

ORDER OF PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS.

The ordinary motions rank as follows, the lowest in rank being at the bottom and the highest at the top of the list. When any one of them is immediately pending the motions above it in the list are in order, and those below are out of order.

1	2	3	4	5	Motion
-	X	a	X	-	Fix the Time to which to Adjourn.
-	X	b	-	-	Adjourn.
-	X	c	X	-	Take a Recess.
-	X	-	-	-	Raise a Question of Privilege.
-	X	-	-	-	Call for the Orders of the Day.
-	-	-	-	-	Lay on the Table.
-	-	-	-	X	Previous Question.
-	-	-	-	X	Limit or Extend Limits of Debate.
X	-	-	X	-	Postpone to a Certain Time.
X	-	-	X	-	Commit or Refer.
X	-	-	X	-	Amend.
X	-	-	-	-	Postpone Indefinitely.
X	-	-	X	-	A Main Motion.

Columns:

1 - Debatable

2 - Usually Privileged

3 - Not always privileged:

a - Privileged only when made while another question is pending, and in an assembly that has made no provision for another meeting on the same or the next day.

b - Loses its privileged character and is a main motion if in any way qualified, or if its effect, if adopted, is to dissolve the assembly without any provision for its meeting again.

c - Privileged only when made while other business is pending.

4 - Can be amended

5 - Require a 2/3 vote for their adoption; the others require only a majority.

Every original main motion may be amended. All others may be amended, except those contained in the following list of

Motions That Cannot Be Amended.

To adjourn (except when it is qualified, or when made in an assembly with no provision for a future meeting)

Call for the orders of the day

Question of order, and appeal

To object to consideration of a question

Call for a division of the assembly

To grant leave to withdraw a motion

To grant leave to speak after indecorum

A request of any kind

To take up a question out of its proper order

To suspend the rules

To lay on the table

To take from the table

To reconsider

The previous question

To postpone indefinitely

To amend an amendment

To fill a blank

A nomination

Motions That Open the Main Question to Debate.

<i>Postpone Indefinitely</i>
<i>Reconsider a Debatable Question</i>
<i>Rescind</i>
<i>Ratify</i>

Undeatable Motions.

<i>Fix the Time to which to Adjourn</i> (when a privileged question)
<i>Adjourn</i> (when unqualified in an assembly that has provided for future meetings)
<i>Take a Recess</i> (when privileged)
<i>Call for the Orders of the Day</i> , and questions relating to priority of business
<i>Appeal</i> when made while an undeatable question is pending, or when simply relating to indecorum, or transgression of the rules of speaking, or to priority of business
<i>Suspension of the Rules</i>
<i>Objection to the Consideration of a Question</i>
<i>Incidental Motions</i> , except an Appeal as shown above in this list under Appeal
<i>Lay on the Table</i>
<i>Previous Question and Motions to Close, Limit, or Extend the Limits of Debate</i>
<i>Amend an Undeatable Motion</i>
<i>Reconsider an Undeatable Motion</i>

Motions Requiring a Two-thirds Vote.

Amend (Annul, Repeal, or Rescind) any part of the Constitution, By-laws, or Rules of Order, previously adopted; it also requires previous notice

Amend or Rescind a Standing Rule, a Program or Order of Business, or a Resolution, previously adopted, without notice being given at a previous meeting or in the call for the meeting

Take up a Question out of its Proper Order

Suspend the Rules

Make a Special Order

Discharge an Order of the Day before it is pending

Refuse to Proceed to the Orders of the Day

Sustain an Objection to the Consideration of a Question

Previous Question

Limit, or Extend the Limits, of Debate

Extend the Time Appointed for Adjournment or for Taking a Recess

Close Nominations or the Polls

Limit the Names to be Voted for

Expel from Membership: it also requires previous notice and trial

Depose from Office: it also requires previous notice

Discharge a Committee when previous notice has not been given

Reconsider in Committee when a member of the majority is absent and has not been notified of the proposed reconsideration

