

## BASIC RULES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

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All chapter officers should be familiar with parliamentary procedures to assist in the running of effective chapter meetings. Outlined below are some of the basic parliamentary procedures used during chapter meetings.

- The rights of the Sorority supersede the rights of individual sorors.
- All members\* are equal and their rights are equal. Those rights are:
  - To attend meetings
  - To make motions and speak in debate
  - To nominate
  - To vote
  - To hold office
- A quorum must be present to transact business and to vote.
- The majority rules
- Majority Vote — more than half of the votes cast by members entitled to vote, excluding blanks or abstentions, at a regular or properly called meeting.
- Silence is consent. The chair should not call for abstentions.
- Two-thirds vote—a motion that requires two thirds (2/3) must receive at least two thirds of the vote cast by members entitled to vote, excluding blanks or abstentions, at a regular or properly called meeting. Two-thirds vote is required to adopt any motion that
  - a) suspends or modifies a Policy and Procedure previously adopted; b) prevents the introduction of a question for consideration; c) closes, limits, or extends the limits of debate; d) closes nominations or polls, or otherwise limits the freedom of nominating or voting; or e) takes away membership.
- There is one question at a time and one speaker at a time.
- Debatable motions must receive full debate; therefore, a motion to close (or end) the debate must be voted upon rather than the chair declaring the debate ended (motion to limit or extend limits of debate, or moving the previous question).
- Once a question is decided, it is not in order to bring up the same motion or one essentially like it at the same meeting, unless there first is a motion that brings a question again before the assembly (take from the table, rescind or amend something previously adopted, or reconsider).

- Personal remarks in debates are always out of order.
- In voting, members have the right to know at all times what motion is before the assembly and what an affirmative and negative votes mean.

*\* A member is defined as any soror who pays dues to a chapter and to Grand Chapter, or who pays a member-at-large fee, or those exempt from payment of Grand Chapter dues and fees as stated in Article X – DUES AND FEES, Section 15. EXEMPTION FROM PAYMENT OF GRAND CHAPTER DUES AND FEES in the Constitution and Bylaws of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated*

Members should following the steps below to seek consideration of a motion:

- Seek recognition by raising your hand
- Wait to be recognized by the chair
- State your motion
- After the second, the chair will restate your motion
- Chair opens the floor for debate
- Chair puts the question to a vote
- Chair announces the vote

To expedite business, the President should:

- Assist members in framing their motions
- Keep the discussion on the motion on the floor
- Know that the Treasurer's report is filed for audit, not adopted
- Know that committee reports are not adopted—action may be taken on the recommendations only
- Use general consent whenever possible

## BASIC TYPES OF MOTIONS

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Main Motion—A proposal that certain action be taken; means by which business is brought before an assembly

- Allows the group to do its work
- Can be made only when no other motion is pending
- Must be capable of standing by itself
- Lowest in ranked motions
- Requires a second, is debatable, is amendable
- Normally takes a majority vote

Subsidiary Motion—Relates directly to the main motion that is on the table; designed to expedite business by disposing of the pending motion other than by adopting or rejecting it.

- Examples: amend, lay on the table, refer to committee, limit debate, postpone definitely, postpone indefinitely, order the previous question (Call for the vote)

Incidental Motion—Deals with questions of procedure

- Arises out of another pending motion or item of business
- Is not debatable
- Examples: point of order, appeal, division of the body

Privileged Motion—Not related to the business on the floor but to the rights of the members

- Has the right to interrupt business
- Because of their high privilege, is not debatable
- Examples: adjourn, recess, raise a question of privilege

Restorative Motion—Allows body to change a previous action

- Robert's Rules of Order says, "Within limits, members have the right to rethink a situation if they feel their decision has been made too quickly or without enough information."
- Two Types of Restorative Motions: Reconsider and Rescind
  1. Reconsider—Enables a majority in an assembly within a limited time and without notice, to bring back for further consideration a motion which has already been voted on
    - Can be applied to the vote on any motion except:
      - A motion which can be renewed
      - An affirmative vote whose provisions have been partly carried out
      - An affirmative vote on a contract if the party to the contract has been notified of the outcome
      - A vote to reconsider
      - A vote which caused something to be done that is impossible to undo

