

This summary is taken from 11th edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) (see [www.robertsrules.com](http://www.robertsrules.com)). Please feel free to forward any questions to be researched regarding procedure or form to [davidread@weber.edu](mailto:davidread@weber.edu). Please also forward any correction to the following summary; please include a direct reference to the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of Robert's Rules to support the correction.

## SUMMARY OF COMMON MOTIONS

### I. Motions in Order of Precedence:

*Only one main motion may be on the floor at a time, but more than one secondary motion may be on the floor. Pending motions must be disposed of in descending order of precedence.*

- A. **Main Motion:** Introduces business to the assembly for its consideration. A main motion can only be made when no other motion is pending. A main motion yields to privileged, subsidiary and incidental motions. (Ch. III, §6, p. 62).
- B. **Subsidiary Motions (secondary motion):** Change or affect how the main motion is handled (voted on before the main motion) (Ch. III, §6, p. 62-66).
  1. **Postpone Indefinitely:** Made when the assembly does not want to take a position on the main question. Its adoption kills the main motion for the duration of the session and avoids a direct vote on the question. It is useful in disposing of a poor motion that cannot be either adopted or expressly rejected without possibly undesirable consequences. Unlike other subsidiary motions, debate on the motion to postpone indefinitely can go into the merits of the main motion. (Ch. VI, §11).
  2. **Amend:** Changes the wording of the main motion before it is voted upon. An amendment must be germane to the main motion. Its acceptance does not adopt the motion thereby amended; that motion remains pending in its modified form. Rejection of an amendment leaves the pending motion worded as it was before the amendment was offered. An amendment can: delete words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs; strike out words, phrases or sentences and insert new ones; add words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs; or substitute entire paragraph(s) or the entire text of the motion and insert another. (Ch. VI, §12).

When an entire motion is substituted for another, the chair must first call for a vote on the **Motion to Substitute** to determine the advisability of substituting a new motion. If the Motion to Substitute passes, the chair then throws the Substitute Motion open to debate. The **Substitute Motion** in turn must be voted upon, and is subject to amendment. (substitutions are addressed in §12, pages 153-162).  
*Note: As it relates to "Friendly Amendments," Robert's Rules states in §12 that "Regardless of whether or not the maker of the main motion "accepts" the amendment, it must be opened to debate and voted on formally (unless adopted by unanimous consent) and is*

*handled under the same rules as amendments generally (see also pp. 295-298).*" (§12, p. 162).

3. **Secondary Amendment:** An amendment can be offered to an amendment (amendment of the second order). (§12, p. 144).
  4. **Refer (Commit):** Sends a pending motion to a standing committee, or to an ad hoc (special) committee to be appointed or elected, for consideration. The motion to refer may include instructions to investigate, recommend, or take action, and may specify the composition of the committee. (§13, p. 179).
  5. **Postpone Definitely (Postpone to a Certain Time):** Delays action until a certain time specified in the motion (not beyond the next regular business meeting). (§14, p. 144).
  6. **Limit or Extend Debate:** Is used (1) to reduce or increase the number or length of speeches permitted or (2) to require that debate be closed at a specified time. It requires a two-thirds vote. (§15, p. 191).
  7. **Previous Question ("Call the Question"):** Immediately closes debate if passed. Requires a second and a two-thirds vote. (§16, p. 144).
  8. **Lay on the Table:** Enables the assembly to lay the pending question aside temporarily when something else of immediate urgency has arisen. It is not debatable, but the chair can ask the maker of the motion to state the reason(s) for the motion. A motion to lay on the table is out of order if the evident intent is to avoid further consideration of the motion. At time, when one indicates a desire "to table" a motion, the correct motion is either to Postpone Indefinitely or Postpone Definitely. (§17, p. 209).
- C. **Privileged Motions (secondary motion):** Do not relate to the pending business but have to deal with urgent matters which, without debate, must be considered immediately. (Ch. III, §6, p. 66-69) (See Ch. VII for detailed discussion of privileged motions).
1. **Call for the Orders of the Day:** Requires the assembly to conform to the agenda or to take up a general or special order that is due to come up at the time ("time certain"), unless two-thirds of those voting wish to do otherwise. A member can interrupt a speaker to call for the orders of the day. (§18, p. 219).
  2. **Raise a Question of Privilege:** Permits a request or main motion relating to the rights and privileges of the assembly or any of its members. Examples include requests relating to members' ability to hear a speaker or a request to go into "executive session" (closed session). A member may interrupt a speaker to raise a question of privilege. (§19, p. 225).
  3. **Recess:** Used to request an intermission, but does not close the meeting. (§20, p. 230).
  4. **Adjourn:** Used to close the meeting immediately. Not debatable. (§21, p. 233).

