

NSTU GUIDE
TO
PARLIAMMENTARY
PROCEDURE



NSTU

PARLIAMMENTARY
PROCEDURE COURSE

1. *What is parliamentary procedure?*

It is a set of rules for conducting business at official meetings of an organization. Organizations, other than legislative bodies, operate under common law. Various parliamentary authorities are available to organizations adhering to common law that provide guidance for appropriate parliamentary procedure.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th Edition, is the parliamentary authority for most organizations; in particular, non-profit organizations.

2. *Why is parliamentary procedure important?*

Parliamentary procedures ensures and protects the democratic procedure. It protects the rights of the minority to be heard while ensuring the voice of the majority prevails.

It's important for members of an organization to know basic rules of parliamentary procedure.

The purpose of Parliamentary Procedure is to facilitate the business of the meeting. It is not a goal in itself.

3. *A Meeting Agenda*

The order of business generally followed by an organization that uses parliamentary procedure.

Meeting Agenda Template

1. Call to Order
2. Minutes
3. Officer's Reports
4. Reports of Special Committees
5. Special Orders
6. Unfinished Business and General Orders
7. New Business
8. Announcements
9. Adjournment

4. *How do members participate?*

Members make motions. A motion is a proposal that the assembly take a position or action on an issue. Members have the right to:

Present Motions (Make a Proposal) "I move that..."

*Second Motions (Express support for discussion of another member's motion)
"Second."*

Debate Motions (Give options on the motion) "I think..."

Vote on Motions (Make a decision) "All those in favor..."

5. *The Five Classes of Motions*

1. *Main Motions*

These introduce subjects for consideration. They cannot be made when another motion is before the assembly. They yield to privileged, subsidiary and incidental motions. For example: "I move that we purchase..."

2. *Subsidiary Motions*

These change or affect how the main motion is handled. (They are voted on before the main motion.) For example: "I move to amend the motion by striking out..."

3. *Privileged Motions*

These concern special or important matters not related to pending business. In general, they are considered before other types of motions. For example: "I move we adjourn."

4. *Incidental Motions*

These are questions of procedure that arise out of other motions. They must be considered before the other motion. For example: "I move to suspend the rules for the purpose of..."

5. *Motions that bring a question again before the assembly.*

These enable certain items to be reconsidered. In general, they are brought up when no business is pending. For example: "I move to reconsider..."

Key Questions Relating to Motions

Is it in order?

Your motion must relate to the business at hand and be presented at the right time. It must not be obstructive, frivolous or against the bylaws.

May I interrupt the speaker?

Some motions are so important that the speaker may be interrupted to make them. The original speaker regains the floor after the interruption has been addressed.

Do I need a second?

Usually, yes. A second indicates that another member would like to consider your motion. It prevents spending time on a question that interests only one person.

Is it debatable?

Parliamentary procedure protects the right to free and full debate on most motions. However, some subsidiary, privileged and incidental motions are not debatable.

Can it be amended?

Some motions can be changed by striking out or inserting wording, or both. Amendments must relate to the subject as presented in the main motion.

What vote is needed?

Most motions require only a majority vote (more than half the members present and voting). But, motions concerning the rights of the assembly or its members need a 2/3s vote to be adopted.

Can it be reconsidered?

Some motions can be debated again and revoted to allow members a chance to change their decision. The motion to reconsider must come from the winning side.

Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance

Here are some motions you might make, how to make them, and what to expect of the rules.

Ranking Motions

To do this:	You say this:	May you interrupt the speaker?	Do you need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	What vote is needed?	Can it be reconsidered?
Adjourn meeting	"I move to adjourn."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Call an intermission	"I move to recess for..."	No	Yes	No(1)	Yes	Majority	No
Complain about heat, noise, etc.	"I rise to a question of privilege."	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No
Temporarily suspend consideration of an issue	"I move to lay the motion on the table."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No(2)
End debate and amendments	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes(3)
Postpone discussion for a certain time	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Give a closer student of something	"I move to refer the matter to committee."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes(4)
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..."	No	Yes	Yes(5)	Yes	Majority	Yes
Introduce business	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes

Non-Ranking Motions

To do this:	You say this:	May you interrupt the speaker?	Do you need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	What vote is needed?	Can it be reconsidered?
Protest breach of rules or conduct	"I rise to a point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote(6)	No
Vote on a ruling of the chair	"I appeal from the chair's decision."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Yes
Suspend rules temporarily	"I appeal from the Chair's decision."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Avoid considering an improper matter	"I object to consideration of this motion."	Yes	No	No	No	2/3(7)	Yes(2)
Verify a voice vote by having members stand	"I call for a division," or "Division!"	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No
Request information	"Point of information..."	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No
Take up a matter previously tabled	"I move to take from the table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Reconsider a hasty action	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."	Yes(8)	Yes	Yes(9)	No	Majority	No

Notes:

1. Unless moved when no questions is pending.
2. Affirmative votes may not be reconsidered.
3. Unless vote on question has begun.
4. Unless the committee has already taken up the subject.
5. Unless the motion to be amended is not debatable.
6. Unless the chair submits to the assembly for decision.
7. A 2/3 vote in negative is needed to prevent consideration of the main motion.
8. Only if the speaker has the floor but has not actually begun to speak.
9. Unless the motion to be reconsidered is not debatable.

How do I present a motion?

Here's what happens when you want a motion considered.

EIGHT STEPS — PROCESSING A MOTION

Main Motion Procedure Eight Step Process

1. Member obtains the Chair's attention.
2. Chair recognizes the member.
3. Member makes the motion.
4. Motion is seconded by another member.
5. The Chair states the motion to the assembly.
6. The motion is debated and amended if necessary by the assembly.
7. The vote is taken on the motion.
8. The Chair reports the results of the vote to the assembly.

The method of voting on a motion

Depends on the situation and the bylaws of the organization.

You may vote by:

Voice

The chair asks those in favor to say “aye” and those opposed to say “no” (for majority votes only).

Show of Hands

Members raise their hands to verify a voice vote, or as an alternative to it. This does not require a count.

Roll Call

A record of each person’s vote – each member answers “yes,” “no” or “present” (indicating the choice not to vote) as his or her name is called.

Ballot

Members write their vote on a slip of paper. This is done when secrecy is desired.

General Consent

When a motion isn’t likely to be opposed, the chair says, “If there is no objection...” Members show consent by their silence.

If someone says “I object,” the matter must be put to a vote.



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