

How Can Parliamentary Procedure Help?

Do you stick to the agenda or does conversation stray from one topic to another and from one board member to another without order? Do directors individually repeat at length what has already been stated? Do some members consistently dominate the meeting with their opinions? Do you find yourselves repeatedly deferring issues for another meeting due to time constraints? If so, this is discouraging to members who cannot commit unlimited volunteer time to participate.

In contrast parliamentary procedures promote a positive and equal opportunity for an exchange of views by all participants. Order is upheld, for example, when a motion is made to bring an issue forward, requiring a second to proceed. If a second to the motion is not heard, the motion fails presumably because no one beyond the individual making the original motion wished to pursue such a discussion. As a result, discussions do not drift from their original intent. Instead, the Chair rules any unrelated discussion out of order. When a second to the original debatable motion has been made, many boards set time limits (i.e., two minutes) for comment by each member on the specific motion. The Chair will recognize each member in an orderly manner, who then has the floor and may not be interrupted. Instead of being formal, this is simply organized fairness.

Because there may not be a second for motions to discuss a particular topic in which an individual member has an interest, many Boards begin or end their meetings by providing a two-minute period during which each director may address any issue they desire - further providing each director with a reasonable opportunity to speak openly on subjects she/he believes important.

[Robert's Rules of Order](#) is considered the written authority on the details of parliamentary procedures, but it is not necessary to be an accomplished user to implement the basic procedures toward a much more efficient and productive meeting today. Try it and see what a difference it will make in your meetings!

To Do This	You Say This	May You Interrupt the Speaker	Must you be Seconded	Is Motion Debatable	What Vote Required
Adjourn Meeting	I move that we adjourn	No	Yes	No	Majority
Recess Meeting	I move that we recess until...	No	Yes	No	Majority
Complain about noise, room temperature, etc.	Point of Privilege	Yes	No	No	No vote
Suspend further consideration of something	I move to table it	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 we refer this matter to committee	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	I move this motion be amended by...	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a Primary motion)	I move that...	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Object to procedure or personal affront	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No vote chair decides
Request information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No vote
Ask for actual count to verify voice vote	I call for a division of the house	No	No	No	No vote
Object consideration of undiplomatic vote	I object to consideration of this question	Yes	No	No	2/3 vote
Take up a matter previously tabled	I move to take from the table	No	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	I move we reconsider or action relative to...	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Consider something already out of its schedule	I move we suspend the rules and consider...	No	Yes	No	2/3 vote
Vote on ruling by the Chair	I appeal the chairs decision	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority