

## ***Classes Of Motions***

A motion refers to a formal proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the assembly take certain action.

### *Five Classes of Motions*

1. Main Motions
  - a. Original Main Motions – Primary Motion
  - b. Incidental Main Motions – Primary Motion
2. Subsidiary Motions – Secondary Motion
3. Privileged Motions – Secondary Motion
4. Incidental Motions – Secondary Motion
5. Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly

## ***Primary Motions***

### **I. 1st Class: Main Motions**

- A. A main motion can be made only when no other motion is pending
- B. Distinction Between Original Main Motions and Incidental Main Motions
  1. An **original main motion** that introduces a substantive question to the assembly.
  2. An **incidental main motion** that is incidental to or relates to the business of the assembly, or its past or future action.
  3. The main difference between original main motions and incidental main motions is principally in the nature of their subject matter.

*Practice Note:* Incidental main motions form a category of main motions completely separate from incidental motions – the 4th class of motions.

## ***Secondary Motions***

Comprised of 3 Classes of Motions

1. Subsidiary Motions
2. Privileged Motions
3. Incidental Motions

A secondary motion is one whose relationship to the main motion, or whose procedural character or urgency, is such that:

- 1) It can be made and considered while a main motion is pending without violating the principle of taking up only one question at a time; and

- 2) When the secondary motion has been made and has been admitted by the chair as in order, it must be acted upon or disposed of before direct consideration of the main question can be continued.
- 3) When a secondary motion is placed before the assembly, it becomes the immediately pending question.
- 4) The main motion remains pending while the secondary motion is also pending.

## II. **2nd Class: Subsidiary Motions**

A. Assist the assembly in treating or disposing of a main motion (and sometimes other motions)

1. Postpone Indefinitely
2. Amend
3. Commit or Refer
4. Postpone to a Certain Time
5. Limit or Extend Limits of Debate
6. Previous Question
7. Lay on the Table

B. Characteristics of Subsidiary Motions as a Class

All have the 5 following characteristics:

1. They are always applied to another motion to aid in treating or disposing of it;
2. They can be applied to any main motion;
3. They fit into an order of precedence, so that, no subsidiary motion can be moved when a motion of higher rank is already pending;
4. They are out of order when another member has the floor; and
5. They are in order during the entire time that a motion to which they can be applied is pending

C. Motions

1. Postpone Indefinitely

If an embarrassing main motion has been brought before the assembly, a member can propose to dispose of this question without bringing it to a direct vote, by moving to Postpone Indefinitely.

2. Amend

If a main motion might be more suitable or acceptable in an altered form, a proposal to change its wording (either to clarify or, within limits, to modify the meaning) before the main motion is voted on can be introduced by moving to Amend.

3. Commit

If much time would be required to amend the main motion properly, or that additional information is needed, so that it would be better to turn the motion or resolution over to a committee for study or redrafting before the assembly considers it further. Such action can be proposed by moving to Commit or Refer it to a committee.

#### 4. Postpone to a Certain Time

If the assembly might prefer to consider the main motion later in the same meeting or at another meeting, this can be proposed by moving to Postpone to a Certain Time – also called: the motion to Postpone Definitely, or simply to Postpone.

#### 5. Limited or Extend Limits of Debate

All such modifications of the normal limits of debate on a pending motion are proposed by means of the motion to Limit or Extend Limits of Debate.

#### 6. Previous Question

If it is desired to close debate and amendment of a pending motion so that it will come to an immediate vote, this can be proposed by moving the Previous Question.

#### 7. Lay on The Table

If there is reason for the assembly to lay the main motion aside temporarily without setting a time for resuming its consideration, but with the provision that it can be taken up again whenever a majority so decides, this can be proposed by the motion to Lay on the Table.

#### D. Subsidiary Motions Used as Incidental Main Motions

For each of the first five subsidiary motions (that is, for all except the Previous Question and Lay on the Table), there is a corresponding incidental main motion of the same name that can be made when no other motion is pending.

