

Brief Resume of Parliamentary Rules from Sturgis

(This summary of commonly used parliamentary rules from Sturgis is a slightly modified and updated version of an earlier document, compiled by Fred Cranston, for the HSU Academic Senate. It is based on The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th edition, Revised and Updated).

I. Precedence of Motions

Privileged Motions

1. Adjourn
2. Recess
3. Questions of privilege

Subsidiary Motions

4. Postpone temporarily (or table)
5. Close debate
6. Limit or extend debate
7. Postpone to a certain time
8. Refer to committee
9. Amend

Main Motions

10. The main motion and restorative main motions

Basic Rules of Precedence:

1. When a motion is being considered, any motion of higher precedence may be proposed, but no motion of lower precedence may be proposed. Higher precedence is accorded to lower numbers.
2. Motions are considered and voted on in reverse order to their proposal. The motion last proposed is considered and disposed of first.

Incidental Motions

Incidental motions (Appeal, Suspend Rules, etc.) have no order of precedence.

II. Motions to Postpone

Motion to **postpone temporarily** (to lay on the Table, or to Table). Defers the main motion temporarily but specifies no time for its consideration and is not debatable. Its effect terminates with the current meeting. The postponed motion can be taken up again for consideration at any time during the current meeting by a motion to resume its consideration. Usually used when more urgent business arises, for example, a TIME CERTAIN agenda item.

Motion to **postpone to a certain time**. A motion to postpone to a certain time defers consideration of the pending main motion, but also fixes a definite date or time for its consideration. Debate on this motion is permitted, but is restricted to brief discussion of the time or reason for postponement.

Motion to **postpone indefinitely** (Robert's Rules). Kills the pending main motion. Fully debatable and opens main motion to debate. In addition to killing the main motion, this motion is useful for opponents to learn, without risk of adopting the main motion, who favors and who opposes it.

III. Motion to Vote Immediately

Motion to **close debate and vote immediately**. Prevents or stops discussion on the pending question or questions and prevents the proposal of other subsidiary motions except to postpone temporarily, and to bring the pending question or questions to an immediate vote. Is not debatable and requires a two-thirds vote.

Question! The correct way to bring a matter to an immediate vote is to obtain the floor and move to close debate. A common practice, however, is to call out "Question!" or "I call for the question!" without obtaining the floor. The member who calls the question is out of order; but at the discretion of the chair, this may be treated as an informal way of closing the debate. The chair may proceed by general consent, or may take a vote requiring two-thirds majority.

IV. Other Motions

Question of privilege enables a member to secure immediate decision and action by the presiding officer on a request that concerns the comfort, convenience, rights, or privileges of the assembly or of the member, or permission to present a motion of an urgent nature, even though other business is pending.

Motion to appeal enables a member who believes that the presiding officer is mistaken or unfair in a ruling to have the assembly decide by vote whether the presiding officer's decision should be upheld or overruled.

Request for point of order calls attention of the assembly and of the presiding officer to a violation of the rules, an omission, a mistake, or an error in procedure, and to secure a ruling from the presiding officer on the question raised.

Parliamentary inquiry enables a member (a) to ask the presiding officer a question relating to proper procedure in connection with the pending motion or with a motion the member may wish to bring before the assembly immediately, or for information on the meaning or effect of the pending questions; or (b) to ask the speaker or the proposer of the motion a question about the pending motion. A parliamentary inquiry may interrupt a speaker only if it requires an immediate answer.

Request to withdraw a motion enables a member who has proposed a motion to remove it from consideration by the assembly. Motion is not debatable, the consent of the seconder is not necessary, and requires a majority vote.

Division of a question is used to divide a motion that is composed of two or more independent parts into individual motions that may be considered and voted on separately. Any member has the right to request a division into separate motions. If the chair agrees, the chair must divide it. If there is objection to the division, a vote must be taken.

Call for division of assembly is used to verify an indecisive voice or hand vote by requiring the voters to rise and, if necessary, to be counted. May be made immediately after a vote has been taken and without waiting for recognition.

Motion to limit or extend debate limits or extends the time that will be devoted to discussion of a pending motion or modifies or removes limitations already imposed on its discussion.

Motion to refer to committee transfers a motion that is pending before the assembly to a committee.

Motion to suspend rules permits an assembly to take some action that otherwise would be prevented by a procedural rule or by a program already adopted.

All motions require seconds, excepting those that are presented as a request or demand: point or order, parliamentary inquiry, withdraw a motion, division of a question, divisions of the assembly, and question of privilege. However, if presented as a motion, all require seconds.

Most motions require a majority vote. Three motions require a two-thirds vote: Close debate and vote immediately; Limit debate; and Suspend the rules.

V. Amendments

Amendments must be germane to the motion. They may be hostile; that is, opposed to the actual intent of the original motion. They may be made to the original (main) motion or to a pending amendment. Only one amendment to the main motion may be on the floor at a time. Several amendments and amendments to amendments may be offered in succession. (The practice of the Academic Senate has been to allow only one amendment to an amendment, otherwise it gets too confusing).

