

# Parliamentary procedure at a glance

	To do this:	You say this:	Must motion be seconded?	Order of precedence	May motion be amended?	May motion be debated?	Who decides the outcome?
Main business actions	Introduce business (make a main motion)	"I move that..."	Yes	13	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Majority
	Change a motion or a resolution	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	Yes	11	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Majority
Delaying or blocking actions	Postpone indefinitely	"I move we postpone consideration of this question indefinitely."	Yes	12	No	Yes	Majority
	Refer to Committee	"I move that we refer this to the Committee on..."	Yes	10	Yes	Yes	Majority
	Postpone to a definite time	"I move that consideration of this matter be postponed until..."					
	Lay on the table	"I move we table this."	Yes	6	No	No	Majority
	Recess the meeting	"I move we recess until..."	Yes	2	Yes	No	Majority
	Adjourn the meeting	"I move we adjourn."	Yes	1	No	No	Majority
Speeding up actions	Limit debate	"I move that discussion be limited to [period of time]."	Yes	8	Yes	No	2/3 vote <sup>3</sup>
	Stop debate by calling for a vote	"I move the previous question."	Yes	7	No	No	2/3 vote
	Get a matter taken up ahead of schedule	"I move that we suspend the rules and consider..."	Yes	— <sup>4</sup>	No	No	2/3 vote
Other actions	Obtain the floor to reply immediately to a personal affront or to call attention to a nuisance or an emergency	"Point of privilege!" <sup>5</sup>	No	3	No	No	The chair
	Object to an improper procedure	"Point of order!" <sup>5</sup>	No	4	No	No	The chair
	Get information about a procedure	"Point of information." <sup>5</sup>	No	5	No	No	The chair
	Get a count taken to verify a voice vote	"I call for a division of the assembly," or, simply, "Division!"	No	— <sup>6</sup>	No	No	Majority (if someone objects)
	Reconsider a matter already disposed of	"I move that we reconsider [now or later] our action on..."	Yes	— <sup>4</sup>	No	Yes (if original motion was debatable)	Majority
	Take up a matter that was tabled	"I move that we take from the table..."	Yes	— <sup>4</sup>	No	No	Majority
	Try to reverse a decision by the chair	"I appeal the chair's decision."	Yes	— <sup>6</sup>	No	Yes <sup>7</sup>	Majority

For easy reference, the principal kinds of parliamentary action are grouped according to the general purpose they're intended to accomplish. Each action is bracketed with the specific words used to initiate it and the basic rules that will affect its outcome. If you want to know which actions get prior consideration over other actions...and in any lively debate you may need to know that...refer to the column "order of precedence." there, each motion or point that can be ranked has a rank-number assigned to it. The lower the number, the higher the motions' rank—that is, the fewer other motions it yields to. A motion to adjourn thus takes precedence over any other motion on the chart.

<sup>1</sup> Amendment must be germane to the motion. An amendment that would nullify a motion is out of order.

<sup>2</sup> An amendment may be amended only once.

<sup>3</sup> Generally, any action that interferes with Members' rights requires a 2/3 vote.

<sup>4</sup> These motions have no fixed rank, but they may not be brought up while any other motion is pending.

<sup>5</sup> A person wishing to raise a point of privilege, order or urgent information may interrupt another person who has the floor; otherwise it's out of order to interrupt a speaker.

<sup>6</sup> A motion for a vote-count must be made during or immediately after a voice vote, and an appeal motion must be made immediately after the chair's ruling is announced; both kinds of motion must be disposed of immediately. Neither has a general ruling.

<sup>7</sup> Except when the ruling being appealed has to do with the appealing Member's conduct or behavior in the meeting.