

HOW MOTIONS ARE PRESENTED

Obtain the floor

- Wait until the last speaker has finished.
- Rise and address the chairperson by saying “Mr. /Ms. Chairperson or Mr. /Ms. President.”
- Wait until the chairperson recognizes you.

Make your motion

- Speak in a clear and concise manner.
- Always state a motion affirmatively. Say “I move that we...” rather than “I move that we do not...”
- Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.

Wait for someone to second your motion

- Another member will second your motion or the chairperson will call for a second.
- If there is no second to your motion, it is lost.

The chairperson states your motion

- The chairperson will say, “It has been moved and seconded that we...”, thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
- The membership either debates your motion, or may move directly to a vote.
- Once your motion is presented to the membership by the chairperson, it becomes “assembly property” and cannot be changed by you without the consent of the members.

Expanding on your motion

- The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time, rather than at the time you present it.
- The “mover” is always allowed to speak first.
- All comments and debate must be directed to the chairperson.
- Keep to the time limit for speaking that has been established.
- The mover may speak again only after other speakers are finished unless called upon by the chairperson.

Putting the question to the membership

- The chairperson asks, “Are you ready to vote on the question?”
- If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.
- On a motion to move the previous question may be adapted.

Voting on a motion

The method of vote on any motion depends on the situation and the bylaws of your organization.

There are five methods used to vote by most organizations:

- **By voice**-The chairperson asks those in favor to say “aye”, those opposed to say “no.” Any member may move for an exact count.
- **By roll call**-Each member answers “yes” or “no” as his/her name is called. This method is used when a record of each person’s vote is required.
- **By general consent**-When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the chairperson says, “If there is no objection...” The membership shows agreement by their silence; however, if one member says “I object”, the item must be put to a vote.
- **By division**-this is a slight variation of voice vote. It does not require a count unless the chairman so desires. Members raise their hands or stand.
- **By ballot**-Members write their vote on a slip of paper; this method is used when secrecy is desired.

There are two other motions that are commonly used that relate to voting.

- **Motion to table**- This motion is often used in the attempt to “kill” a motion. The option is always present, however, to “take from the table”, for reconsideration by the membership.
- **Motion to postpone indefinitely**-This is often used as a means of parliamentary strategy and allows opponents of a motion to test their strength without an actual vote being taken. Also, debate is once again open on the main motion.

Parliamentary procedure is the best way to get things done at your meetings. It will only work, however, if you use it properly. Remember to:

- Allow motions that are in order.
- Have members obtain the floor properly.
- Speak clearly and concisely.
- Obey the rules of debate.
- Most importantly, BE COURTEOUS.