

# Motions

All business brought before the association should be put in the form of a motion. Eight steps are required to handle a motion. These steps are explained in detail below.

## Step 1: Obtaining the Floor

- The member stands and addresses the presiding officer, by saying “Mr. President,” or “Mr. Chair.”
- The member does not speak further until recognized by the presiding officer.

## Step Two: Assigning the Floor

- The Chair recognizes the member, using his name, if known.
- The chair is under no obligation to recognize a motion made by a member who does not wait for recognition by the chair.

## Step Three: Making the Motion

- After being recognized by the chair, the member then states the motion, beginning with the words: “I move.”
- Motions should be worded in the affirmative; however, if strong feeling must be expressed, it may be done by a negative motion.

## Step Four: Seconding the Motion

- A second is necessary to avoid spending time considering a question that only one member favors.
- Any member who wants the motion to be considered states: “*I second the motion,*” or “*I second it,*” or simply, “*Second.*” The member does not need to be in favor of the motion to second it.
- A motion is seconded without obtaining the floor.

## Step Five: Stating the Motion

- The chair states, “The motion has been made and seconded that... Is there discussion?” Only after the motion is stated by the chair is it before the assembly. The chair must correctly state a motion before the assembly can take action. (Never say, “You have heard the motion.”)
- Do not allow members to state motions by saying “so moved,” since this makes it very difficult for the secretary to record the exact wording of a motion.
- If a second is not heard, the chair may ask “Is there a second to the motion?” If he feels that there is confusion or that the motion was not heard, he may repeat the motion.
- If no second is made, the chair proceeds with the business.

## Step Six: Discussion or Debate

- Immediately after stating the question, the chair asks the maker of the motion if he would like to speak first in debate.
- The chair gives the chance to speak to every member who wishes it. Pro and con speakers should be given alternating opportunities to speak, if possible, and all speakers should tactfully be kept to rules of order and to the question.
- The chair recognizes a member who has not previously spoken to the motion in preference to one who has spoken.
- All statements must be addressed to the chair.

- The chair does not enter into discussion. Should the president wish to debate, the chair must ask the vice president to preside. He does not resume the chair until after the final disposition of the question under discussion. The president may vote when the vote would change the outcome (to make or break a tie) or when the voting is by ballot.
- Debate continues until no one wishes to speak or until someone moves to close debate.
- Do not allow members to close debate by shouting “question.” Make them seek recognition and make the motion properly. (“I move the previous question.”)

### **Step Seven: Putting the Question**

- The chair states, “The question is on the motion to .... Those in favor say ‘aye.’ Those opposed say ‘no.’” (The negative vote is called for on all motions except courtesy motions.)
- The chair always states the method of voting. Voting can be by general consent (if there is no objection), by voice, by show of hands, by rising to be counted, or by ballot.

### **Step Eight: Announcing the Vote**

- The chair states either, “The affirmative has it, and we will...” or “The negative has it, and the motion is lost.” The chair always announces the vote.
- A tie vote on any motion means the motion is lost except on an appeal from the decision of the chair. A tie vote sustains the chair’s decision.

### **Additional Information**

- A motion may be brought before the association for a second consideration by a motion: a) to reconsider the vote, b) to rescind, or c) to take from the table. A lost motion may be brought back as a new motion at any future meeting.
- A motion cannot be rescinded when action has been taken that cannot be recalled or undone. If no action has been taken on a motion, it may be rescinded by a two-thirds vote or a majority vote with previous notice.
- A motion to ratify is used to confirm some action that requires the approval of the association or of some emergency action taken at a meeting when a quorum was not present. An association can only ratify a request that is within the bylaws or in a motion. Do not ask for ratification for expenditures, unless they are specifically outlined in the budget or unless you can afford to pay for the item if the association refuses to ratify it.
- In the motion to appeal from the decision of the chair, the appeal is the question before the assembly. The chair puts the question without leaving the chair and has the right to debate first and last if the appeal is debatable. The member appealing the decision is entitled to be the second to debate. Each member may speak only once on an appeal.
- A motion that has been laid on the table can be taken from the table during the meeting at which it was tabled (after at least one item of business has been transacted) or at the next meeting by any member.

If the assembly wishes to adjourn before all business is completed, it must be adjourned by a motion.

# MOTIONS: RANKING AND REQUIREMENTS

RANKING MOTIONS		PRINCIPAL REQUIREMENTS						
The motions are listed in order of rank. When any one of these motions is immediately pending, those above it are in order and those below it are not in order.		Recognition	Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Required	Reconsiderable	May Interrupt
		<b>PRIVILEGED MOTIONS</b>						
13.	Fix the time to which to adjourn	yes	yes	no	yes	majority	yes	no
12.	Adjourn	yes	yes	no	no	majority	no	no
11.	Recess	yes	yes	no	yes	majority	no	no
10.	Raise a question of privilege	no	no	no	no	X	no	yes
9.	Call for order of the day	no	no	no	no	X	no	yes
<b>SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS</b>								
8.	Lay on the table	yes	yes	no	no	majority	no	no
7.	Previous question (to close debate)	yes	yes	no	no	2/3 vote	yes*	no
6.	Modify debate	yes	yes	no	yes	2/3 vote	yes	no
5.	Postpone definitely	yes	yes	yes	yes	majority	yes	no
4.	Commit or recommit	yes	yes	yes	yes	majority	yes*	no
3.	Amend	yes	yes	yes*	yes*	majority	yes	no
2.	Postpone indefinitely	yes	yes	yes	no	majority	+	no
1.	MAIN MOTION	yes	yes	yes	yes	majority*	yes	no
<b>NON-RANKING MOTIONS</b>								
Whether these motions are in order depends upon the business already under consideration and what purpose they may serve when introduced.								
<b>INCIDENTAL MOTIONS</b>								
Appeal		no	yes	*	no	majority	yes	yes
Close nominations or the polls		yes	yes	no	yes	2/3 vote	no	no
Consider seriatim		yes	yes	no	yes	majority	no	no
Divide the question		yes	yes*	no	yes*	majority*	no	no*
Division of the assembly		no	no	no	no	no	no	yes
Object to consideration of a question		yes	no	no	no	2/3 vote	#	yes*
Parliamentary inquiry		no	no	no	no	chair	no	yes
Point of order		no	no	no	no	chair	no	yes
Reopen nominations or the polls		yes	yes	no	yes	majority	#	no
Suspend the rules*		yes	yes	no	no	2/3 vote*	no	no
Withdraw a motion		yes	no	no	no	majority	#	yes*
<b>MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY</b>								
Reconsider		yes	yes	=	no	majority	no	no
Take from the table		yes	yes	no	no	majority	no	no

## KEY TO MARKINGS

- \* See *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* for special rules. # Only a negative vote may be recognized.  
 X Usually no vote taken; chair rules. = Debatable when applied to a debatable motion.  
 + Only an affirmative vote may be reconsidered.