

Robert's Rules of Order Cheat Sheet

Classes of Motions

The word "motion" refers to a formal proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the organization take a certain action. Several specific motions have evolved and have been classified under parliamentary law as follows:

- (1) Main Motions
- (2) Subsidiary Motions)
- (3) Privileged Motions) Secondary motions
- (4) Incidental Motions)
- (5) Motions that bring a question again before the meeting.

Main Motions—A main motion is one which brings business before the meeting. It is the most often used and is the device by which a matter is presented to the meeting for possible action.

Subsidiary Motions—Subsidiary motions assist the meeting in treating or disposing of a main motion. They are always applied to another motion while it is pending. The adoption of one of them does something to this other motion, that is, changes its status in some way.

Privileged Motions—Unlike subsidiary or incidental motions, privileged motions do not relate to the pending business but have to do with special, important matters which should be allowed to interrupt the consideration of anything else.

Incidental Motions—Incidental motions relate to the pending business or other business. With but few exceptions, incidental motions are related to the main question in such a way that they must be decided immediately, before business can proceed.

Motions that bring a question again before the meeting—Either by their adoption or introduction, this type of motion serves the function described by the name of the class. This class of motions allows the members, for good reason, to reopen a completed question during the same session, to take up one that has been temporally disposed of, or to change something previously adopted.

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In the following chart, the privileged, subsidiary, and main motions are listed in order of rank, the motion at the top taking precedence over all the others, and each of the remaining ones taking precedence over all those below it. A main motion is in order only when no other motion is pending.

Table of Rules Relating to Motions

Motion	Class	In order when another has the floor?	Must be seconded?	Debatable ?	Amendable ?	Vote required for adoption	Can be reconsidered
Main motion	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Adjourn	P	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Adjourn at or to a future time	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No
Adopt, accept, or agree to a report	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Adopt revised bylaws or constitution	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	As provided for in the bylaws	Negative vote only
Adopt special rules of order	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Previous notice and 2/3 or majority of the entire membership	Negative vote only
Adopt ordinary standing rules	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Amend a pending motion	S	No	Yes	If motion to be amended	Yes	Majority	Yes

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				is debatable			
Amend an amendment of a pending motion	S	No	Yes	Ditto	No	Majority	Yes
Amend something previously adopted	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority with notice, or 2/3, or majority of the entire membership	Negative vote only
Appeal	I	Yes	Yes	Usually	No	Majority	Yes
To order a vote to be taken by ballot	I	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	Yes
To create a blank by striking out	I	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Proposals for filling a blank	-	Yes	No	Yes	No	Majority	Yes
Change or depart from the agenda, immediately to take up a matter out of its proper order	I	No	Yes	No	No	Two thirds	No
Commit, refer, or recommit a pending question	S	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	If committee has not begun work
Refer a matter that is not pending to a committee	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	If committee has not begun work

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Consider informally	S	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Negative vote only
Consider by paragraph	I	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
Limit or extend limits of debate on a pending question	S	No	Yes	No	Yes	Two thirds	Yes
Limit or extend limits of debate for the duration of a meeting	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Two thirds	Yes
Discharge a committee	-	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority with notice or 2/3, or majority of the entire membership	Negative vote only
Division of the question	I	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	Yes
Call for a separate vote on a resolution which is one of a series on different subjects in a single motion	I	Yes	No	No	No	Demand of a single member compels the separate vote	No
Information, point of	I	Yes	No	No	No	not voted on	No
Lay on the table	S	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
To approve the minutes	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
To correct the minutes before adoption	S	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
To dispense with the reading of the minutes	I	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
To make nominations	-	No	No	Yes	No	Majority for election	Not after the electee has been

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							notified
To close nominations	I	No	Yes	No	Yes	Two thirds	Yes
To reopen nominations	I	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	Negative vote only
Other motions relating to nominations while election is pending	M	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	Yes
Other motions relating to nominations while election is not pending	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Object to consideration of a question	I	Yes, with limits	No	No	No	Two thirds	Sustaining vote only
Call for orders of the day	P	Yes	No	No	No	Must be enforced upon the demand of one member unless set aside by a 2/3 vote	No
Point of order	I	Yes	No	No	No	Is ruled on by the Chair	No
Parliamentary inquiry	I	Yes	No	No	No	Is responded to by the Chair	-
Postpone indefinitely	S	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Affirmative vote only
Postpone to a certain time, applied to a pending question	S	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Postpone an event or action	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority with	Negative

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previously scheduled						notice or 2/3, or majority of the entire membership	vote only
Previous Question	S	No	Yes	No	No	Two thirds	Usually
Ratify or Confirm	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Grant permission to read papers	I	Yes	Yes, if made by one requesting . No, if by another	No	No	Majority	Yes
To take a recess, if moved while business is pending	P	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
To take a recess, if moved while no question is pending	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No
Reconsider	-	Limits	Yes	Yes, if the motion to be reconsidered is debatable	No	Majority	No
Rescind, repeal, or annul	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority with notice or 2/3, or majority of the entire membership	Negative vote only
Suspend the rules of order	I	No	Yes	No	No	Usually 2/3	No
Suspend ordinary standing	I	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No

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rules							
Take from the table	-	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Motion relating to voting if made while subject is pending	I	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority except 2/3 to close the polls	Close polls no, reopen polls negative vote only, others yes
Motion relating to voting if made while no question is pending	M	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
To grant permission to withdraw or modify a motion after the motion has been stated by the chair	I	Yes, if not by general consent	Yes, if by one requesting No, if by another	No	No	Majority	Negative vote only

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