON MOTIONS**
(make a decision)

> "Ay, aye;" "Nay;" "Aye;" "No;" "No;" "Aye;" "No;" "Aye;"
There are
4 GENERAL TYPES
OF MOTIONS.

1 MAIN MOTIONS
introduce subjects to the
assembly for its consideration.
They cannot be made when
another motion is before the
assembly. They yield to
privileged, subsidiary and
incidental motions.
For example:

"I move that we
purchase..."

2 SUBSIDIARY
MOTIONS
change or affect how the
main motion is handled. (They
are voted on before the main
motion.) For example:

"I move the
question before the
assembly be amended by striking
out..."

3 PRIVILEGED
MOTIONS
are most urgent. They concern
special or important matters not
related to pending business. For
example:

"I move we adjourn."

"I move to
suspend the rules
for the purpose
of..."

4 INCIDENTAL
MOTIONS
are questions of procedure
that arise out of other motions.
They must be considered before
the other motion. For example:

Some questions
RELATING TO MOTIONS:

IS IT IN ORDER?
Your motion must relate to the
business at hand, and be presented
at the right time. It must not be
obstructive, frivolous or against
the bylaws.

MAY I INTERRUPT THE SPEAKER?
Some motions are so important
that the speaker may be inter-
rupted to make them. The original
speaker regains the floor after the
interruption has been attended to.

DO I NEED A SECOND?
Usually, yes. A second indicates
that another member would like
to consider your motion.
It prevents spending time on a
question which interests only
one person.

IS IT DEBATABLE?
Parliamentary procedure guards
the right to free and full debate
on most motions. However some
subsidiary, privileged and inciden-
tal motions are not debatable.

CAN IT BE AMENDED?
Some motions can be altered by
striking out, inserting, or both at
once. Amendments must relate
to the subject as presented in
the main motion.

WHAT VOTE IS NEEDED?
Most require only a majority
vote, but motions concerning
the rights of the assembly or
its members need a 2/3 vote
to be adopted.

CAN IT BE RECONSIDERED?
Some motions can be debated
again and revoted to give mem-
bers a chance to change their
minds. The motion to reconsider
must come from the winning side.

The table on pages 8 and 9 answers these
questions for some common motions.
Parliamentary Procedure

-- at a glance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TO DO THIS:</th>
<th>YOU SAY THIS:</th>
<th>MAY YOU INTERRUPT THE SPEAKER?</th>
<th>DO YOU NEED A SECOND?</th>
<th>IS IT DEBATABLE?</th>
<th>CAN IT BE AMENDED?</th>
<th>WHAT VOTE IS NEEDED?</th>
<th>CAN IT BE RECONSIDERED?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADJOURN MEETING</td>
<td>&quot;I move that we adjourn&quot;</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>MAJORITY</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALL AN INTERMISSION</td>
<td>&quot;I move that we recess for...&quot;</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>MAJORITY</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPLAIN ABOUT HEAT, NOISE, ETC.</td>
<td>&quot;I rise to a question of privilege&quot;</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO VOTE</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMPORARILY SUSPEND CONSIDERATION OF AN ISSUE</td>
<td>&quot;I move to table the motion&quot;</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>MAJORITY</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>END DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS</td>
<td>&quot;I move the previous question&quot;</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSTPONE DISCUSSION FOR A CERTAIN TIME</td>
<td>&quot;I move to postpone the discussion until...&quot;</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>MAJORITY</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIVE CLOSER STUDY OF SOMETHING</td>
<td>&quot;I move to refer the matter to committee&quot;</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>MAJORITY</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMEND A MOTION</td>
<td>&quot;I move to amend the motion by...&quot;</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>MAJORITY</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCE BUSINESS</td>
<td>&quot;I move that...&quot;</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>MAJORITY</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The motions listed above are in order of precedence...

Below there is no order...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YOU SAY THIS:</th>
<th>MAY YOU INTERRUPT THE SPEAKER?</th>
<th>DO YOU NEED A SECOND?</th>
<th>IS IT DEBATABLE?</th>
<th>CAN IT BE AMENDED?</th>
<th>WHAT VOTE IS NEEDED?</th>
<th>CAN IT BE RECONSIDERED?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROTEST BREACH OF RULES OR CONDUCT</td>
<td>&quot;I rise to a point of order.&quot;</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO VOTE</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOTE ON A RULING OF THE CHAIR</td>
<td>&quot;I appeal from the chair's decision&quot;</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>MAJORITY</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSPEND RULES TEMPORARILY</td>
<td>&quot;I move to suspend the rules so that...&quot;</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVOID CONSIDERING AN IMPROPER MATTER</td>
<td>&quot;I object to consideration of this motion&quot;</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERIFY A VOICE VOTE BY HAVING MEMBERS STAND</td>
<td>&quot;I call for a division&quot; or &quot;Division!&quot;</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO VOTE</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REQUEST INFORMATION</td>
<td>&quot;Point of information&quot;</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO VOTE</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAKE UP A MATTER PREVIOUSLY TABLED</td>
<td>&quot;I move to take from the table...&quot;</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO VOTE</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECONSIDER A HASTY ACTION</td>
<td>&quot;I move to reconsider the vote on...&quot;</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>MAJORITY</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
**HOW do I present my motion?**

Here’s what to do when it’s your turn to speak:

1. **OBTAIN THE FLOOR**
   a. Wait until the last speaker is finished.
   b. Rise and address the chair. Say, "Mr. (or Madam) Chairperson" or "Mr. (or Madam) President."
   c. Give your name. The chair will recognize you by repeating it.

