

Parliamentary Procedure Cheat-Sheet

For boards that use Robert's Rules of Order. State law, your bylaws, and your own rules come first.

How a motion moves

- 1 A member makes the motion: "I move that..."
- 2 Another member seconds it: "Second."
- 3 The chair states it: "It is moved and seconded that... Is there any discussion?"
- 4 Members debate it. The maker may speak first.
- 5 The chair puts it to a vote: "All in favor say aye. Those opposed say no."
- 6 The chair announces the result: "The ayes have it, and the motion is adopted."

Small board? Relax the rules

With about a dozen members or fewer present:

- Raise a hand to speak, and stay seated.
- Members may speak as often as they need to.
- Talk a subject over before anyone makes a motion.
- If a proposal is clear to all, vote without a motion.
- Vote by show of hands.
- The chair may discuss, make motions, and vote.
- Every decision still takes a vote, unless no one objects.

What to say

To do this	Say	Interrupt?	Second?	Debate?	Amend?	Vote
WHILE A MOTION IS ON THE FLOOR Ranked: you may make any of these while a motion lower on the list is pending.						
End the meeting	"I move to adjourn."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Take a break	"I move to recess for 10 minutes."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Fix an urgent problem	"I rise to a question of privilege."	If urgent	No	No	No	Chair rules
Pause for urgent business	"I move to lay the question on the table."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate and vote now	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds
Limit or extend debate	"I move to limit debate to 2 minutes each."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Two-thirds
Put it off to a set time	"I move to postpone this to our next meeting."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Send it to a committee	"I move to refer this to a committee."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Change the wording	"I move to amend by inserting..."	No	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Majority
Drop it without voting it down	"I move to postpone this indefinitely."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Bring up new business	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
ANY TIME						
Flag a broken rule	"Point of order."	If urgent	No	No	No	Chair rules
Challenge the chair's ruling	"I appeal from the decision of the chair."	Yes	Yes	Usually	No	Majority against the chair reverses it
Ask how to do something	"Parliamentary inquiry."	If urgent	No	No	No	None; chair answers
Ask for facts	"Request for information."	If urgent	No	No	No	None
Doubt a voice vote	"Division!"	Yes	No	No	No	None; retaken standing
Set a rule aside for now	"I move to suspend the rules and..."	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds
Take back your own motion	"I ask to withdraw my motion."	If urgent	No	No	No	None if no one objects; else majority
COMING BACK TO SOMETHING						
Resume a tabled motion	"I move to take from the table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Revisit a vote from today	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."	No	Yes	Yes*	No	Majority [†]
Undo something adopted earlier	"I move to rescind..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Two-thirds, or majority with notice

* Debatable when the motion it applies to is debatable. † Only someone who voted on the winning side may move to reconsider, and only on the same day.

Voting

- **Majority:** more than half the votes cast. Blanks and abstentions don't count.
- **Two-thirds:** at least twice as many yes votes as no votes.
- **Quorum:** unless your bylaws or state law say otherwise, a majority of the board's members. Without one, the board can't act.

Common mistakes

- **Tabling to kill a motion.** Tabling sets a motion aside for something urgent. To drop one, postpone it indefinitely or vote it down.
- **Calling "Question!" to end debate.** Ending debate takes a motion and a two-thirds vote.
- **Voting on routine items.** Ask, "Any objection?" If none, it's done. Minutes need no vote: "Any corrections? Hearing none, the minutes are approved."