

# Introduction to Parliamentary Procedure

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Parliamentary Procedure is a set of rules for conduct at meetings that allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion. Today, Robert's Rules of Order newly revised is the basic handbook of operation for most clubs, organizations and other groups, including our Toastmasters Club.

The method used by members to express themselves is by moving motions. A motion is a proposal that the entire membership take action or a stand on an issue.

There are four Basic Types of Motions:

- Main
- Subsidiary, which change or affect the main motion
- Incidental, for questioning procedure or tabling the motion
- Privileged, which are used for urgent unrelated matters

The general pattern is motion, second, debate and vote. While a main motion is under discussion, if a subsidiary, privileged, or incidental motion is made, it must be voted on before the main motion.

How are Motions Presented?

- Obtaining the floor by being recognized by the Chairman.
- Make Your Motion in the affirmative. "I move that we ..." rather than, "I move that we do not ...".
- Wait for a Second. If there is no second to your motion it is lost.
- Chairman States Motion "it has been moved and seconded that we ..." The membership then either debates your motion, or may move directly to a vote.
- Expanding on Your Motion. The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time, rather than at the time you present it. The mover is always allowed to speak first.
- Membership Debate. The membership is then able to speak for or against your motion or to make a subsidiary, privileged or incidental motion.
- Putting the Question to the Membership. The Chairman asks, "Are you ready to vote on the question?" When there is no other debate, a vote is taken.

There are two incidental motions that are commonly used that relate to voting.

- Motion to Table -- This motion is often used in the attempt to "kill" a motion.
- Motion to Postpone Indefinitely -- This is often used as a means of parliamentary strategy and allows opponents of motion to test their strength without an actual vote being taken.

More information can be found at <http://www.robertsrules.com/> or in the book, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 10<sup>th</sup> edition.