2. **MAKE YOUR MOTION**
   a. Speak clearly and concisely.
   b. State your motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we . . ." instead of "I move that we do not . . ."
   c. Avoid personalities and stay on the subject.

3. **WAIT FOR A SECOND**
   a. Another member will say, "I second the motion."
   b. Or the chair will call for a second.
   c. If there is no second, your motion will not be considered.

4. **CHAIR STATES YOUR MOTION**
   The chair must say, "It is moved and seconded that we . . ."
   After this happens, debate or voting can occur.
   Your motion is now "assembly property" and you can’t change it without consent of the members.

5. **EXPAND ON YOUR MOTION**
   a. Mover is allowed to speak first.
   b. Direct all comments to the chair.
   c. Keep to the time limit for speaking.
   d. You may speak again after all other speakers are finished.
   e. You may speak a third time by a motion to suspend the rules with a 2/3 vote.

6. **PUTTING THE QUESTION**
   a. The chair asks, "Are you ready for the question?"
   b. If there is no more discussion, or if a motion to stop debate is adopted, a vote is taken.
   c. The chair announces the results.
The method of voting on a motion depends on the situation and on the laws of your organization.

**BY VOICE**
The chair asks those in favor to say "aye" and those opposed to say "no." (For majority votes only.) A member may move for an exact count.

**BY SHOW OF HANDS**
Members raise their hands as a sign of verification or as an alternative to a voice vote. It does not require a count. A member may move for an exact count.

**BY ROLL CALL**
If a record of each person's vote is needed, each member answers "yes," "no" or "present" (indicating the choice not to vote) as his or her name is called.

**BY BALLOT**
Members write their vote on a slip of paper. This is done when secrecy is desired.

**BY GENERAL CONSENT**
When a motion isn't likely to be opposed, the chair says, "If there is no objection . . ." Members show agreement by their silence. If someone says, "I object," the matter must be put to a vote.

More about VOTING

*Are we ready for the question?*

A question (motion) is PENDING when it has been stated by the chair but not yet voted on.

The last motion stated by the chair is the first pending. The MAIN MOTION is always the last voted on.

A MOTION TO TABLE

( lay on the table)

This motion is used to lay something aside temporarily to take care of a more urgent matter. There is always the option to "take from the table" any motion for reconsideration by the assembly.

A MOTION TO POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

This is parliamentary strategy – it allows members to dispose of a motion without making a decision for or against. It is useful in case of a badly chosen main motion for which either a "yes" or "no" vote would have undesirable consequences.
Glossary and Index

Adjoin
To end the meeting ........................................ 4
Ways to adjourn ........................................... 4
How to move to adjourn ................................ 8-9

Agenda
Business to be considered during a meeting .......... 4

Amend
To change a motion ........................................ 7
Ways to amend ............................................. 7
How to move to amend ................................ 8-9

Committee
A group of members chosen for a certain task ....... 4

Debate
Discussion about a motion ................................ 5
Members' right ............................................. 5
When to debate ............................................ 6, 8-9
Rules on debate ............................................ 11

General Consent
Accepting a motion without a vote ...................... 12

In Order
Relevant to the business at hand ......................... 6

Majority
More than one half of the members ......... 7
In voting ................................................. 7
When required ........................................... 8-9

MOTION
A proposal that the assembly take a stand or take action on some issue
Types of motions ...................................... 6-7
 Procedures affecting motions ........................ 7
Typical motions ......................................... 8-9
How to make a motion ................................ 10-11

Quorum
Number of members that must be present to conduct business legally ......................... 4

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised
Manual of procedure for nonlegislative assemblies .... 2

Second
A verbal signal from a member that he or she wishes to consider a motion just made
Members' right ........................................... 5
When required ............................................. 6
How to give a second ................................... 11

Voting
Means by which motions are accepted or rejected by the assembly
Members' right ........................................... 5
What vote is needed ..................................... 7, 8-9
Method of voting ........................................ 12

So--
Parliamentary Procedure Helps Get Things Done!

But-- it only works if you use it right!

✓ MAKE MOTIONS that are in order.
✓ OBTAIN THE FLOOR properly.
✓ SPEAK clearly and concisely.
✓ OBEY the rules of debate.

And, most of all, BE COURTEOUS!