1. FIX THE TIME TO WHICH TO ADJOURN

This motion is privileged only when made while another question is pending and in an assembly that has made no provision for another meeting on the same or the next day. The time fixed cannot be beyond the time of the next meeting. If made in an assembly that already has provided for another meeting on the same or the next day, or if made in an assembly when no question is pending, this is a main motion and may be debated and amended and have applied to it the other subsidiary motions, like other main motions. Whenever the motion is referred to in these rules the privileged motion is meant, unless specified to the contrary. This motion when privileged takes precedence of all others, and is in order even after it has been voted to adjourn, provided the chairman has not declared the assembly adjourned. It can be amended, and a vote on it can be reconsidered. When the assembly has no fixed place for its meetings, this motion should include the place as well as the time for the next meeting, and in this case the place is subject to amendment as well as the time. When the assembly meets at the time to which it adjourned, the meeting is a continuation of the previous session. Thus, if the Annual Meeting is adjourned to meet on another day, the adjourned meeting is a legal continuation of the Annual Meeting. The form of this motion is, I move that when we adjourn, we adjourn (or stand adjourned) to 2 P.M. tomorrow.

2. ADJOURN

The motion to adjourn (when unqualified) is always a privileged motion except when, for lack of provision for a future meeting, as in a mass meeting, or at the last meeting of a convention, its effect, if adopted, would be to dissolve the assembly permanently. In any organized society holding several regular meetings during the year, it is, when unqualified, always a privileged motion. When not privileged it is treated as any other main motion, being debatable and amendable, etc. The motion to adjourn, like every other motion, cannot be made except by a member who has the floor. When made by one who has not risen and addressed the chair and been recognized, it can be entertained only by general consent. It cannot be made when the assembly is engaged in voting, or verifying the vote, but is in order after the vote has been taken by ballot before it has been announced. In such case the ballot vote should be announced as soon as business is resumed. Where much time will be consumed in counting ballots the assembly may adjourn, having previously appointed a time for the next meeting, or, still better, may take a recess as explained in the next section. No appeal, or question of order, or inquiry, should be entertained after the motion to adjourn has been made, unless it is of such a nature that its decision is necessary before an adjournment, or unless the assembly refuses to adjourn, when it would be in order. When the motion to adjourn is qualified in any way, or when its effect is to dissolve the assembly without any provision being made for holding another meeting of the assembly, it loses its privilege and is a main motion, debatable and amendable and subject to having applied to it any of the subsidiary motions.

3. RECESS

This motion is practically a combination of the two preceding, to which it yields, taking precedence of all other motions. If made when other business is before the assembly, it is a privileged motion and is undebatable and can have no subsidiary motion applied to it except amend. It can be amended as to the length of the recess. It takes effect immediately. A motion to take a recess made when no business is before the assembly, or a motion to take a recess at a future time, has no privilege, and is treated as any other main motion. A recess is an intermission in the day's proceedings, as for meals or for counting the ballots when much time is required; or in the case of meetings like conventions lasting for several days a recess is sometimes taken over an entire day. When a recess is provided for in the order of exercises, or program, the chair, when the time arrives, announces the fact and says the assembly stands adjourned, or in recess, to the specified hour. The assembly by a two-thirds vote can postpone the time for taking a recess, or adjournment. When the hour has arrived to which the recess was taken, the chairman calls the assembly to order and the business proceeds the same as if no recess had been taken. If the recess was taken after a vote had been taken and before it was announced, then the first business is the announcement of the vote. The intermissions in the proceedings of a day are termed recesses, whether the assembly voted to take a recess, or whether it simply adjourned having previously adopted a program or rule providing for the hours of meeting. When an assembly has frequent short regular meetings not lasting over a day, and an adjourned meeting is held on another day, the interval between the meetings is not referred to as a recess.

