

12 Running Effective Meetings

TYPES OF MOTIONS

Decisions are made through motions. Once a main motion is on the floor at a meeting, secondary motions can be brought. The Chair must deal with secondary motions in a specific order:

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS (dealt with first)

Examples: Fixing a time to adjourn, adjourn, recess, question of privilege, orders of the day.

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS (dealt with second)

Debate may be closed formally with a subsidiary motion.

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS (no order of precedence – dealt with as issues arise)

Examples: Before a vote on a main motion is taken, business may be interrupted to lay a motion on the table, postpone the vote, refer the motion to a committee, withdraw it from consideration, or adjourn the meeting.

RESTORATIVE MOTIONS (decisions to reconsider, rescind, etc. – dealt with after the motion has passed)

Example: After motions have been passed or rejected, no further discussion on the same issues is allowed at the meeting unless there is a motion to reconsider.

Your Board's Special Rules of Order may include or exclude some of these motions or define them differently. To be a very effective trustee, it is your job to understand the Rules of Order that govern your meetings. If you have any questions about the Rules of Order during your meetings, you may rise and move a motion for a Parliamentary Inquiry: you simply ask the Chair their opinion on the parliamentary issue.

On the other hand, if you are confident that a parliamentary procedure is being breached, you may rise to a **Point of Order**.

AMENDING A MOTION

Knowing how to amend a motion can greatly enhance the efficiency of your meetings. The basics of amending a motion are:

- Only two amendments at a time
- Amendments must directly relate to the main motion
- Debate amendments and main motion one at a time, in reverse order

A **Friendly Amendment** does not require that you go through the basics mentioned above if it meets these three criteria:

1. Simple word inserts
2. Mover of the motion must agree
3. The unanimous acceptance by trustees