

SEVEN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE



1. The Purpose of Parliamentary Procedure

The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to facilitate the transaction of business and to promote cooperation and harmony. Parliamentary procedure should not be used to awe, entangle, or confuse the uninitiated. Technical rules should be used only to the extent necessary to observe the law, to expedite business, to avoid confusion, and to protect the rights of members

2. Equality of Rights

All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations. The presiding officer should be strictly impartial and should act promptly to protect the equality of members in the exercise of their rights and privileges.

3. Majority Decision

The majority vote decides. The primary purpose of the parliamentary procedure is to determine the will of the majority and see that it is carried out. By the act of joining a group, a member agrees to be governed by the vote of its majority.

4. Minority Rights

The rights of the minority must be protected. Democratic organizations always protect certain basic rights belonging to all members. The right present proposals, to be heard, and to oppose proposals are valued rights of all members, although the ultimate authority of decision rests with the majority.

5. The Right of Discussion

Full and free discussion of every proposition presented for decision is an established right of members. Each member has the right to speak freely without interruption provided the rules are followed. The right of members to "have their say," is as important as the right to vote.

6. The Right to Information

Every member has the right to know the meaning of the question before the assembly and what its effect will be. Members have the right to request information on any motion they do not understand so that they may vote intelligently.

7. Fairness and Good Faith

All meetings must be characterized by fairness and good faith. The intent and overall good faith of the group are of more importance than the particular detail of the procedure. Fraud, unfairness, or absence of good faith may cause a court to hold any action invalid.

Adapted from: Stuart, M. (2005). *Parliamentary Procedure. Arizona Community Training: Civic Leadership*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona
Sturgis, A., (2001). *The standard code of parliamentary procedure*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.



PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE: RULES OF ORDER



1. MEETING WILL COME TO ORDER

The chair will call the meeting to order

2. INTRODUCTION OF BUSINESS

The chair will present the agenda for the meeting and seek approval. The chair will state, "Is there a motion to approve the agenda?". Depending on the type of meeting, in many meetings a formal motion to approve the agenda may be unnecessary. An agenda item, presentation, or communication, brings business to the floor. Motions are rarely made to receive reports of committees or communications to the group.

3. DISCUSSION OR DEBATE

The group may have several discussions or debates during the meeting. However, if the group wants the subject to go to the floor for approval and/or more formal discussion, a member must motion the discussion/debate to the floor.

4. MOTION FROM THE FLOOR

There are three steps that must be followed before a formal discussion/debate can proceed:

Step 1: A member obtains the floor by raising their hand to be acknowledged by the chair. Once the member has the floor, they make a motion, stating:

"I make a motion to _____."

Step 2: The motion is seconded by another member by stating; "I second the motion".

Step 3: The chair states the motion. "The motion on the floor is _____ and there is a second. (Only a chair can put a motion before the group) After the chair states the motion, the chair will bring the motion to question for consideration, discussion, and action.

5. FORMAL DISCUSSION/DEBATE

The chair will state, "It has been moved and seconded to approve the motion on the floor, is there any discussion?" Any member may raise their hand and be recognized by the chair to express any clarification, suggested change in the motion, or suggested amendment. After discussion, the chair will state, "If there is no further discussion, I bring the motion to question." "Hearing no further discussion, all those in favor, signify by saying "Aye", all who oppose, indicate by saying "No". If the vote is in favor, the chair will state, "the motion carries unanimously. If the vote is in the majority, the chair states, "The vote carries with # _____ Ayes and # _____ of nays. If everyone votes "Aye". The chair will state, the vote is unanimous, the motion carries. If the majority opposes, the chair will state, "The motion did not carry."

Sturgis, A., (2001). *The standard code of parliamentary procedure*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.



**PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE:
AT A GLANCE**



MAIN MOTIONS TO DO THIS	YOU SAY THIS	INCIDENTAL MOTIONS TO DO THIS	YOU SAY THIS	SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS TO DO THIS	YOU SAY THIS
Move to approve agenda.	"The chair entertains a motion to approve the agenda."	Appeal from decision of the chair (vote on ruling by the chair).	"I appeal from the decision of the chair."	Postpone temporarily (lay on the table).	"I move that the debate on _____ be postponed until _____."
Motion to approve.	"I move to approve _____."	Suspend the rules.	"I move that we suspend _____."	Close debate.	"I move to close the debate on the matter of _____."
Second the motion.	"I second the motion."	Consider informally.	"I move that we consider _____ informally."	Limit or extend debate.	"I move that propose debate be limited/ extended to _____."
State the motion.	Chair states the motion. "It has been moved and seconded _____."	Point of order (object to the procedure).	"Point of order."	Postpone to a certain time.	"I move we postpone until _____."
Put to question.	"The question is on the Those in favor say 'Aye', those opposed say 'No'."	Parliamentary inquiry.	"I rise to a parliamentary inquiry."	Refer to a committee.	"I move that we refer this to a committee."
Results of the vote.	The "Ayes" have it and the resolution is adopted or The "Nos" have it and the resolution is lost.	Withdrawal of a motion.	"I withdraw the motion."	Amend.	"I move we amend _____."
RESTORATIVE MAIN MOTION TO DO THIS	YOU SAY THIS	PRIVILEGED MOTIONS TO DO THIS	YOU SAY THIS		
Amend to a previous motion/action.	"I move to amend the motion."	Adjourn.	"I move we adjourn."		
Ratify-to confirm and validate an action.	"I move to ratify the decision."	Recess.	"I move that we recess for _____ minutes."		
Reconsider.	"I move we reconsider _____."	Question of privilege.	"I move that _____ be asked to come to our next meeting to _____."		

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