- It may only be made by someone who voted on the winning side of the motion;
  - Must be made during the same or next session.
  - Must be seconded
  - Is debatable
  - Is not amendable
  - Cannot be reconsidered
2. Rescind—Amends something that was previously adopted; allows the chapter to change an action previously taken or ordered
- Used to change part of the text or substitute a different version
  - Takes precedence over nothing
  - Can be applied to anything
  - Is out of order when another has the floor
  - Requires previous notice or 2/3 vote if not
  - Must be seconded
  - Is debatable
  - Negative vote on this motion can be reconsidered, but not an affirmative vote

### ***Motions - Order of Precedence (Highest to Lowest)***

- Privileged Motions
- Subsidiary Motions
- Main Motion

### ***Unranked Motions***

- Incidental Motions
- Restorative Motions

### ***Parliamentary Motions Guide***

Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11<sup>th</sup> Edition)

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

<b>You Say:</b>	<b>If You Want TO:</b>	<b>Interrupt?</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>?</b>	<b>Debate?</b>	<b>Amend?</b>	<b>Vote?</b>
I move to adjourn	Close meeting	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
I move to recess for	Take break	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
I rise to a question of privilege	Register complaint	Yes	No	No	No	None
I call for the orders of the day	Make follow agenda	Yes	No	No	No	None
I moved to lay the question on the table	Lay aside temporarily	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
I move the previous question	Close debate	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
I move that debate be limited ...	I move that debate be limited to	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
I move to <b>postpone</b> the motion to ...	Postpone to a certain time	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
I moved to refer the motion to ...	Refer to committee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
I move to <b>amend</b> the motion by ...	Modify wording of motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	Kill main motion	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
I move that (or 'to') (main motion)	Bring business before assembly	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority, with some exceptions

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Incidental Motions – No order of precedence. Arise incidentally and decide immediately

<b>You Say:</b>	<b>If You Want TO:</b>	<b>Interrupt?</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>?</b>	<b>Debate?</b>	<b>Amend?</b>	<b>Vote?</b>
Point of order	Enforce rules	Yes	No	No	No	None
I appeal from the decision of the chair	Submit matter to assembly	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
I move to suspend the rules which ...	Suspend rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
I object to the consideration of the question	Avoid main motion altogether	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
I move to divide the question	Divide motion	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
I call for a division	Demand rising vote	Yes	No	No	No	None
Parliamentary inquiry	Parliamentary law question	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None
Request for information	Request information	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None

Motions that Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly – no order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else is pending.

I move to take from the table ...	Take matter from table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
I move to rescind/amend something previously adopted	Cancel or change previous action	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or majority with notice
I move to reconsider the vote ...	Request information	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority

## AMENDMENTS

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The motion to amend is the most frequently used and most important of the subsidiary motions. The motion to Amend also can cause the most confusion in a group. To amend a motion means to change the wording of a motion to make it clearer, more complete, or more acceptable *before* voting upon the motion. The amending process allows the group to change the proposed motion to more clearly represent the will of the group. Robert's Rules of Order calls this "perfecting the motion." An amendment must be germane to the motion on the floor to be in order. New business may not be introduced under the pretext of an amendment.

There are three ways to amend a motion:

- To add words or phrases.
- To strike out words or phrases.
- To substitute by:
  - Striking out and inserting words;
  - Substituting an entire motion or paragraph.

An amendment may also be amended. The first amendment is called a primary amendment and the amendment to the amendment is called a secondary amendment.

Only two amendments may be pending at any one time. (In other words, an amendment to an amendment to an amendment is not in order; otherwise, the members would become hopelessly confused.)

The process of amending an amendment:

- First vote on: the amendment to the amendment (the secondary amendment).
- Next vote on: the original amendment (the primary amendment)
- Finally vote on: the main motion (which may or may not have been amended).

## WHEN TO USE A MOTION

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### If the Agenda is Not Being Followed and You Want to Get the Chair Back on Track...

**Call for the Orders of the Day:** (no second, no vote\*, no debate) (a.k.a. "to enforce the schedule") if the agenda is not being followed, a member may call for the orders of the day.

