

EIGHT STEPS IN PROCESSING A MAIN MOTION

Step 1: Member rises and addresses the chair when nothing is pending: “Madame president.”

Step 2: The chair recognizes a member by nodding at the member or stating their name and role at the meeting: “Carmen Mincy, Bylaws Chairman” or “Kate Kappa, Alpha Deuteron, chapter delegate.”

Step 3: Member states their motion: “I move that we have a canned food drive.”

Step 4: Another member seconds the motion (without recognition): “Second.”

Step 5: The chair states the motion and places it before the assembly for discussion: “It is moved and seconded that we have a canned food drive. Is there any discussion?”

Step 6: Eligible members have the right to get recognition and debate the motion. During debate, subsidiary motions (i.e., amendments) may be introduced to help the assembly make a final decision.

Step 7: When the discussion is finished, the chair puts the question to a vote: “The question is on the adoption of the motion that we have a canned food drive. Those in favor, say aye.” (Pause) “Those opposed, say no.” (Pause)

Step 8: The chair announces the results of the vote: “The ayes/noes have it. The motion is adopted/lost. We will/will not have a canned food drive. The next business in order is ...”

METHODS OF VOTING

- **Unanimous consent:** No member objects to a proposal that meets with general approval. A vote of silent agreement.
- **Voice vote:** Regular method of voting on any motion that does not require more than a majority vote. This is the most common form of voting.
- **Rising vote:** The method used when a two-thirds vote is required for adoption. This is also used when a member calls for a division of the assembly.
- **Show of hands or voting cards:** An alternative method for a rising vote.
- **Counted vote:** This can be ordered by the chair when it appears a voice vote is unclear and it can be ordered by a majority vote of the assembly.
- **Ballot or roll call vote:** This can be ordered by a majority vote of the assembly and is required if specified in the bylaws.

THE 13 RANKING MOTIONS

Motions lower on the list cannot be made if anything higher is pending.

1. **Fix the time to which to adjourn:** This motion is used to set the time for another meeting to continue the business of the session. It does not adjourn the present meeting or set a time for its adjournment.
2. **Adjourn:** This is a motion to close the meeting.
3. **Recess:** A short interruption that does not close the meeting. After recess, business resumes at exactly the point where it was interrupted.
4. **Raise a question of privilege:** This device permits a request or a motion relating to the rights of either the assembly or an individual to interrupt business and, because of its urgency, to be brought up for possible immediate consideration.

5. **Call for the order of the day:** Using this motion, a single member can require the assembly to follow the order of business or agenda or to take up a special order that is now due to come up unless two-thirds of the assembly wishes to do otherwise.
6. **Lay on the table:** This motion is used to place the pending motion aside when something of an urgent nature arises and needs the immediate attention of the assembly.
7. **Previous question:** This is simply a motion to end the debate, allow no further subsidiary motions on the pending motion, and take a vote. It must be seconded, no debate is allowed, and a two-thirds vote is needed to close the debate.
8. **Limit or extend limits of debate:** This motion can reduce or increase the number and length of speeches permitted or limit the length of debate on a specific question.
9. **Postpone definitely:** This should be used if the body needs more time to make a decision or if there is another time that is more appropriate to consider the main motion. The postponement cannot be beyond the next session in a group that meets regularly.
10. **Commit or refer to a committee:** This motion sends the main motion to a committee for further examination and refinement before the body votes on it.
11. **Amend:** The intent of this motion is to modify the pending motion before it is voted on.
12. **Postpone indefinitely:** This motion, in effect, kills the main motion for the duration of the meeting without having to take a vote on it.
13. **Main motion:** A formal proposal for consideration and action.

THE THREE WAYS TO AMEND

1. To insert or to add (a word, consecutive words, or a paragraph).
Phrasing:
“I move to amend the motion by inserting the word ‘consecutive’ before the word ‘terms.’”
“I move to amend by adding the words ‘at a cost not to exceed \$100.’”
“I move to amend by adding the following paragraph ...”
2. To strike out (a word, consecutive words, or a paragraph).
Phrasing:
“I move to amend by striking out the word ‘every.’”
“I move to amend by striking out the words ‘during the second semester.’”
“I move to amend by striking out the third paragraph.”
3. To strike out and insert (words) or to substitute (paragraph or entire main motion).
Phrasing:
“I move to amend by striking out the word ‘monthly’ and inserting the word ‘annually.’”
“I move to amend by substituting for the pending main motion the following...”

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

- Reading and approval of minutes: Approves the record of actions taken at the previous meeting.

- Reports of officers and standing committees: Considers actions as recommended by an officer or committee. Any correspondence received should be read if not distributed prior to the meeting. A financial report is made at every meeting.
- Reports of special committees: Considers actions as recommended by a group formed for a particular purpose.
- Special orders: Considers items that were made special orders for this meeting or items required to be taken up at this meeting by provision in the bylaws.
- Unfinished business and general orders: Considers items not reached when the last meeting adjourned or items postponed to this meeting.
- New business: Considers actions proposed by members.

DEBATE

Decorum in debate

- In order to debate a question, a member must rise, address the presiding officer by their title, and be assigned the floor.
- Always address remarks to the chair, never using a member's name where it is possible to describe them otherwise.
- The correctness of a statement of facts may be denied but the motives of a member are not questioned.
- Discourteous language is never used.

Rules of debate

- The maker of a debatable motion is always entitled to be recognized first in debate. When a motion is made by order of a committee, the reporting member of the committee should be recognized first.
- As much as possible, debate should alternate between pro and con.
- Confine debate to the question under consideration.
- Ask permission of the assembly before reading any document.
- Do not waste time with frivolous arguments or repetitions.
- The member who introduces a question is allowed to close the debate provided they have not already exhausted their time.
- Time cannot be yielded to another speaker or saved for later use.

Number and length of speeches

- Unless permission is given by the assembly, no member shall speak:
 - Longer than 10 minutes at a time.
 - More than twice on the same question on the same day.
 - A second time until everyone has spoken who desires to do so.
- At any meeting the limits of debate may be changed by a two-thirds vote.
- If a member who has the floor allows another member to make an explanation, the time is charged to the one who has the floor.
- Consider adopting a special rule of order limiting speakers to two to three minutes per speech in debate.