

Guide to  
Parliamentary Procedure  
Basic  
for *Dummies*



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**PARLIAMENTARY LAW**

Parliamentary procedures provides an orderly system for accomplishing chapter business while protecting the rights of the members. It can be defined as:

- \* the right of the minority
- \* the rule of the majority
- \* partiality to none

The four basic principles of parliamentary laws are:

1. Courtesy and justice for all
2. One time of business at a time
3. The minority must be heard
4. The majority must prevail



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**WHAT TO SAY!**

Recognition by the Chair - A member may not speak unless recognized by the chair - Only one member at a time is allowed to speak. **To gain recognition a member must say ("Mr. or Madam President:)**

**Each item of business must contain to following:**

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**Main Motion** - An idea brought before the assembly for consideration. Usually begins with a "reason" before stating the motion. A motion should be short and concise. **To make the motion a member must say ("I move that ...." or I move to ....")**

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**Second** - The main motion must have a second which means another member supports the main motion. **To second a motion a different member than who made the motion must say ("I second the motion")**

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**Discussion** - Once the motion has been moved and seconded the "floor" is open for discussion. **The Chair or President will recognize the members allowing them to discuss the motion.** Note: Amendments to the main motion may be changed by inserting or deleting words or phrases. **To amend to motion a member must say ("I move to amend the motion by inserting or deleting ....")** Note: A motion may be amended twice.

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**Vote** - Once discussion ends a vote must be taken. If discussion goes on too long a member may end discussion by moving previous question (“**I move previous question**” or **questions**”) Previous question must be seconded and a vote on previous question must pass by 2/3rds vote. The the vote will be taken on the Main Motion or its amendment on the floor.

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*Definitions*

**Amendment** - A change of alteration proposed to a main motion by inserting, changing, or striking out words and phrases with out changing the meaning or intent of the motion. (“**I move to amend the motion by inserting or deleting ...**”) A motion may be amended twice - the second amendment is an amendment to the amendment.

**Appeal** - A challenge from a member on a ruling the chair has made regarding a question. (“**I appeal from the decision of the Chair**”) >

**Chair** - Presiding officer of the meeting, whether temporary or permanent.

**Division of House** - When the voice vote on an item of business is close, the chair must call the results of the vote. A member can challenge the results of the vote after it has been announced (“**Division**”) Once division has been called the vote will be retaken using either a show of hand or standing.

**Floor** - Refers to recognition and privilege of addressing the chair or assembly; obtaining the floor means receiving recognition from the chair with the privilege of making a motion, nomination, requesting a point of order, inquiry of information, or discussion.

**General Consent** - A form of voting in which a motion is accepted without going through the actual procedure of voting (“**Shall we by general consent accept the ... committee report ... hearing no objection the motion carries.**”) >

**Law on table** - A term used to indicate that a motion has been temporarily set aside. A motion that has been tabled must be taken up within the current meeting or the next meeting or it dies. (“**I move to table the motion**”) >

**Main Motion** - An idea that is brought before the assembly for consideration. (“**I move that ...**” or “**I move to ...**”) >

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*Definitions continued*

**Point of Information** - The request for information referring to the motion on the floor. It does not deal with parliamentary law. (“**I rise to point of information.**”) >

**Point of order** - Calling attention to the fact that the parliamentary laws have been violated. (“**Point of Order ... explain what was violated.**”) >

**Previous Question** - A motion designed to bring a motion already on the floor an immediate vote without further debate. Must be seconded and then voted upon before a vote on the motion. (“**Question**” or “**I call Previous Question**”) >

**Refer to a Committee** - A motion that will require in depth work or investigation is better served in a committee. (“**I move to refer the motion ... and its amendment(s) to a ... committee**”) >

**Take from the table** - A motion to bring a motion that has been tabled back before the assembly for consideration (“**I move to take from the table the motion to ...**”) >

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