

Going through the motions

Here are a few brief tips on motions that may help meetings go faster.

1. The essential steps for motions are:

- a) Obtain floor.
- b) Recognition by the chair.
- c) Make the motion.
- d) Obtain a second if necessary.*
- e) Question is placed on floor by chair.
- f) Discussion.
- g) Chair puts the question for THE VOTE.
- h) Outcome is announced by chair.

*A Motion that comes out of the meeting of a body does not need a second. Look for words like “*The executive board recommends and I move,*” “*With the _____ committee concurring and I move*” or “*At the direction of the _____ task force, I move.*” Immediately after the maker moves such a motion, and the chair restates the motion, discussion can begin.

2. Preprinting motions is a way to help meetings go faster. Preprinted motions are not motions until they have actually been moved by the maker. (“*I move action item 1.*”) A maker may move a block of preprinted motions. (“*I move action items #1-3 and #5.*” In this instance #4 may be considered separately or withdrawn.)

3. Withdrawing a preprinted motion is not an item of business in itself. If the maker withdraws the motion before the motion has been brought forward, then for all practical purposes it never existed. Similarly, if the maker withdraws the motion after the motion has been made but before the chair restates it (or in the case of our preprinted motion, begins discussion), the motion simply ceases to exist. Chair states, “*The motion is withdrawn.*”

4. If the maker wants to withdraw a motion after there has been discussion, there must be consensus of the group that the motion be withdrawn. Chair states, “*If there is no objection....*”

5. Postponing a motion requires a motion, second, and vote.

6. To amend a motion, a member strikes, inserts, or strikes and inserts language, or substitutes entire paragraphs or pages. An amendment requires a second. Discussion then follows only on the merit of the amendment. Once the amendment has been voted upon, then the discussion returns to the (amended, if adopted) main motion, further discussion and vote. Only two amendments to the main motion may be on the table for discussion at once. The chair and parliamentarian help members word motions so that everyone understands the questions.

7. Each member can discuss the merits of a motion or amendment twice and for ten minutes each time. The chair alternates speakers pro/con, and no speaker speaks a second time until all speakers have had an opportunity to speak.

Standing Rules tip: An association may adopt a standing rule to limit the number of speakers pro/con on each motion, set a speaker time limit, or set a number of speaking opportunities for each speaker, for example: four speakers pro and four speakers con, two minutes each, once per member. This standing rule may be set aside by a 2/3 vote using an interrupting motion, when the body needs to discuss an item further.

8. “*I move the question*” if adopted, requires the body to vote immediately on the current motion on the floor, but permits further discussion on any remaining motions. The motion “*I move the question and all pending questions,*” if adopted, closes debate and requires a vote first on the amendments and then on the main motion, or amended main motion, if the amendments are adopted.