### III. **3<sup>rd</sup> Class: Privileged Motions**

A. Have to do with special matters of immediate and overriding importance which, without debate, should be allowed to interrupt the consideration of anything else

1. Call For the Orders of the Day
2. Raise a Question of Privilege
3. Recess
4. Adjourn
5. Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn

B. Characteristics of Privilege Motions as a Class

- Unlike subsidiary or incidental motions, privileged motions do not relate to the pending business
- Have to do with special matters of immediate and overriding importance which should be allowed to interrupt the consideration of anything else
- The privileged motions as a class are also known as “privileged questions,” which should not be confused with “questions of privilege”

C. Motions

#### 1. Call For The Orders Of The Day

If the adopted program or order of business is not being followed, or if consideration of a question has been set for the present time and is now in order but the matter is not being taken up, a single member, by making a Call for the Orders of the Day, can require such a schedule to be enforced – unless the assembly decides by a two-thirds vote to set the orders of the day aside.

## 2. Raise A Question Of Privilege

If a pressing situation is affecting a right or privilege of the assembly or of an individual member (for example, noise, inadequate ventilation, introduction of a confidential subject in the presence of guests, etc.), a member can Raise a Question of Privilege, which permits him to interrupt pending business to state an urgent request or motion.

## 3. Recess

A short intermission in a meeting, even while business is pending, can be proposed by moving to Recess for a specified length of time.

## 4. Adjourn

A member can propose to close the meeting entirely by moving to Adjourn.

Adjourn can be made and the assembly can adjourn even while business is pending, provided that the time for the next meeting is established by a rule of the society or has been set by the assembly. In such a case, the pending business and any other business that is unfinished at the time of adjournment, as well as any questions that have been temporarily disposed of, either fall to the ground or are carried over to the next meeting, depending on the circumstances.

## 5. Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn

- Under certain conditions while business is pending, the assembly – before adjourning or postponing the pending business – may wish to fix a date and hour, and sometimes the place for another meeting before the next regular meeting
- Can be made – even while a matter is pending

## D. Incidental Main Motions Corresponding to Privileged Motions

Questions of Privilege can also be brought up while no motion is pending, and at such times they are moved just as any main motion:

1. Recess
2. Adjourn
3. Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn

## **IV. 4<sup>th</sup> Class: Incidental Motions**

### A. Related to the Parliamentary situation so that it must be decided before business can proceed

1. Point of Order
2. Appeal
3. Suspend the Rules (Parliamentary/Standing)
4. Objection to Consideration of the Question
5. Division of the Question
6. Seriatim
7. Division of the Assembly
8. Voting Methodologies
9. Motions Related to Nominations (How To/Reason/Close)

10. Close/Reopen Polls
11. Request to be Excused from a Duty
12. Parliamentary Inquiry
13. Request for Information
14. Request for Permission to Withdraw a Motion
15. Request to Read Papers
16. Create and Filling a Blank
17. Change or Depart From Adopted Convention Agenda
18. Dispense with Reading of the Minutes
19. Request for Any Other Privilege

- B. An incidental motion is said to be incidental to the other motion or matter out of which it arises.

Incidental motions deal with questions of procedure arising out of:

- 1) commonly, another pending motion; but also
- 2) sometimes, another motion or item of business
  - a) that it is desired to introduce,
  - b) that has been made but has not yet been stated by the chair, or
  - c) that has just been pending

C. Motions

1. Point of Order

Although the presiding officer has the responsibility of enforcing the rules, any member who believes he has noticed where the chair is failing to do so can, at the time the breach occurs, call attention to it by making a Point of Order; the effect is to require the chair to make a ruling on the question involved.

2. Appeal

Although the duty of ruling on all questions of parliamentary procedure affecting the assembly's proceedings rests with the chair, any two members, by moving and seconding an Appeal immediately after the chair has made such a ruling, can require him to submit the matter to a vote of the assembly.

3. Suspend the Rules

When it is desired that the assembly take up a question or do something that would be in violation of a rule that applies, it can be proposed in some cases to Suspend the Rules to permit accomplishment of the desired purpose.

4. Objection to Consideration of The Question

If an original main motion has been made and a member believes that it would do harm for the motion even to be discussed in the meeting, he can raise an Objection to the

Consideration of the Question provided he does so before:

- 1) debate has begun, or
- 2) any subsidiary motion (other than a motion to Lay on the Table) has been stated,
- 3) The assembly then votes on whether the main motion shall be considered (and if there is a two-thirds vote against consideration, the motion is dropped)

#### 5. Division of The Question

If a pending main motion (or a pending amendment) contains two or more parts capable of standing as separate questions, the assembly can vote to treat each part accordingly in succession.