4. RAISE A QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

Questions relating to the rights and privileges of the assembly, or to any of its members, take precedence of all other motions except the three preceding relating to adjournment and recess, to which they yield. If the question is one requiring immediate action it may interrupt a member's speech; as, for example, when, from any cause, a report that is being read cannot be heard in a part of the hall. But if it is not of such urgency it should not interrupt a member after he has commenced his speech. Before a member has commenced speaking, even though he has been assigned the floor, it is in order for another member to raise a question of privilege.

5. CALL FOR THE ORDERS OF THE DAY

A Call for the Orders of the Day (which, in an ordinary assembly, is a demand that the assembly conform to its program or order of business) can be made at any time when no other privileged motion is pending and the order of business is being varied from, and only then. It requires no second, and is in order when another has the floor, even though it interrupts a speech, as a single member has a right to demand that the order of business be conformed to. It is out of order to call for the orders of the day when there is no variation from the order of business. Thus, the orders of the day cannot be called for when another question is pending, provided there are no special orders made for that time or an earlier time, as general orders cannot interrupt a question actually under consideration. The call must be simply for the orders of the day, and not for a specified one, as the latter has no privilege. When the time has arrived for which a special order has been made, a call for the orders of

the day taken precedence of everything except the other privileged motions, namely, those relating to adjournment and recess, and questions of privilege, to which it yields. If there are no special orders a call for the orders of the day cannot interrupt a pending question; but, if made when no question is pending, it is in order even when another has the floor and has made a main motion, provided the chair has not stated the question. Until the time of actually taking up the general orders for consideration this call yields to a motion to reconsider, or to a calling up of a motion to reconsider, previously made. A call for the orders of the day cannot be debated or amended, or have any other subsidiary motion applied to it.

6. LAY ON THE TABLE

The Object of this motion is to enable the assembly, in order to attend to more urgent business, to lay aside the pending question in such a way that its consideration may be resumed at the will of the assembly as easily as if it were a new question, and in preference to new questions competing with it for consideration. It is to the interest of the assembly that this object should be attained instantly by a majority vote, and therefore this motion must either apply to, or take precedence of, every debatable motion whatever its rank. It is undebatable, and requires only a majority vote, notwithstanding the fact that if not taken from the table the question is suppressed. These are dangerous privileges which are given to no other motion whose adoption would result in final action on a main motion. There is a great temptation to make an improper use of them, and lay questions on the table for the purpose of instantly suppressing them by a majority vote, instead of using the previous question, the legitimate motion to bring the assembly to an immediate vote. The fundamental principles of parliamentary law require a two-thirds vote for every motion that suppresses a main question for the session without free debate. The motion to lay on the table being undebatable, and requiring only a majority vote, and having the highest rank of all subsidiary motions, is in direct conflict with these principles, if used to suppress a question. If habitually used in this way, it should, like the other motions to suppress without debate, require a two-thirds vote.

7. PREVIOUS QUESTION

The Effect of ordering the previous question is to close debate immediately, to prevent the moving of amendments or any other subsidiary motions except to lay on the table, and to bring the assembly at once to a vote on the immediately pending question, and such other pending questions as were specified in the demand, or motion. If the previous question is ordered on more than one question, then its effect extends to those questions and is not exhausted until they are voted on, or they are disposed of as shown below under exhaustion of the previous question. If the previous question is voted down, the discussion continues as if this motion had not been made. The effect of the previous question does not extend beyond the session in which it was adopted. Should any of the questions upon which it was ordered come before the assembly at a future session they are divested of the previous question and are open to debate and amendment.

8. LIMIT OR EXTEND LIMITS OF DEBATE

Motions, or orders, to limit or extend the limits of debate, like the previous question, take precedence of all debatable motions, may be applied to any debatable motion or series of motions, and, if not specified to the contrary, apply only to the immediately pending question. If it is voted to limit the debate, the order applies to all incidental and subsidiary motions and the motion to reconsider, subsequently made, as long as the order is in force. But an order extending the limits of debate does not apply to any motions except the immediately pending one and such others as are specified. They are undebatable, and require a two-thirds vote for their adoption.