\*Must be enforced immediately unless there is a 2/3 vote to set aside the orders of the day.  
Privileged

### If You Feel that the Rules of the Assembly Have Been Violated...

**Point of Order:** (no second, no vote, no debate): when a member thinks the rules of an assembly have been violated, she may make a point of order, thereby calling for the chair's ruling to restore order. Incidental

### If there is a Problem in the Room (Air Conditioning, etc.)...

**Raise a Question of Privilege to Make an Urgent Request about a Person's Rights:** (no second, no vote, no debate) allows a request or main motion to be brought up immediately because of its urgency, while doing so would typically be called out of order. There is no debate and no vote as the chair rules on the matter of privilege or not. Privileged

### If a Member has a Question for the Chair on a Matter of Parliamentary Procedure...

**Request: Parliamentary Inquiry:** (no second, no vote, and no debate) a member may request of the chair her ruling on the matter of parliamentary procedure. This is answered by the chair.  
Incidental

### If You Wish to Discuss an Item Earlier than It is on the Agenda...

**Suspending the Rules:** (needs second, 2/3, no debate) a motion that is used when the assembly wants to discuss an issue in a way that violates standing rules or rules of order; may not interfere with the organizational bylaws and may not be made when a question is pending.  
Incidental

### If You Feel Tired and You Would like to Have a Recess...

**Recess:** (needs second, majority vote, no debate) allows for a short intermission; acts as a privileged motion only if a main motion is pending. If no motion is pending, this motion is actually a main motion to recess. Privileged

### If You Wish to Adjourn at a Certain Time...

**Fixing the Time to which to Adjourn:** (needs second, majority vote, no debate) Privileged

### Or, Just Adjourn...

**Adjourn:** (needs second, majority vote, no debate) Privileged

If You Wish to Consider Parts of a Motion, or Vote on Them Piece by Piece...

**Division of a Question:** (needs second, majority vote, no debate) When a motion contains several parts which may be individually debated, a motion may be *divided* (known as "division of the question" or to "divide the question.") Incidental

If You Wish to Have More Information on a Matter Being Debated...

**Request: Point of Information:** (no second, no vote, and no debate) a request for information about the matter being debated; also answered by the chair. Incidental

If You Wish to Alter or Change a Main Motion While It is being Considered...

**Amend:** (needs second, majority, debatable) allows a motion to become more specific when it is unclear or broad. This is the most common of subsidiary motions used in an assembly. An amendment must be *germane*, that is, it must have bearing on the subject of the motion being amended. Subsidiary

If You Wish to Take Back or Modify a Motion You Made While It is Pending...

**Request: Withdrawing or Modifying a Motion:** (no second, consent or majority with objection, no debate) used only when a motion is *pending*. Remember, after the chair restates a motion or resolution, it becomes the property of the assembly. If there is an objection to consent, the chair may request a subsidiary motion of amend. Incidental

If You Wish to Immediately End Discussion of a Question and Take an Immediate Vote...

**Previous Question:** (needs second, 2/3, no debate), (a.k.a. "motion to close debate") when members wish to bring a motion to an immediate vote they may "move the previous question" to limit discussion. Subsidiary

If You Wish to Request the Method of Balloting Used to Vote on a Question...

**Motion on Voting:** (second, consent or majority vote, no debate) a member may request the method of voting on a question, such as a ballot vote. Incidental

If a Member Questions the Result of a Vote...

**Division of the Assembly:** (no second, no vote, no debate) (a.k.a. "calling for a division," not to be confused with the "division of a question") if any member questions the result of a voice vote or a show of hands, she may call for a division, thereby requiring the vote be taken again by rising. Incidental

If You Wish to Not Even Consider a Motion Brought before the Assembly because it is Embarrassing...

