

Types of Motions

Motion

A motion is a formal proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the group take certain action. To begin the process of making any decision, a member offers a proposal by making a motion.

Main Motion

The purpose of the main motion is to introduce items to the membership for consideration. The chairs should not allow discussion of any item until a motion has been brought. Once a motion has been made and seconded, it no longer belongs to the person who made the motion—it belongs to the entire body—the body can discuss it, amend it or vote it up or down.

Substitute (subsidiary) Motion

The substitute (subsidiary) motion changes or affects how a main motion is handled and is voted on before the main motion. The following are examples of subsidiary motions:

- Move to postpone—indefinitely or to a specific date
- Refer the main motion to a committee for review (generally not practiced by boards)
- Amend a motion
- Limit debate
- Call for the question —(means that a member feels the item has been adequately discussed and it is time for a vote)
- Table (means that the item will be discussed later in the same meeting)

Privileged Motion

Privileged motions bring up items that are urgent about special or important matters unrelated to pending business. An example of a privileged motion is a motion to recess or to “raise a question of privilege” similar to a board member asking the citizen to speak into the microphone, because the citizen cannot be heard.

Incidental Motion

An incidental motion provides a means of questioning a procedure concerning other motions. An incidental motion must be considered before other motions.

Amendments

An amendment does not change the meaning of the motion. If the meaning of the motions is changed, then it is a substitute motion. The proposed amendment must be germane to the main motion. An amendment can be amended and is debatable.