5. **Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn:** Sets the time, and sometimes the place, for another meeting (“adjourned meeting”) before the next regular business meeting to continue business of the session (§22, p. 242).

- II. **Incidental Motions (secondary motion):** Questions of procedure that arise out of other motions and must be considered before the other motion (Ch. III, §6, p. 69-74) (See Ch. VIII for detailed discussion of incidental motions).
- A. **Point of Order:** Used when a member believes that the rules of the assembly are being violated, thereby calling on the chair for a ruling and enforcement of the rules. A member can interrupt a speaker to raise a point of order (§23, p. 247).
  - B. **Appeal:** Used to challenge the chair’s ruling on a question of parliamentary procedure. A member can interrupt a speaker to appeal from the decision of the chair (§24, p. 255).
  - C. **Suspend the Rules:** Used to make a parliamentary rule or special rule of an organization temporarily inoperative. The motion cannot be applied to the constitution and bylaws unless those documents include specific provisions for suspension. Normally requires a two-thirds vote. (§25, p. 230)
  - D. **Objection to the Consideration of a Question:** Suppresses business that is irrelevant or inappropriate and undesirable to be discussed. The objection must be made immediately (acceptable to interrupt a speaker). Does not require a second, is not debatable, and requires a two-thirds vote opposed to consideration in order to pass. (§26, p. 267).
  - E. **Division of a Question:** Divides a motion containing two or more provisions that can stand alone so that each provision can be considered and voted upon separately. Not debatable. (§27, p. 271).
  - F. **Consideration by Paragraph or Seriatim:** Among other motions, this section governs motions such as “Motion to Consider as a Whole.” (§28, p. 277).
  - G. **Division of the Assembly:** Used to demand a rising vote to verify the vote count. The motion can be made without obtaining the floor, does not require a second, is not debatable, and does not require a vote. (§29, p. 280).
  - H. **Withdraw:** Permits the maker of a motion to remove it from deliberation after the motion has been stated by the chair. If there is not unanimous consent, the motion is debated and voted upon. (§33, p. 295).
  - I. **Request for Information (also known as “Point of Information”:** requests to the chair, or through the chair to another officer or member, to provide information relevant to the business at hand. *A point of information must be in the form of a question.* A request for information regarding parliamentary procedure or the organization’s rules bearing on the business at hand is referred to as a **Parliamentary Inquiry**. (§33, p. 294).

III. **Motions That Bring a Question Back Before the Assembly:** (Ch. III, §6, p. 74-79) (See Ch. IX for detailed discussion of these motions).

- A. **Take from the Table:** Resumes consideration of a motion laid on the table earlier in the same session or in the previous session. Not debatable. (§34, p. 300).
- B. **Rescind; Amend Something Previously Adopted:** Repeals or amends a motion for which it is too late to reconsider. Normally requires a two-thirds vote of those present or a majority vote of the entire membership; however, if previous notice has been given then only a majority vote of those present is required. A motion to rescind cannot be applied to action that cannot be reversed. (§35, p. 305).
- C. **Reconsider:** Reopens a motion to debate that has already been voted upon in the same session. The motion to reconsider can only be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side. It suspends action on the motion to which it is applied until it has been decided. (§37, p. 315).