

Motions and Procedures

Main Motions

A main motion is the topic under discussion (e.g., “I move that we add a coffee break to this meeting”). After recognition by the Chair, any member can introduce a main motion when no other motion is on the table. A main motion requires a second to be considered. A main motion must be disposed of (passed, defeated, tabled, referred to committee, or postponed indefinitely) before a new main motion may be considered.

A subsidiary motion affects the main motion under discussion (e.g., “I move that we amend the motion to specify that the break should be 5 minutes long”). After recognition by the chair, any member can introduce a subsidiary motion when another motion is on the table. Once a subsidiary motion has been seconded, it must be disposed of before returning to the main motion. Subsidiary motions can, theoretically, have their own subsidiary motions – each of which must be resolved in turn. The various kinds of subsidiary motions have different precedence and require different votes to pass (see next below).

Technically, once a motion has been introduced and seconded, it “belongs” to the group, not the person who introduced it. Instead of the mover “withdrawing” it, the group should amend it, or move to postpone the motion indefinitely (a way of killing the motion without voting it down).

To bring a new idea before the group:

After recognition by the chair, present your **motion** by stating “I move that we...”. A second is required for the motion to go to the floor for discussion, or consideration. If a motion passes, it goes into effect immediately or at a specified time. Defeated motions cannot be reintroduced for 6 months.

To change or add to the wording of a motion under discussion:

After recognition by the Chair, move to **amend** the motion by proposing a specific change in the current wording or by providing additional words. Most amendments are friendly, arising naturally out of the group’s discussion of the motion, and can be accepted by the original mover. But if the original mover objects, a 2/3 Majority vote will still amend the original motion. An amendment can completely reword or replace a motion without voting it down. Provide the Secretary with a copy of the Amendment in writing.

If you have heard enough discussion, either:

1. **Call the Question.** This requires a Secunder, ends the discussion, and brings the assembly to a vote on the pending question only. Requires a 2/3 Majority vote.
2. Move to **limit discussion** to a set period of time or to a set number of speakers. Requires a Secunder and a 2/3 Majority vote to pass.

To recommend more study and/or investigation be given to a motion:

Move to **refer to a committee**. Refers a question to be investigated by a specified committee, with a specified purpose, and a specified time to report back to the entire group. Requires a Simple Majority vote.

To postpone a motion until some later time:

Move to **table the motion** until a specific time. The motion may be taken from the table after at least 1 subsequent item of business has been conducted. If the motion is not reintroduced by the end of the next meeting, it dies. A Simple Majority is required to table a motion.

To end the meeting:

Move to **close business meeting**. All pending motions will be tabled until the next business meeting. This motion takes immediate precedence and is not discussed. It requires a Simple Majority vote to pass.

You are unsure that the Chair has announced the results of a vote correctly.

Without being recognized, call for a **“Recount.”** At this point a standing vote will be taken.

If you are confused about a procedure being used and want clarification:

Without recognition, call for a **“Point of Information.”** The Chair will ask you to state your question and will attempt to clarify the situation.

If you think the rules of order have been violated:

Without recognition, call for a **“point of order.”** The Chair will ask you to state your question and will attempt to clarify the situation.

To kill a just-introduced motion:

Without recognition from the Chair simply state **“I object to the Motion.”** This must be done before any discussion. This motion requires no second, is not debatable, and requires a 2/3 vote.

If you have changed your mind about something that was voted on earlier in the meeting for which you were on the winning side.

Move to **Reconsider**. If the majority agrees, the motion comes back on the floor as though the vote had not occurred.

You want to change an action voted on at an earlier meeting.

Move to **Rescind**. A 2/3 vote is required.

Notes about Main Motions in A.A.

In most meetings, when there are widely differing viewpoints, nothing is discussed without a motion. But in A.A., cooperation is assumed, and it is often counterproductive to introduce a main motion before there has been some discussion of its subject matter. After some discussion, the intent of the group is usually clearer, and the Chair can be of service by attempting to coalesce what they have heard into a coherent motion, and asking if anyone will introduce such a Motion. If so, the Motion is written down and passed to the Secretary who then reads it to the group.

You may influence WHAT the members discuss:

- If you would like to discuss something - **Motion**
- If you would like to change a motion under discussion - **Amend**

You may influence HOW and WHEN a motion is discussed:

- If you want to limit discussion on something - **Limit discussion**
- If you think people are ready to vote – **End discussion**
- If you want a committee to evaluate the topic and report back – **Refer to committee**
- To discuss the topic at another time – **Table until later in meeting or next meeting**

You may INTERRUPT a speaker for these reasons only:

- To get information about business - **Point of Information**
- To get information about rules – **Point of Inquiry**
- If you see a breach of the rules - **Point of Order**

Requirements and Precedence of Motions

Lower-numbered motions have precedence over higher numbers.

1. **Close meeting** – Requires a Second, no Discussion, needs Simple Majority.
2. **Table until later in meeting** – Used to set aside the pending motion, so the group can take up something more urgent, with the full expectation of returning to the motion later in the meeting. Requires a Second, no Discussion, needs Simple Majority.
3. **Calling the Question** - Closes Discussion immediately. Applies only to the Motion on the floor. Requires a Second, no Discussion, needs a 2/3 Majority.
4. **Limit discussion** - can be general, or for a specified time, or for a specified number of speakers. Requires a Second, no Discussion, needs 2/3 Majority.
5. **Table until next meeting** – Postpones the current motion to the next session or postpones all pending motions when there is an adjourned meeting. Requires a Second, allows for Discussion, can be Amended, needs Simple Majority.
6. **Refer to a committee** - Applies only to the main motion. Requires a Second, allows for Discussion, can be Amended, needs Simple Majority.
7. **Amend Motion**– If the amendment **not** accepted by Mover, then it must be voted on. Requires a Second, allows Discussion, needs 2/3 Majority.
8. **Kill Motion on the floor** – Kills the motion without directly voting it down. Requires a Second, no Discussion, needs 2/3 Majority.
9. **Main Motion** – This is the subject to be debated. Requires a Second, allows for Discussion, can be Amended, needs 2/3 Majority unless otherwise agreed.