9. POSTPONE TO A CERTAIN TIME

The Effect of postponing a question is to make it an order of the day for the time to which it was postponed, and if it is not then disposed of, it becomes unfinished business. Postponing a question to a certain hour does not make it a special order unless so specified in the motion.

10. COMMIT OR REFER

The Object of the motion to refer to a standing or special committee is usually to enable a question to be more carefully investigated and put into better shape for the assembly to consider, than can be done in the assembly itself. Where an assembly is large and has a very large amount of business it is safer to have every main question go to a committee before final action on it is taken. A special committee to investigate and report upon a subject should consist of representative members on both sides of the question, so that both parties in the assembly may have confidence in the report, or reports in case there is disagreement and a minority report is submitted.

11. AMEND

An amendment is debatable in all cases except where the motion to be amended is undebatable. An amendment of a pending question requires only a majority vote for its adoption, even though the question to be amended requires a two-thirds vote. An amendment of a constitution or by-laws, or rules of order, or order of business, previously adopted, requires a two-thirds vote; but an amendment of that amendment requires only a majority vote. When a motion or resolution is under consideration only one amendment of the first degree is permitted at a time, and one amendment of that amendment -- that is, an amendment of the second degree is allowed also. An amendment of the third degree would be too complicated and is not in order. Instead of making it, a member may say that if the amendment of the amendment is voted down, he will offer such and such an amendment of the amendment. While there can be only one amendment of each degree pending at the same time, any number of them may be offered in succession. An amendment must be germane to the subject to be amended -- that is, it must relate to it, as shown further on. So an amendment to an amendment must be germane to the latter.

12. POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

The Object of this motion is not to postpone, but to reject, the main motion without incurring the risk of a direct vote on it, and it is made only by the enemies of the main motion when they are in doubt as to their being in the majority.

MAIN MOTION

Is a motion made to bring before the assembly, for its consideration, any particular subject. It takes precedence of nothing -- that is, it cannot be made when any other question is before the assembly; and it yields to all Privileged, Incidental, and Subsidiary Motions -- that is, any of these motions can be made while a main motion is pending. Main motions are debatable, and subject to amendment, and can have any subsidiary motions applied to them. When a main motion is laid on the table, or postponed to a certain time, it carries with it all pending subsidiary motions. If a main motion is referred to a committee it carries with it only the pending amendments. As a general rule, they require for their adoption only a majority vote - that is, a majority of the votes cast; but amendments to constitutions, by-laws, and rules of order already adopted, all of which are main motions, require a two-thirds vote for their adoption, unless the by-laws, etc., specify a different vote for their amendment; and the motion to rescind action previously taken requires a two-thirds vote, or a vote of a majority of the entire membership, unless previous notice of the motion has been given.

Some Main and Unclassified Motions. Two main motions (to rescind and to ratify) and several motions which cannot conveniently be classified as either Main, Subsidiary, Incidental, or Privileged, and which are in common use, are hereafter explained and their privileges and effects given. They are as follows:

<i>Take from the Table</i>
<i>Reconsider</i>
<i>Rescind</i>
<i>Renewal of a Motion</i>
<i>Ratify</i>
<i>Dilatory, Absurd, or Frivolous Motions</i>

To Take from the Table takes precedence of no pending question, but has the right of way in preference to main motions if made during the session in which it was laid on the table while no question is actually pending, and at a time when business of this class, or unfinished business, or new business, is in order; and also during the next session in societies having regular business meetings as frequently as quarterly. It yields to privileged and incidental motions, but not to subsidiary ones. It is undebatable, and no subsidiary motion can be applied to it. It is not in order unless some business has been transacted since the question was laid on the table, nor can it be renewed until some business has been transacted since it was lost. The motion to take from the table cannot be reconsidered, as it can be renewed repeatedly if lost, and, if carried, the question can be again laid on the table after progress in debate or business.