When an amendment to a motion is proposed, discussion is limited to that amendment until it is disposed of.

When the wording or effect of a motion as proposed is not satisfactory, it is sometimes better, instead of proposing several amendments, to reword the motion and propose it as an amendment by substitution.

The proposer of a motion or an amendment has the right to modify or withdraw the motion or amendment at any time before the presiding officer has stated it to the assembly for consideration.

A member may propose a "friendly amendment", indicating that the member proposing the amendment feels it will be acceptable to the maker of the main motion.

Amendments are voted on in the reverse order of their proposal. An amendment to an amendment is voted on first, and requires only a majority vote.

PRINCIPAL RULES GOVERNING MOTIONS

<i>Order of precedence¹</i>	<i>Can interrupt?</i>	<i>Requires second?</i>	<i>Debat-able</i>	<i>Amend-able?</i>	<i>Vote required?</i>	<i>Applies to what other motions?</i>	<i>Can have what other motions applied to it?⁴</i>	<i>Refer to page</i>
PRIVILEGED MOTIONS								
1. Adjourn	No	Yes	Yes ³	Yes ³	Majority	None	Amend	77
2. Recess	No	Yes	Yes ³	Yes ³	Majority	None	Amend ³	75
3. Question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None	None	None	72
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS								
4. Postpone temporarily (Table)	No	Yes	No	No	Majority ²	Main motion	None	68
5. Close debate	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	Debatable motions	None	65
6. Limit debate	No	Yes	Yes ³	Yes ³	2/3	Debatable motions	Amend ³	62
7. Postpone to a certain time	No	Yes	Yes ³	Yes ³	Majority	Main motion	Amend ³ , close debate, limit debate	58
8. Refer to committee	No	Yes	Yes ³	Yes ³	Majority	Main motion	Amend ³ , close debate, limit debate	55
9. Amend	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Rewordable motions	Close debate, limit debate, amend	47
MAIN MOTIONS								
10. a. The main motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	None	Restorative, subsidiary	32
b. Restorative main motions								
Amend a previous action	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Main motion	Subsidiary, restorative	36
Ratify	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Previous action	Subsidiary	37
Reconsider	Yes	Yes	Yes ³	No	Majority	Main motion	Close debate, limit debate	38
Rescind	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Main motion	Close debate, limit debate	42
Resume consideration	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	Main motion	None	44

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

<i>No order of precedence</i>	<i>Can interrupt?</i>	<i>Requires second?</i>	<i>Debat-able?</i>	<i>Amend-able?</i>	<i>Vote required?</i>	<i>Applies to what other motion?</i>	<i>Can have what other motions applied to it?</i>	<i>Refer to page</i>
MOTIONS								
Appeal	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Decision of chair	Close debate, limit debate	82
Suspend rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	None	None	84
Consider informally	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	Main motion	None	126
REQUESTS								
Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	None	Any error	None	87
Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	None	All motions	None	90
Withdraw a motion	Yes	No	No	No	None	All motions	None	94
Division of question	No	No	No	No	None	Main motion	None	96
Division of assembly	Yes	No	No	No	None	Indecisive vote	None	99

¹ Motions are in order only if no motion higher on the list is pending. Thus, if a motion to close debate is pending, a motion to amend would be out of order; but a motion to recess would be in order, since it outranks the pending motion.

² Requires two-thirds vote when it would suppress a motion without debate.

³ Restricted.

⁴ Withdraw may be applied to all motions.

From:

Sturgis, Alice. The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure. 4th edition, revised by the American Institute of Parliamentarians. New York : McGraw-Hill, 2001

Sturgis Parliamentary Procedure Motions Chart (Side 1)

Based on *Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th Edition)*

The motions below are listed in order of precedence. A motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

Page	YOU WANT:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
77	Close meeting	I move that we adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
75	Take break	I move to recess for ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
72	Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
68	Lay aside temporarily	I move that the main motion be postponed temporarily	No	Yes	No	No	Varies
65	Close debate and vote immediately	I move to close debate	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
62	Limit or extend debate	I move to limit debate to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3
58	Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion until ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
55	Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
47	Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
32	Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Sturgis Parliamentary Procedure Motions Chart (Side 2)

Based on *Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*

Incidental Motions - no order of precedence. Arise incidentally and are decided immediately.

Page	YOU WANT:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
82	Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
84	Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rule requiring	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
87	Enforce rules	Point of Order	Yes	No	No	No	None
90	Parliamentary question	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	None
96	Divide motion	I request that the motion be divided . . .	No	No	No	No	None
99	Demand a rising vote	I call for a division of the assembly	Yes	No	No	No	None

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Restorative Main Motions - no order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else is pending.

Page	YOU WANT:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
36	Amend a previous action	I move to amend the motion that was ...	No	Yes	Varies	Yes	Varies
38	Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider ...	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
42	Cancel previous action	I move to rescind ...	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
44	Resume consideration (take matter from table)	I move to resume consideration of ...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority

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