



# Parliamentary Procedure Reference Guide

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*

## Why is Parliamentary Procedure Important?

Parliamentary procedure is the rules that govern the transaction of business during board meetings. Following a uniform set of rules allows for effective board meetings as well as conducting business in a fair and democratic manner, giving everyone who wishes to speak an opportunity to express an opinion or raise a question with minimal delay and confusion.

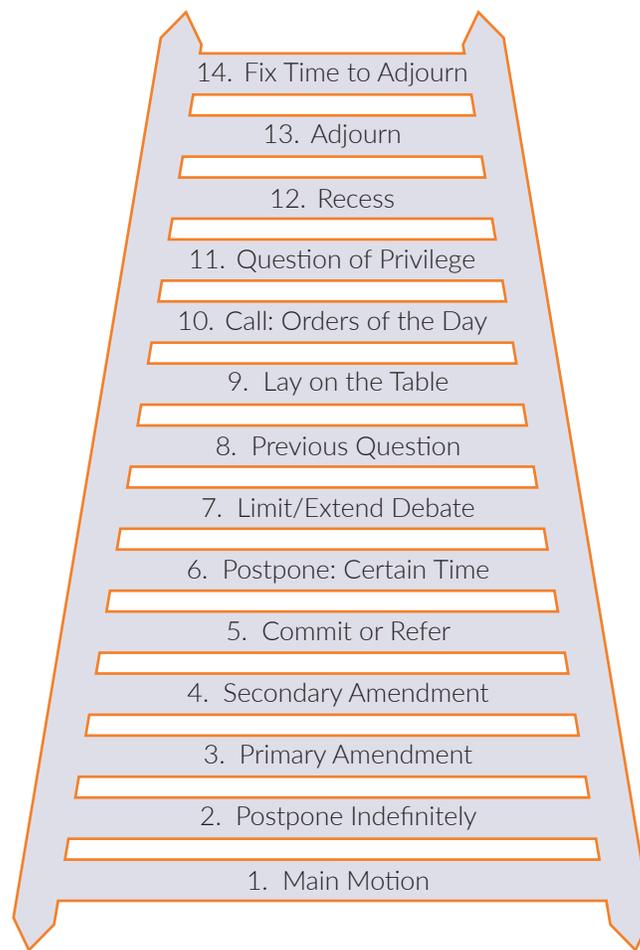
## MOST COMMON TYPES OF PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS

Motion	Summary	Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote
Main Motion	Brings business before the assembly; permitted only when no other motion is pending	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Reconsider	Revisit motion already voted on at same meeting	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Rescind	Strikes or modifies motion adopted at prior meeting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amendment	Allows modifications to another motion by adding, deleting, or changing words; only one amendment to a main motion or to amend an amendment may be made at any one time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer	Allows a matter to be sent to a smaller group to consider and report back; must report back at the time specified	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone	Delays consideration of a matter; may be introduced at a time no one is speaking	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Limit Debate	Places a limit on the time or number of speakers	Yes	No	Yes	Majority*
Previous Question	Ends debate immediately	Yes	No	No	Majority*
Table	Temporarily delays a matter when something of urgency arises; should not include specific time for removal; should be taken from the table no later than the next meeting	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	Permits a short break	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Adjourn	Ends the meeting	Yes	No	No	Majority
Point of Order (No order of precedence)	Calls attention to an error in procedure; done at any time to question a ruling of the Chair or a point of parliamentary procedure	No	No	No	None
Suspend the Rules (No order of precedence)	Allows an action to be taken that would otherwise be against the rules	Yes	No	No	Majority*
Appeal (No order of precedence)	Takes decision from the Chair and gives to the full Board	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Request Information (No order of precedence)	Allows a member to ask a question	No	No	No	None

\**Robert's Rules of Order* requires a two-thirds vote; however, Tennessee law states that only a simple majority is needed.

## Precedence of Motions Ladder

Certain motions are considered ahead of others in formal procedure. The ladder shows the order of precedence, from the highest to lowest ranking motion. When a motion is being considered, any motion higher on the list – but no motion of lower precedence – may be proposed. The motion last proposed (and highest on the list) is considered and decided first.



## To do this, say...

**To adjourn the meeting –**  
“I move that we adjourn.”

**To recess the meeting –**  
“I move that we recess until...”

**To end debate –**  
“I move the previous question.”

**To postpone consideration –**  
“I move we postpone this matter until...”

**To modify wording of the motion –**  
“I move that this motion be amended by...”

**To enforce rules –**  
“Point of Order”\*

**To take up a matter previously tabled –**  
“I move that we take from the table...”

**To consider something out of its scheduled order –**  
“I move that we suspend the rules and consider...”

**To reconsider something already disposed of –**  
“I move that we reconsider our action relative to...”\*

\*Instances when you may interrupt the speaker



**Only one motion should be addressed at a time, and proceedings must be carried out in the correct order.**

### How the Motion is Brought Before the Board

**First Board Member:** “Mr./Madam Chairman...” [Board member remains standing and waits to be recognized by the Board Chairman.]

**First Board Member:** “I move that...” [Board member resumes his/her seat.]

**Second Board Member:** “I second the motion.”

**Board Chairman:** “It is moved and seconded that...” [Board Chairman calls for the discussion.]

### Putting the Motion to a Vote

**Board Chairman:** “Is there any further discussion on the matter?” [If no one seeks the floor, the Board Chairman will proceed to take the vote.]

**Board Chairman:** “The question is on the adoption of the motion that...” [repeat or clearly identify the motion].”

**Board Chairman:** “Those in favor of the motion, say aye. [pause for response] Those opposed, say no [pause for response].”

**Board Chairman:** “The ayes have it, and the motion is adopted.” OR  
“The noes have it, and the motion fails.”