

Parliamentary Procedures

What is parliamentary procedure? It is a set of rules for conducting a meeting.

It allows everyone to be heard and make decisions without confusion!

What makes parliamentary procedure important?

It is a time-tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings.

What is the history of parliamentary procedure?

It originated in the early English Parliaments, then came to America with the first settlers. In 1876, it became uniform when Henry M. Robert published his manual on Parliamentary Law. Today, Robert's "Rules of Order" is the most widely used approach to rules for group leadership.

What does parliamentary procedure mean?

It means democratic rule, flexibility, protection of rights, and a fair hearing for everyone...which means it can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization.

How do I present my motion?

1. Obtain the floor

- a. Wait until the last speaker is finished.
- b. Raise your hand and wait to be acknowledged by the chair.

2. Make your motion

- a. Speak clearly and concisely.
- b. State your motion affirmatively. "I move..."
- 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

- a. The chairperson must say, "It is moved and seconded that we..."
- b. After this happens, debate or voting can occur.
- c. Your motion is now "assembly property" and you can't change it without consent of the members.

5. Expand your motion

- a. Mover is allowed to speak first.
- b. Direct all comments to the chairperson.
- c. You may speak again after all other speakers are finished.

6. Putting the question

- a. Mover is allowed to speak first.
- b. If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.

Types of Motions

- **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..."
- **Subsidiary motions** change how the main motion is handled (voted on before the main motion). For example, "I move the question before the assembly be amended by striking out..."
- **Privileged motions** are most urgent about special or important matters not related to pending business. For example, "I move we adjourn."
- **Incidental motions** are questions of procedure that come from other motions and must be considered before the other motion. For example, "I move to suspend the rules for the purpose of..."

Other questions relating to motions

- **Is it in order?** Your motion must relate to the business at hand and be presented at the right time.
- **May I interrupt the speaker?** Some motions are so important that the speaker may be interrupted 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. Some privileged and incidental motions are not debatable.
- **Can it be amended?** Some motions can be altered by striking out, inserting, or by doing both at once. Amendments must relate to 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 2/3 vote to be adopted.

- **Can it be reconsidered?** Some motions can be re-debated and re-voted to give members a chance to change their minds. The move to reconsider must come from the winning side.

| Type of motion | May interrupt member who has the floor | Mover must first be recognized | Requires a second | Debatable | Vote required | May be renewed |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|---------------|----------------------|
| Main Motion | no | yes | yes | yes | majority | not at same session |
| Lay on Table | no | yes | yes | no | majority | after progress |
| Amend | no | yes | yes | yes | majority | no |
| Reconsider | yes | no | yes | yes | majority | no |
| Rescind | no | yes | yes | yes | majority | not at same session |
| Refer | no | yes | yes | yes | majority | after progress |
| Suspend the Rules | no | yes | yes | no | | no, unless unanimous |
| Withdraw | no | yes | no | no | majority | after progress |
| Question of Privilege | yes | no | no | no | majority | after progress |
| Point of Order | yes | no | no | no | none | no |



Campus Activities at Northwestern University: For more information on organization and leadership development skills, stop by Norris University Center, 1999 S. Campus Dr., or call (847)491-2350. Staff members will be happy to assist you and answer your questions. Check out our website: <http://www.stuaff.nwu.edu/norris/>