

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE GUIDE

For

*Nevada Jaycees
Officers & Directors*



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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide members with basic knowledge of Parliamentary procedure, enabling each member to understand and participate effectively in a business meeting. The more educated a member is, the more he or she would feel comfortable in attending and being a part of the decision making process.

Every member of an organization should know how to take part in a meeting, how to conduct one, and how to protect the rights of other members of the group so that all are treated fairly. When accepted procedure is followed, each member is insured an equal right to express his or her views; thus, the will of all members, rather than the will of a select few, is represented in the activities of the organization.

This is not a complete guide to Parliamentary procedure, but is intended for general reference to assist members. I would be pleased to discuss particular points of interest or refer the reader to more detailed background sources. Robert's Rules of Order is the reference for conducting business except where the Constitution and Bylaws are in conflict. This is standard practice for conducting business for any organization.

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I. General Background and Principles

Parliamentary Law consists of a collection of rules, and originated as a science in England during the 14th century. The American Colonists for use in Colonial legislatures, town meetings, and other public and private meetings introduced it in this country. Parliamentary Law was used in a primitive fashion in ancient Greece and Rome.

The rules, though modified through the centuries, have remained basically the same and are used throughout the civilized world. If you understand and apply, then you are in a unique position not only to exert leadership and influence in organizations, but also to preside with credit and distinction over any assembly, large or small, anytime, anywhere, through the land. The term, Parliamentary, is derived from the French word “parlay” (parlay) – to speak, discuss, deliberate. The terms Parliamentary procedure, Parliamentary Law, and rules of order are interchangeable in a practical sense.

The object of Parliamentary Law is to transact the assembly’s business legally and to control conduct of its members. Its application assures the will of the majority rules and that of the minority is protected.

The fundamental principles of Parliamentary Law are –

- Courtesy to all
- Justice to all
- One thing at a time
- The rule of the majority
- The rights of the minority
- Partiality to no one

It is designed to –

- Expedite business
- To maintain order
- To insure justice and equality

Eight essential steps to obtain action a Main Motion –

1. Rises and addresses the Chair
 2. Receives recognition from the Chair
 3. Introduces the motion
 4. Another member seconds the motion
- Chair (Presiding Officer)
5. States the motion
 6. Calls for remarks
 7. Takes the vote
 8. Announces the result of the vote

“Parliamentary Law is no part of Civil Law.”

II. Basic Courtesies and Regulations

1. The Chair or presiding officer of the organization is referred to by the member as the Moderator or the Chair
2. When presiding and referring to him (her) self, the Moderator says “The Chair...” rather than, “I....”
3. Members wishing to speak will rise and address the Moderator (Chair) so as to be recognized.
4. Members say, “I move that...” not, “I make a motion that...”
5. Members cooperated with the Moderator (Chair) in seeing that a motion precedes discussion by the group. However, the member planning to make the motion may first give a brief explanation of meaning, purpose and intention.
6. Before making a motion, the member thinks it through first (or writes it down) so as to assure adequate and concise wording. This saves the Moderator (Chair) from attempting to rephrase a proper motion from a rambling, confusing paragraph.
7. Make motions positive rather than negative. Example: Don’t say, “I move that we don’t contribute the money.” Instead, say, “I move that we refuse to contribute the money,” or, “deny the request to contribute the money.”

III. Class, Rules and Rank of Certain Motions.

The symbols S, D, A, M, R and 2/3 are used to reveal the rules of each motion, and to give “on-the-spot” information about each. These symbols mean respectively, that the motion is secondable, debatable, and amendable, requires majority vote, can be reconsidered, and requires two-thirds vote.

There are three Classes of Ranking Motions: Privileged, Subsidiary, and Principal (Main). Each motion is listed according to its rank. Each is of higher rank than those below it, and of lower rank than those above it. A motion is in order when those of lower rank are pending and out of order when a motion of higher rank is pending. There are thirteen non-ranking or Incidental motions.

Example:

Transacting the rank of these motions is like transacting bids at an auction sale. For example, let's assume that the Main Motion, “to buy a radio,” has been properly made, seconded, and stated by the Moderator (Chair). Member A moves to “lay the motion on the table.” Seconded. (This subsidiary of helping motion ranks higher than the Main Motion, so is in order.)

Member B moves the “previous question”. Moderator (Chair) says, “The motion just proposed is not in order as it is of lower rank than the motion to table.”

