

Standing Rules of Order

Bourinot's Rules of Order

Bourinot's Rules of Order, current edition, is the source on which the following Standing Rules of Order are based. *Bourinot* sets out general principles and intentions rather than providing a handbook of specific procedures. Each organization is expected to derive its own standing rules based on the *Bourinot* principles.

House Rules

1. Any delegate wishing to speak must rise and address the chair, stating name, delegate status and synod.
2. No motion or amendment is before the convention unless proposed by Synod Council, a committee, or seconded and submitted in writing to the Chair. Motions coming directly from the floor must apply to the motion before the house. Motions not pertinent to the matter before the house must be submitted to the Reference and Counsel committee.
3. No delegate, other than the mover, shall speak more than once on a motion.
4. An address from the Bishop is in order at any time.
5. The maker of a motion may not speak for more than five (5) minutes without the consent of the convention. Each speaker thereafter is limited to three (3) minutes. The maker of the motion may speak for an additional three (3) minutes in closing unless the convention has acted to cease debate.
6. When a question is under consideration, the only other motions that will be considered, in order of precedence, are:
 - To adjourn
 - To move the previous question
 - To table
 - To defer (to a certain time or indefinitely)
 - To refer
 - To divide (number by number or clause by clause)
 - To amend
7. No more than one amendment to a motion can be considered at a time. If one amendment is defeated, further amendments may be proposed.
8. An amendment to an amendment may be made and must be voted on before the original amendment can be considered. Further amendments to amendments may be proposed.
9. To suspend the Bylaws or Standing Rules of Order shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the delegates present.
10. Any delegate may request that, at any time in the proceedings, a motion be re-read to the assembly.
11. No delegate shall interrupt another except to make a point of order.
12. The chair shall decide all questions of order without debate. A ruling of the chair can be over-ruled by a majority vote of the delegates. A motion challenging the ruling of the chair requires a second, and is voted upon immediately.
13. When a vote is called, delegates shall remain at their places and shall not retire until the matter is disposed of. Proxy voting or congregational binding of a delegate's vote is not permitted. Bourinot says "Members who are not present when the question is put cannot vote." (p. 27, 4th edition)
14. To move the previous question, when adopted, ends debate and requires the convention to vote immediately on the motion before it. Such a motion is debatable. If the motion is defeated, debate continues.
15. Motions to defer or table, whether to a specified time or indefinitely, are admissible and are debatable.
16. Special Orders shall have precedence over other matters on the agenda.
17. Delegates putting a motion before the house must do so before speaking.
18. Once an agenda has been approved, items designated as consent items can only be brought to the floor upon recommendation of the Committee on Reference and Counsel, as requested by ten (10) or more delegates.

Motions

A motion is a formal proposal brought forward to the convention for its consideration. Motions require movers and seconders and are decided by vote after a period of debate. Motions may come to the convention from Synods, Conferences, congregations, and delegates through the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

There are various types of motions that may be brought before the convention for consideration.

Main Motion

When making a *main motion* from the floor of the convention, the mover cannot precede it with any remarks. A motion must be moved, seconded and accepted by the chair prior to discussion. The mover says, "I move that. . . ." If a motion is out of order or beyond the authority of the convention, the chair can refuse to accept it. If the motion is in order, the chair then says, "Is there a second?" Another person is recognized by the chair and says, "I second the motion." A second is important because that means there are at least two people who agree the point should be raised. The seconder is not required to agree with the motion, but only that the content should be considered. If there is no second, the motion dies. When there is a second, the chair invites discussion.

When discussion on the motion is complete, the chair calls the question and, if necessary, has the motion repeated. The delegates vote by a show of coloured cards or by ballot. A majority carries the motion; 50% or less will result in a defeat of the motion. The chair announces the outcome.

A mover may withdraw a motion only if the seconder and the meeting as a whole agree.

Subsidiary Motions

Subsidiary motions provide additional ways to direct a main motion besides simply debating and voting on it.

- **Table**
A motion to table is the highest-ranking subsidiary motion, temporarily setting aside the main motion and other subsidiary motions. A motion to table differs from deferment because the motion can be recovered at any time. In the meantime, the meeting can proceed to other business. The matter can be brought back to discussion by a motion that requires a second, can be debated but not amended, and requires a majority vote to carry.
- **Defer indefinitely**
This procedure defeats the main motion without voting against it. It requires a second and a majority vote to carry.
- **Defer (to a specified time)**
The time for reconsideration of the motion can occur in the same or in a subsequent convention. The usual reason for such postponement is to obtain information or change the sequence of decisions so that the postponed motion can be informed by a prior action. The motion requires a second and a majority vote to carry.
- **Refer**
Referral sends the main motion to a committee for research, study or in-depth discussion which is not practicable in a general assembly. If a special committee is to be created for the referral, the motion should include the number of persons on the committee, the member selection process, the particular item to be reviewed and a deadline for reporting back. This motion requires a second and a majority vote to carry.

- **Amend**
This is the most widely used subsidiary motion. Amendments are ways to correct, clarify or alter the wording of a motion. Amendments must relate specifically to the main motion and cannot negate or reverse its main intent. The wording used is, "I move to amend the motion by
 - a) substituting the words...for...;
 - b) by adding the words...;
 - c) so that the motion will read..."
 The chair will restate the main motion to demonstrate how it will be changed if the amendment passes. The amendment is voted on before the main motion. A second is required and a majority vote to carry.
- **Amend an amendment**
An amendment may be amended and must be moved and voted on the same way as a primary amendment. Amendments to amendments should be avoided, if possible, so as not to tax the energy of the chair and delegates. The chair will attempt to keep clear how the amendments or sub-amendments alter the original motion.
- **Limit or extend debate**
A motion to limit can be used to set a specific amount of time allowed for debate. When a matter of urgency is before the convention, a motion to extend time so as to permit completion of the business at hand may be made. A motion to limit or extend debate requires a second, may be amended, and requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote to carry.

Motions of Privilege

Motions of privilege rank above subsidiary motions and main motions. They do not relate directly to a pending question, but deal with issues that require immediate attention. They are not debatable. The following are listed in rank from lowest to highest.

- **Order of the day**
This term is used to return the convention to the timed appointments on the agenda. The motion does not require a second or a vote. A variation is to move to proceed to the next item on the agenda. Motions on the floor at the time cannot be brought back for reconsideration until the next session.
- **Personal Privilege**
To rise on a point of privilege is to ask the chair for a personal consideration such as the introduction or congratulation of an important person germane to the discussion, the accommodation of inability to hear or to tolerate heat or cold, etc. This action does not require a second or a vote; merely a response from the chair.
- **Recess**
A motion to recess for a rest break, meals or the end of the day requires a second and a majority vote to carry.
- **Move the previous question**
To move the previous question calls for the convention to decide whether to cease debate and proceed immediately to vote on the motion at hand. This motion requires a second and a majority vote to carry. It cannot be amended. If the motion to call the previous question passes, the chair must immediately call for a vote on the main motion. If the motion fails, debate continues.
- **Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn is always in order, but its most frequent use is to *close* the business of the convention. It requires a second and a majority vote to carry. Any discussion or debate after adjournment is off the record. The chair will usually ask whether there is any remaining business before recognizing a motion to adjourn.

Incidental Motions

Incidental motions deal with procedural matters but do not relate directly to the business under discussion. The following motions are not ranked, but are adjudicated by the chair.

- **Point of order**
A delegate may rise on a point of order when debate begins before a motion is seconded or any other departure from the rules of procedure. The chair will correct the situation before further action is permitted.
- **Appeal the decision of the chair**
Any voting delegate may appeal a decision taken by the chair, but the motion must be made immediately following the chair's ruling. This motion requires a second and a majority vote to carry. No debate or amendment is permitted.
- **Suspend the rules**
On rare occasions a business matter can be better expedited by suspending the rules of procedure provided the action is not in conflict with the constitution or bylaws. This may be done to accommodate someone who is unable to be present at the assigned times on the agenda or to add to the agenda a matter not given within the required advance notice. The motion requires a second, cannot be debated or amended, and requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote to carry.

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS

MAIN MOTIONS	Second	Debate	Amend	Vote Req'd
To make a motion: I move that... <i>(Can be withdrawn only with assent of the entire convention)</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend: I move to amend the motion by....	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Reconsideration: I move that _____ be reconsidered. <i>(Prior notice must be submitted to Reference and Counsel and be brought forward, with a recommendation, at an appropriate time.)</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 Majority
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS <i>(In order of priority)</i>	Second	Debate	Amend	Vote Req'd
Adjourn: I move that this meeting be adjourned.	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Move the question: I move that we call the question.	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Table: I move that this matter be tabled.	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Deferred: I move that this matter be deferred indefinitely/until____.	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Refer: I move that we refer this matter to _____.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Divide: I move that we consider this question clause by clause/item by item/as follows.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

MOTIONS OF PRIVILEGE	Second	Debate	Amend	Vote Req'd
Order of the day: I move that we proceed to the Order of the Day.	Yes	No	No	Majority
Personal privilege: I rise on a matter of personal privilege to ask that...	No	No	No	Chair
Recess: I move that we recess until...	Yes	No	No	Majority
Adjourn: I move that this meeting be adjourned.	Yes	No	No	Majority
Exact count: I call for a division of the house.	No	No	No	Chair
Clarification: I request clarification on...	No	No	No	Chair

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS	Second	Debate	Amend	Vote Req'd
Point of Order: The rules of order state that...	No	No	No	Chair decides
Appeal the ruling of the chair: I appeal the ruling of the chair. <i>(Must be made immediately following the chair's ruling.)</i>	Yes	No	No	Majority
Suspend the rules: I move that we suspend the following Bylaw or Standing Rule in order that...	Yes	No	No	2/3 Majority