#### 6. Consideration by Paragraph/Seriatim

If the main motion is in the form of a resolution or document containing several paragraphs or sections which could be most efficiently handled by opening each paragraph or section to amendment one at a time (before the whole is finally voted on), such a procedure can be proposed by the motion for Consideration by Paragraph or Seriatim.

#### 7. Division of The Assembly

- If a member doubts the accuracy of the chair's announcement of the result of a voice vote (or even a vote by show of hands)—or doubts that a representative number of persons voted—he can demand a Division of the Assembly
- A single member thus has the power to require a standing vote, but not to order a count, which only the chair or the assembly can do

#### 8. Voting Methodologies

A member can move that a vote be taken by

- (a) by ballot,
- (b) by roll call, or
- (c) by a counted standing vote, especially if a division of the assembly has appeared inconclusive and the chair neglects to order a count

#### 9. Motions Related to Nominations

If the bylaws or rules of the organization do not prescribe how nominations are to be made, and if the assembly has taken no action to do so prior to an election, any member can move while the election is pending to (a) specify one of various methods by which the candidates shall be nominated; or, if the need arises, (b) close nominations, or (c) reopen them; these are the Motions Relating to Nominations.

#### 10. Polls Closed/Reopened

Motion that the polls be closed or reopened in a ballot vote.

11. Request to Be Excused From A Duty

A member may Request to Be Excused from a Duty if he wishes to be relieved from an obligation imposed upon him by the bylaws or by virtue of some position or office he holds.

12. Parliamentary Inquiry

A request for the chair's opinion on a matter of parliamentary procedure as it relates to the business at hand—not involving a ruling.

13. Request for Information

An inquiry as to facts affecting the business at hand - directed to the chair or, through the chair, to a member.

14. Request for Permission (Or Leave) To Withdraw or Modify A Motion (After It Has Been Stated by The Chair)

Allows a member to withdraw a motion after it has been stated by the chair. If a member other than the one making the request made the motion, it does not require a second.

15. Request to Read Papers

If any member objects, a member has no right to read from any paper or book as part of his speech without permission from the assembly.

16. Create/Fill a Blank

Allows unlimited member of alternate choices for a particular specification in a main motion or primary amendment to be pending at the same time.

17. Change or Depart from Adopted Convention Agenda

Allows the assembly to change or depart from previously adopted convention agenda.

18. Dispense with Reading of the Minutes

Allows assembly to not carry out the reading and approval of the minutes at the regular time.

19. Request for Any Other Privilege

Allows member to request any number of things, such as a request to address remarks or make a presentation while no motion is pending.

**IV. 5<sup>th</sup> Class: Motions That Bring A Question Again Before The Assembly**

A. Allows the assembly to consider again the merits of a question that has previously been disposed of in some way

1. Take From The Table

2. Rescind or Amend Something Previously Adopted

3. Discharge a Committee

4. Reconsider

B. Three of the motions can only be made—while no business is pending:

1. Take From Table
2. Rescind or Amend Something Previously Adopted
3. Discharge a Committee

C. Motions

1. Lay On The Table

- If it is desired to resume consideration of a main motion which lies on the table, it can be proposed by means of the motion to Take from the Table
- A main motion is said to lie on the table if it was laid on the table earlier in the present session, or in the last previous session with no more than a quarterly time interval having intervened, and it has not yet been finally disposed of

2. Rescind or Amend Something Previously Adopted – Incidental Main Motions

- If it is desired to cancel or countermand an entire main motion, resolution, order, or rule that has been adopted and that has continuing force and effect, such action can be proposed by means of the motion to Rescind (or Repeal, or Annul)
- The motion to Amend Something Previously Adopted can be proposed to modify the wording or text previously adopted, or to substitute a different version

3. Discharge A Committee – Incidental Main Motions

If a question has been referred, or a task has been assigned, to a committee that has not yet made its final report, and it is desired to take the matter out of the committee's hands, either so that the assembly itself can consider or act upon it or so that it can be dropped, such action can be proposed by means of the motion to Discharge a Committee.

4. Reconsider

If, in the same session that a motion has been voted on but no later than the same day or the next day on which a business meeting is held, new information or a changed situation makes it appear that a different result might reflect the true will of the assembly, a member who voted with the prevailing side can, by moving to Reconsider the vote, propose that the question come before the assembly again as if it had not previously been voted on.

D. *Practice Note:* Take from the Table and Reconsider—do not bring a question again before the assembly by their introduction, but by their adoption, which automatically causes a main question to become pending.