

Robert's Rules of Order

Professional Development Session

Reference for Motions

Main Motion. A main motion introduces an item of business.

Secondary Motion. There are three types of secondary motions: subsidiary, privileged and incidental motions.

- A subsidiary motion changes the idea of a motion or deals with handling it.
- A privileged motion pertain more to the meeting, and not related to the main motion.
- An incidental motion brings a question or action on procedure.

Characteristics of Motions.

- Is the motion in order?
 - It must relate to the business at hand and be presented at the right time. It must not be frivolous, obstructive or against the Constitution & Bylaws.
- Can the speaker be interrupted?
 - Some motions are so important that the speaker can be interrupted for another member to make them.
- Is a second needed?
 - In general the answer is yes, but there are exceptions.
- Is it debatable?
 - A basic right is to have full and free debate on most motions. All main motions are debatable, and several secondary motions are not debatable.
- Can it be amended?
 - Amendments must relate to the subject (be germane).
- What vote is needed?
 - Majority vote is most common. Motions that take away rights of members require a two-thirds vote.
- Can it be reconsidered?
 - Some motions can be debated and voted on over again to give members a chance to change their minds. A motion to reconsider must come from the winning side.

Ranking Motions.

- **Privileged Motions**, while they do not have any relation to the pending question, are so urgent or important they are entitled to immediate consideration.
- **Subsidiary Motions** are those that may be applied to another motion to modify it, delay action, or dispose of it.
- **Main Motions** are the basis of all parliamentary procedure. They provide the method to bring business before the assembly for consideration and action.

Type	Name of Motion	In order when another has the floor?	Does it require a second?	Is it debatable?	Is it amendable?	Vote needed to adopt?	May it be reconsidered?
P	Fix the Time to which to Adjourn	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	Yes
P	Adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
P	Recess	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
P	Raise a Question of Privilege	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides	No
P	Call for the Orders of the Day	Yes	No	No	No	No vote; Demand (5)	No
S	Lay on the Table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
S	Previous Question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes
S	Limit or Extend Limits of Debate	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3	Yes (1)
S	Postpone to a Certain Time (Definitely)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority (2)	Yes
S	Commit (Refer to a Committee)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes (3)
S	Amend	No	Yes	Yes (4)	Yes	Majority	Yes
S	Postpone Indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Aff. Only
M	Main Motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes

(1) Unexecuted part may be reconsidered.

(2) 2/3 vote if made a special order.

(3) Only if committee has not started work.

(4) If applied to a debatable motion.

(5) The assembly may suspend the rules, or a two-thirds vote in the negative would set aside the orders of the day.

Incidental and Restorative Motions.

- **Incidental Motions** (1) arise out of a pending question; or (2) arise out of a question that has just been pending; or (3) related to the business of the assembly. Incidental motions usually apply to the method of transacting business rather than the business itself. They have no rank among themselves because they are in order whenever they are incidental to the business at hand.
- **Motions that Bring a Question Again before the Assembly (Restorative)** are motions that bring a question again to the assembly for consideration.

Type	Name of Motion	In order when another has the floor?	Does it require a second?	Is it debatable?	Is it amendable?	Vote required to adopt?	May it be reconsidered?
I	Appeal	Yes	Yes	Yes (1)	No	Majority (2)	Yes
I	Consider by Paragraph or Seriatim	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
I	Division of the Assembly	Yes	No	No	No	No vote; Demand	No
I	Division of a Question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
I	Request for Information	Yes	No	No	No	Chair answers or asks for member's answer	No
I	Parliamentary Inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	Chair answers	No
I	Point of Order	Yes	No	No	No	Chair rules (4)	No
I	Suspend the Rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
I	Objection to consideration of a question	Yes (5)	No	No	No	2/3 against sustains objection	Negative Only
R	Reconsider	(3)	Yes	Yes (1)	No	Majority	No
R	Take from the Table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No

(1) If applied to a debatable question.

(2) Majority in the negative required to reverse the Chair's decision.

(3) In order if another has been assigned the floor – if that member has not begun to speak.

(4) The chair may also place the point of order into the hands of the assembly for a vote.

(5) Until debate has begun or a subsidiary motion other than Lay on the table has been stated by the chair.