

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

In parliamentary procedure there are several voting methods and voting types. For more information about when to use each kind, check out Roberts Rules of Order. Following are some basics that you may find helpful as you develop your own method most appropriate for your group.

Voting Methods

- Acclamation
- Show of hands
- Standing vote
- Secret roll call ballot (members sign ballot)
- Roll call (members verbally respond)

Voting Types

- Majority (more than half of the number of votes cast)
- Two-thirds
- Tie vote (chair casts tie-breaking vote)
- Plurality vote (largest number of votes cast)
- Unanimous (no dissenting vote)
- General consent (chair assumes consent of members)
- Vote by secretary (unanimous vote used only when one name is presented for nomination)

Basic Procedures

Having the Floor—Before a member can speak at a meeting, she or he must be recognized by the chairperson. Once recognized, the speaker cannot be interrupted, except by the chairperson.

Making Motions—One makes a motion to propose a course of action that one thinks the group should take. If another member agrees that the motion should be open for discussion, she or he will “second the motion.” Discussion pertaining only to the motion on the floor follows. Only one motion to close discussion and a second are needed before a vote can be taken.

Amending Motions—Amendments can be motions as long as the person who moved the original motion is agreeable to the amendment. If the originator of the motion is not agreeable, then the group must vote on the original motion.

Tabling the Motion—If it appears that more information is needed to consider a motion fairly, then a motion to table the discussion can be made. The length of and reason for tabling the motion must be included in the table to motion. A majority of members must support the tabling for it to pass.

Calling the Question—When it appears that the discussion of a particular motion is no longer productive, the question can be called with a two-thirds vote of the members present. The result of the call to question is an immediate vote on the motion.

To do this	You say this	May you interrupt speaker?	Must you be seconded?	Is the motion debatable?	Vote requirement
Adjourn the meeting	I move that we adjourn	No	Yes	No	Majority
Recess the meeting	I move that we recess until...	No	Yes	No	Majority
Complain about noise, room temperature, etc.	Question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No vote
Suspend further consideration of something	I move that the motion be laid on the table	No	Yes	No	Majority
End debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	2/3 vote
Postpone consideration of something	I move we postpone this matter until...	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Have something studied further	I move to refer the motion to the committee	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	I move to amend...	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	I move that...	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Object to procedure or to a personal affront	Point of order	Yes	No	No	Chair decides
Request information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No vote
Ask for a vote by actual count to verify a voice vote	I call for a division	No	No	No	No vote
Object to the consideration of some undiplomatic matter	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	2/3 vote
Take up a matter previously tabled	I move to take from the table	No	Yes	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	I move to reconsider...	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Consider something voted on out of its scheduled order	I move we suspend the rules and consider...	No	Yes	No	2/3 vote
Vote on a ruling by the chair	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority