

A Short Guide to Parliamentary Procedure

This information has been assembled due to frequent requests from members regarding the method of conducting business. However, it should be stressed that studying and utilizing the principles in ACA's Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts can provide the most useful guide to protocol. We use parliamentary procedure, when necessary, to ensure that courtesy is given to members, and to promote the orderly exchange of ideas. These procedures were developed to serve— not to stifle it. When we are at our best, we function almost entirely by using thoughtful consideration of our basic principles.

Step by Step

1) MOTION

- a) An Area Service Committee recommendation is considered a seconded motion, and will be restated as such by the Committee Chairperson, after he/she presents the recommendation to the Area Assembly. (This is due to a recommendation that passes a committee already has more than one voting member who agrees with it)
- b) A motion can be made “from the floor” on any issue by any voting member of the Assembly when there is no other issue being considered.
- 2) SECOND (to demonstrate that more than one voting member is in support of the motion)
- 3) CHAIR STATES: “It has been moved and seconded that ...”.
- 4) DISCUSSION (also refer to THINGS THAT CAN HAPPEN TO A MOTION)
 - a) If every comment is in favor of the motion, the Chair may ask “Is it the sense of the meeting that this motion be adopted?” If there is no opposition, it can be recorded as a passed motion.
 - b) A reasonable opportunity is given to all to speak on the motion, and then...
 - c) Chair says: “There being no further discussion we will vote on ...”, and restates the motion.
- 5) VOTE (“all in favor of the motion ...”, and then “all opposed ...”) A two-thirds majority is required to adopt the motion.
- 6) MINORITY OPINION, MOTION TO RECONSIDER

- I) The motion to reconsider is debatable. After reasonable debate, the Chair will ask for a vote. A simple majority, rather than a two-thirds majority decides this vote. If won ...

- II) Discussion on the Main Motion resumes (same rules as before).

- III) VOTE (same rules as before).

- IV) THERE IS NO MINORITY OPINION ON THE SECOND VOTE.

Things that can happen to a motion:

- 1) It can be seconded, debated, voted on, etc, as outlined above.
- 2) The following subsidiary motions can be made regarding it (all of these must be seconded, and require a two-thirds majority to carry):
 - a) It can be AMENDED. The amendment is debated and voted on; then discussion of the original motion resumes.
 - b) It can be POSTPONED (tabled) either definitely (time or place stated), or indefinitely (basically, “killed”).
 - c) It can be REFERRED TO COMMITTEE, either with or without additional assembly instructions.

- 3) At any time during the discussion, a motion can be made to VOTE IMMEDIATELY (“calling the question”). A second is required. This motion is not debatable. The Chair will immediately ask for a vote on the motion to “vote immediately”, and if adopted, the assembly votes immediately on the motion under consideration.