Member C moves to “limit the debate to two minutes per member.” Again, not in order.

Member D moves to “recess for five minutes.” Seconded. This motion is in order as it ranks higher than the motion to table.

When voting on those motions now pending, i.e. – to buy a radio, lay the motion on the table, and to recess, the one of the highest rank is put to vote first. Then one of the next highest rank, and on down until the main motion, “to buy a radio,” is properly disposed.

Practice the above steps until familiar with the procedure.

The British Parliament invented this order of rank.

Transacting the rank of these motions is similar to transacting the bids at an auction sale.

Conducting voting when More than One Motion is pending

The Moderator (Chair) puts to vote first the highest-ranking motion of those pending, then the next highest, and so on.

In summary, the eight essential steps to making normal (main) motion are as follow:

IV. The Main Motion

A. Eight essential steps to obtain action of the house on a Main Motion.

Member:

1. Rise and address the Moderator (Chair)
2. Await recognition. (The Moderator assigns the floor by calling the member's name.)
3. Introduce the motion – “I move that...”
4. Second the motion – (another member without rising) “I second the motion.”

Moderator (Chair)*

5. State the motion – “It is moved and seconded that” (repeat the motion).

**

6. Call for discussion –
“Is there any discussion?” or “are you ready for the question?” (Any of the three forms are correct.)
7. Take the vote – “those in favor will please say ‘Aye’” (pause) “those opposed will say ‘no’” (pause).
8. Announce the results of the vote – “The ‘ayes’ have it” and “the motion is carried.” Or “The ‘no’s’ have it” and “the motion is lost.”

Note: When announcing the results of a Main Motion, it is well to state what the chapter will do as a result of the vote just taken.

* Maker may withdraw motion.

** Maker may withdraw motion with the unanimous consent of the assembly or by motion by another member.

B. Seven Points to Know of Every Motion.

1. Its object.
2. Whether or not it requires a second.
3. Whether or not it is debatable.
4. Whether or not it may be amended
5. To what motions it will yield.
6. The vote required for its adoption.
7. Whether or not the vote on it may be reconsidered.

V. Debate – General Rules

1. Maker of motion has the right to speak first and last.
2. No one may speak twice until all who wish to speak have spoken once.
3. No one may speak three times to the same motion if anyone in the assembly objects.
4. Debate may be limited or extended by a motion to that effect and this motion requires a two-thirds majority.
5. On a definitely contested issue the Moderator (Chair) should recognize speakers “for” and “against” the motion alternately.
6. The Question may be called (debate closed) by a two-thirds vote. However, the bylaws allow that each member be given ample opportunity to express their views; therefore a premature call for the question is subject to being ruled out of order by the Moderator (Chair).
7. Rights in regard to debate are not transferable. A member cannot yield any unexpired portion of their time to another member.

VI. The Moderator (Chair) – General Rules

1. The Moderator (Chair) may not debate unless they first surrender the gavel to the next highest-ranking officer. The Moderator (Chair) may not resume moderating until the question being debated has been voted upon.
2. The Moderator (Chair) cannot vote except to make or break a tie. He does not have to surrender the gavel to vote.
3. The Moderator (Chair) makes the decision on certain special motions.
4. The Moderator (Chair) has the following authority:
 - a. Order in which speakers are recognized.
 - b. Refuse to recognize members offering dilatory, absurd, or frivolous motions.
 - c. Restrain speakers within the limits of the rules.
 - d. Enforce good decorum.
5. Parliamentarian – Assist the Moderator (Chair) with parliamentary advice upon the Moderator (Chair) request, or the request of any member through the Moderator (Chair). The Parliamentarian only advises, the Moderator (Chair) rules.
6. Any decision of the Moderator (Chair) may be overruled by an “Appeal of the Decision of the Chair” which requires a second, may not be amended or debated and requires only a majority vote to carry.

VII. Voting

1. The vote on a motion may not be interrupted except to restate the motion
2. In case of a tie vote, the motion is lost.
3. A member may change their vote any time before the Moderator (Chair) announces the results.
4. A ballot vote is required only if the bylaws requires or the assembly votes for it.
5. If any member is in doubt as to the result of any voice vote, they may request a "Division of the House" which requires a showing of hands to determine the actual vote. This motion does not require a second, and may not be amended or debated.