**Objection to the Consideration of a Question:** (no second, 2/3 against consideration required to sustain objection, no debate) after a motion has been made, but before debate on the motion occurs, a member may motion to object to the consideration of a question. The purpose of the motion is not to cut off debate but to prevent discussion of a pointless or potentially inflammatory topic. Incidental

If You Wish to Not Take a Position on a Question, Perhaps to Revisit It Later – Three Methods:

1. **TEMPORARILY REMOVE THE QUESTION – USE: Lay on the Table:** (needs second, majority, no debate) when members wish to set aside a motion **temporarily** when something else of immediate urgency has arisen or when something else needs to be addressed before consideration of the pending question is resumed in such a way that a) there is no time set for taking the matter up again; but its consideration can be resumed at the will of a majority and in preference to any new questions that may then be competing with it for consideration. This motion is often misused in place of the motion to Postpone Indefinitely, to Postpone to a Certain Time, or other motions. It is out of order if its intent is to "kill" debate, the motion to *Postpone Indefinitely* should be used. If a time for resuming consideration is specified in making the motion, it can be admitted only as a motion to *Postpone*, in which case it is debatable. A question that has been laid on the table may be removed from the table with a motion to *take from the table* as soon as the interrupting business is disposed of or when no question is pending, or in the same or subsequent session through a majority vote. If the question is not taken from the table by the next meeting of the assembly, it dies but may be reintroduced later as a new question. Subsidiary
  
2. **REMOVE THE QUESTION UNTIL A CERTAIN TIME – USE: Postpone to a Certain Time:** (needs second, majority, debatable) (a.k.a. "postpone to a certain time") allows the assembly to postpone consideration of a question to a future time or date or later in the same meeting. Should not be confused with "postpone indefinitely" which actually kills the motion. Subsidiary
  
3. **REMOVE THE QUESTION INDEFINITELY – USE: Postpone Indefinitely:** (needs second, majority, debatable) this is a motion used if the assembly declines 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. Subsidiary

If You Wish to Send a Motion to a Committee for Further Study and/or Redrafting...

**Commit or Refer:** (needs second, majority, debatable) allows the motion to be sent to a committee for further study or redrafting. Subsidiary

If You Wish to Take a Second Look at a Motion which was Passed...

**Reconsider:** (needs second\*, majority vote, debatable) allows a group to reconsider the vote on a motion. \*It may only be made by someone who voted on the winning side of the motion; this is to help prevent abuse. As well, there is a time limit on any motion to reconsider, generally during the same or next session. Restorative.

If You Wish to Negate a Previously Adopted Motion...

**Rescind:** (needs second, majority vote, debatable, is amendable, and under certain circumstances requires *previous notice* or 2/3 vote) a motion by which the body can change an action previously taken or ordered. There is an explicit right of any member to make the motion, without time limit, unlike the case in *take from the table*. Restorative

If You Wish to Amend a Motion which has Already Passed...

**Amend Something Previously Adopted:** (needs second, majority vote, debatable, is amendable, and under certain circumstances requires *previous notice* or 2/3 vote) a motion that can be used if it is desired to change only a part of the text, or to substitute a different version. Is another form of the motion to *Rescind*, and has the same rules as the motion to *Rescind*. Restorative

## QUESTIONS RELATED TO MOTIONS

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### **Is it in order?**

Your motion must relate to the business at hand and be presented at the right time. It must not be obstructive, frivolous or against the Grand Chapter Constitution and Bylaws or the chapter's Policies and Procedures.

### **May I interrupt the speaker?**

Some motions are so important that the speaker may be interrupted to make them ( Point of Order, Appeal, Object to the consideration of the question, Call for a division, Parliamentary inquiry, Request for information.) The original speaker regains the floor after the interruption has been attended to.

### **Do I need a second?**

Usually, yes. A second indicates that another member would like to consider your motion. It prevents spending time on a question that interests only one person.

### **Is it debatable?**

Parliamentary procedure guards the right to free and full debate on most motions. However, some subsidiary, privileged and incidental motions are not debatable.

### **Can it be amended?**

Some motions can be changed by striking out or inserting wording, or both. Amendments must relate to the subject as presented in the main motion.

### **What vote is needed?**

Most require only a majority vote (more than half of the votes cast by members legally entitled to vote, excluding blanks or abstentions at a properly called meeting.) But, motions concerning the rights of the assembly or its members need a 2/3 vote to be adopted.

**Can it be reconsidered or rescinded?**

Some motions can be debated again to give members a chance to correct a hasty, ill-advised or erroneous action or take into account added information or a changed situation since the vote was taken. The motion to reconsider must come from the winning side. The vote to rescind requires a 2/3 vote or a majority with notice.