Reconsider. This motion is peculiar in that the making of the motion has a higher rank than its consideration, and for a certain time prevents anything being done as the result of the vote it is proposed to reconsider. It can be made only on the day the vote to be reconsidered was taken, or on the next succeeding day, a legal holiday or a recess not being counted as a day. **It must be made by one who voted with the prevailing side.** Any member may second it. It can be made while any other question is pending, even if another member has the floor, or after it has been voted to adjourn, provided the chair has not declared the assembly adjourned. It may be made after the previous question has been ordered, in which case it and the motion to be reconsidered are undebatable.

The motion to reconsider *cannot be applied* to a vote on a motion that may be renewed within a reasonable time; or when practically the same result may be attained by some other parliamentary motion; or when the vote has been partially executed (except in case of the motion to limit debate), or something has been done as the result of the vote that the assembly cannot undo; or to an affirmative vote in the nature of a contract, when the other party to the contract has been notified of the vote; or to a vote on the motion to reconsider. In accordance with these principles, votes on the following motions *cannot be reconsidered*: Adjourn; Take a Recess; Lay on the Table; Take from the Table; Suspend the Rules or Order of Business; and Reconsider. Affirmative votes on the following cannot be reconsidered: Proceed to the Orders of the Day; Adopt, or after they are adopted, to Amend, or Repeal, or Rescind, the Constitution, By-laws, or Rules of Order or any other rules that require previous notice for their amendment; Elect to membership or office if the member or officer is present and does not decline, or if absent and has learned of his election in the usual way and has not declined; to Reopen Nominations. A negative vote on the motion to Postpone Indefinitely cannot be reconsidered as practically the same question comes up again when the vote is taken on the main question. After a committee has taken up the matter referred to it, it is too late to reconsider the vote committing it, though the committee may be discharged. But after debate has proceeded under an order limiting or extending the limits of debate, the vote making that order may be reconsidered, as the debate may develop facts that make it desirable to return to the regular rules of debate. The minutes, or record of proceedings, may be corrected at any time without reconsidering the vote approving them.

If the reconsideration is moved while another subject is before the assembly, it cannot interrupt the pending business, but, as soon as that has been disposed of, if called up it has the preference over all other main motions and general orders. In such a case the chair does not state the question on the reconsideration until it is called up.

If the motion to reconsider is made at a time when the reconsideration could be called up if it had been previously made, the chair at once states the question on the reconsideration, unless the mover adds to his motion the words, "and have it entered on the minutes," as explained further on.

Rescind, Repeal, or Annul. Any vote taken by an assembly, except those mentioned further on, may be rescinded by a majority vote, provided notice of the motion has been given at the previous meeting or in the call for this meeting; or it may be rescinded without notice by a two-thirds vote, or by a vote of a majority of the entire membership. The notice may be given when another question is pending, but cannot interrupt a member while speaking. To rescind is identical with the motion to amend something previously adopted, by striking out the entire by-law, rule, resolution, section, or paragraph, and is subject to all the limitations as to notice and vote that may be placed by the rules on similar amendments. It is a main motion without any privilege, and therefore can be introduced only when there is nothing else before the assembly. It cannot be made if the question can be reached by calling up the motion to reconsider which has been previously made. It may be made by any member; it is debatable, and yields to all privileged and incidental motions; and all of the subsidiary motions may be applied to it. The motion to rescind can be applied to votes on all main motions, including questions of privilege and orders of the day that have been acted upon, and to votes on an appeal, with the following *exceptions*: votes cannot be rescinded after something has been done as a result of that vote that the assembly cannot undo; or where it is in the nature of a contract and the other party is informed of the fact; or, where a resignation has been acted upon, or one has been elected to, or expelled from, membership or office, and was present or has been officially notified. In the case of expulsion, the only way to reverse the action afterwards is to restore the person to membership or office, which requires the same preliminary steps and vote as is required for an election.

