



# **Henderson's PARLIAMENTARY GUIDE**

for the Chairman and Members  
of a Deliberative Assembly

## **What Is a Motion?**

A MOTION is a formal proposal by a member at a meeting that the assembly takes certain action.

## **How to Present and Dispose of a Motion**

The proper presentation and disposition of a motion require eight separate steps:

1. A member rises and addresses the presiding officer.
2. The member is recognized by the presiding officer.
3. The member proposes a motion.
4. Another member seconds the motion.
5. The presiding officer states the motion to the assembly.
6. The assembly debates, or discusses, the motion.
7. The presiding officer takes the vote on the motion.
8. The presiding officer announces the result of the vote.

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## **Chart of Precedence of Motions** – *Meaning of the symbols*

- InSp – may interrupt a speaker
- NSR – no second required
- ND – not debatable
- LD – limited debate
- 2/3 – requires 2/3 vote for adoption
- OMQ – opens main question to debate

### **Privileged Motions**

1. To fix Time to Which to Adjourn ..... LD
2. To Adjourn (Unqualified) ..... ND
3. To Take a Recess..... LD
4. To Rise to a Question of Privilege ..... InSp, NSR, ND
5. To Call for Orders of the Day ..... InSp, NSR, ND

### **Subsidiary Motions**

6. To Lay on the Table ..... ND
7. To Call for the Previous Question ..... ND, 2/3
8. To Limit, or Extend Limits of, Debate..... LD, 2/3
9. To Postpone Definitely..... LD
10. To Refer to a Committee ..... LD
11. To Amend
12. To Postpone Indefinitely..... OMQ

### **Main Motions**

13. (a) General Main Motion
- (b) Specific Main Motions
  - To Take from the Table ..... ND
  - To Reconsider ..... InSp, OMQ
  - To Reconsider and Have Entered on the Minutes ..... InSp, ND
  - To Rescind..... OMQ, 2/3
  - To Expunge ..... OMQ, 2/3
  - To Adopt a Resolution
  - To Adjourn (Qualified)
  - To Create Orders of the Day..... 2/3
  - To Amend (Constitution, etc.)..... 2/3

### **Incidental Motions**

- To Suspend Rules ..... ND, 2/3
- To Withdraw a Motion..... NSE, ND
- To Read Papers..... ND
- To Object to Consideration..... InSp, NSR, ND, 2/3
- To Rise to a Point of Order ..... InSp, NSR, ND
- To Rise to a Parliamentary Inquiry..... InSp, NSR, ND
- To Appeal from the Decision of the Chair..... Sp, LD
- To Call for a Division of the Assembly ..... InSp, NSR, ND
- To Call for a Division of a Question..... ND

### **Significance of the Rank of Motions**

- ▶ The motions in the chart are arranged in the order of their precedence, or rank upward from Main Motions to Privileged Motions.
- ▶ No two Main Motions may be pending at the same time.
- ▶ Motions that bring a question again before the assembly and Incidental Motions have no order of precedence among themselves. Any one of them may be proposed whenever a situation arises that requires it.
- ▶ They yield to Privileged Motions.

## **What Would I Like to Do?**

Introduce business?

13 – Main Motion.

Kill a matter? Or defer it?

12 – Postpone Indefinitely.

Change or Modify?

11 – Amend.

Let a few attend to a matter?

10 – Refer to a Committee.

Fix a time to attend to a matter?

9 – Postpone Definitely.

Limit debate? Or extend limit?

8 – Limit, or Extend Limits of, Debate.

Stop debate and demand immediate vote?

7 – Call for the Previous Question.

Defer action on a question?

6 – Lay on the Table.

Insist upon order of business being followed strictly?

5 – Call for Orders of the Day.

Ask a privileged question?

4 – Rise to a Question of Privilege.

Have an intermission?

3 – Take a Recess.

Make an end of the meeting?

2 – Adjourn (Unqualified)

Fix the time for an adjourned meeting?

1 – Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn.

## **(Specific Main Motions)**

Consider a motion a second time?

Take from the Table - Reconsider - Rescind.

Prevent a vote from being final?

Reconsider and Have Entered on the Minutes.

Consider a motion sent to a Committee?

Discharge a Committee?

## **(Incidental Motions)**

Suspend the rules that interfere with another matter?

Suspend Rules.

Prevent a vote from being taken upon a motion?

Withdraw a Motion.

Have a paper read which is not on the program?

Read Papers.

Suppress a question?

Object to Consideration.

(Must be BEFORE debate.)

See that order is restored?

Rise to a Point of Order.

Make some Inquiry as to Parliamentary procedure?

Rise to a Parliamentary Inquiry.

Object to a decision made by the Chair?

Appeal from the decision of the Chair.

Have the assembly divided in voting?

Call for a Division of the Assembly.

Have a question divided into parts?

Call for a Division of a Question.

## Fundamentals of Parliamentary Law

1. Justice and courtesy for all.
2. Do only one thing at a time.
3. The majority rules.
4. The minority must be heard.
5. Each proposition is entitled to full and free debate.
6. The desires of the individual must be merged into the larger unit – the organization or assembly.
7. The purpose is to facilitate action, not to obstruct it.

## Agenda or Regular Order of Business

1. Call to order.
2. Reading and approval of minutes.
3. Treasurer's report.
4. Reports of officers and standing committees.
5. Reports of special committees.
6. Unfinished business.
7. New business.
8. Program.
9. Adjournment.

## Purposes of Motions

A **MAIN MOTION** brings a question before the assembly for consideration.

**SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS** are for the purpose of modifying or disposing of the Main Motion under discussion.

**PRIVILEGED MOTIONS** have no connection with the Main Motion, but are of such importance as to demand immediate consideration.

**INCIDENTAL MOTIONS** relate to the pending business and must be decided immediately.

## Uses of Motions

To determine whether or not a motion may be correctly used, consider these questions:

1. May it interrupt a speaker?
2. Does it require a second?
3. May it be debated or amended?
4. What vote is required to carry it?
5. Can it be reconsidered?
6. Are there other motions that may be applied to it?
7. What is its rank, or precedence?