Where it is desired not only to rescind the action, but to express very strong disapproval, legislative bodies have, on rare occasions, voted to rescind the objectionable resolution and *expunge* it from the record, which is done by crossing out the words, or drawing a line around them, and writing across them the words, "Expunged by order of the assembly," etc., giving the date of the order. This statement should be signed by the secretary. The words expunged must not be so blotted as not to be readable, as otherwise it would be impossible to determine whether more was expunged than ordered. Any vote less than a majority of the total membership of an organization is certainly incompetent to expunge from the records a correct statement of what was done and recorded and the record of which was officially approved, even though a quorum is present and the vote to expunge is unanimous.

Renewal of a Motion. When an original main motion or an amendment has been adopted, or rejected, or a main motion has been postponed indefinitely, or an objection to its consideration has been sustained, it, or practically the same motion, cannot be again brought before the assembly at the same session, except by a motion to reconsider or to rescind the vote. But it may be introduced again at any future session.

In assemblies having regular sessions as often at least as quarterly, a main motion cannot be renewed until after the close of the next regular session, if it was postponed to that next session; or laid on the table; or adopted, or rejected, or postponed indefinitely, and the motion to reconsider was made and not acted on at the previous session. In these cases the question can be reached at the next session at the time to which it was postponed, or by taking it from the table, or by reconsidering the vote.

When a subject which has been referred to a committee is reported back at the same meeting, or a subject that has been laid on the table is taken up at the same meeting, it is not a renewal.

The following motions, unless they have been withdrawn, *cannot be renewed* at the same session: to adopt or postpone indefinitely an original main motion; to amend; to reconsider, unless the question to be reconsidered was amended materially when previously reconsidered; to object to the consideration of a question; to fix the same time to which to adjourn; to suspend the rules for the same purpose at the same meeting, though it may be renewed at another meeting held the same day.

Ratify. This is a main motion and is used when it is desired to confirm or make valid some action which requires the approval of the assembly to make it valid. The assembly may ratify only such actions of its officers or committees, or delegates, as it had the right to authorize in advance. It cannot make valid a viva voce election when the by-laws require it to be by ballot, nor can it ratify anything done in violation of the laws of the state, or of its own constitution or by-laws, except that it may ratify emergency action taken at a meeting when no quorum was present, even though the quorum is provided for in a by-law. A motion to ratify may be amended by substituting a motion of censure, and vice versa, when the action has been taken by an officer or other representative of the assembly. It is debatable and opens the entire question to debate.

Dilatory, Absurd, or Frivolous Motions. For the convenience of deliberative assemblies, it is necessary to allow some highly privileged motions to be renewed again and again after progress in debate or the transaction of any business, and to allow a single member, by calling for a division, to have another vote taken. If there was no provision for protecting the assembly, a minority of two members could be constantly raising questions of order and appealing from every decision of the chair, and calling for a division on every vote, even when it was nearly unanimous, and moving to lay motions on the table, and to adjourn, and offering amendments that are simply frivolous or absurd. By taking advantage of parliamentary forms and methods a small minority could practically stop the business of a deliberative assembly having short sessions, if there was no provision for such contingency. Congress met it by adopting this rule: "No dilatory motion shall be entertained by the speaker." But, without adopting any rule on the subject, every deliberative assembly has the inherent right to protect itself from being imposed upon by members using parliamentary forms to prevent it from doing the very thing for which it is in session, and which these forms were designed to assist, namely, to transact business. Therefore, whenever the chair is satisfied that members are using parliamentary forms merely to obstruct business, he should either not recognize them, or else rule them out of order. After the chair has been sustained upon an appeal, he should not entertain another appeal from the same obstructionists while they are engaged evidently in trying by that means to obstruct business. While the chair should always be courteous and fair, he should be firm in protecting the assembly from imposition, even though it be done in strict conformity with all parliamentary rules except this one, that no dilatory, absurd, or frivolous motions are allowed.

As an illustration of a frivolous or absurd motion, suppose Mr. A is to be in the city next week and a motion has been made to invite him to address the assembly at its next meeting, the meetings being weekly. Now, if a motion is made to refer the question to a committee with instructions to report at the next regular meeting, the chair should rule it out of order as frivolous or absurd.