Introduction to Parliamentary Procedure for AAOMS Delegates and Alternate Delegates
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Condensed from the American Institute of Parliamentarians

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Parliamentary procedure is a code of rules and ethics, which facilitate working together in groups. It is the procedural safeguard that protects each individual and group in their exercise of the rights of free speech, free assembly and freedom to unite in organizations for the achievement of common purposes.

It is important to recognize the importance of the principles of parliamentary procedure. They are simple and familiar and they are the same principles on which democracies are based. There are basically nine important principles:

1) **The purpose of Parliamentary Procedure is to facilitate the transaction of business and to promote cooperation and harmony.**

   In accordance, the philosophies of parliamentary procedure are:
   
   A. To be constructive.
   B. To make it easier for people to work together effectively.
   C. To help organizations and members accomplish their purposes.

   Parliamentary procedure should not awe, entangle, or confuse the uninitiated.

   There are two basic procedural rules developed to assure the simplest, most direct procedure for accomplishing a purpose. These are:
   
   A. Motions have a definite order of precedence.
   B. Only one motion can be considered at a time.

2) **Individual persons have the right to associate with other persons to promote and pursue their common interests and aspirations**

   In forming associations, members agree to a set of bylaws and governing documents through a democratic process. These documents form a contract between each member and the association. Members have equal rights and are expected to be loyal to the association and to promote and defend their common interests and aspirations.

3) **Individual persons or groups have a right to assemble to promote their common interest.**

   The right of assembly is inherent in the right to associate. Associations may protect this right by secure an assembly location. The assembly controls who may and may not attend. This can be enforced through the rules of the association.

4) **All Members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.**
Every delegate has an equal right to propose motions, speak, ask questions, nominate, be a candidate for office, vote, or exercise any other right of membership. It is the duty of the Speaker of the House to remain impartial and to protect and preserve each individual’s rights.

5) The Majority vote decides.
This is a fundamental concept of democracy. Parliamentary procedure helps determine the will of the majority and sees that it is carried out. Remember, everyone has an equal right to voice his or her opinion in opposition or approval and to seek to persuade others to support their view until the vote is carried out. After the vote is announced the decision of the majority becomes the decision of every member of the house. It is the duty of every member to accept and to abide by this decision.

6) The rights of the Minority must be protected.
Everyone is entitled to the same respect and consideration. It is important to remember that the minority of today is frequently the majority of tomorrow.

7) Full and free discussion of every proposition presented for decision is an established right of members of the House of Delegates.
You have the right to express your opinion fully and freely without interruption or interference.

8) Every member has the right to know the meaning of a question before the House of Delegates and what its effects will be.
A delegate always has the right to request information on any motion that they do not understand, so that they may vote intelligently.

9) All meetings must be characterized by fairness and good faith.
Trickery, overemphasis on minor technicalities, railroading, etc., threaten the spirit and practice of fairness and good faith. “The intent and overall good faith of the group are of more importance than the particular detail of a procedure used in a given instance.”
Presentation of Motions

1) The delegate must rise, address the Speaker, and be recognized.
2) The delegate proposes his/her motion by the words “I move….”
3) The motion is seconded by another delegate.
4) The motion is open for formal debate only after it has been formally stated to the House by the Speaker. The delegate who introduced the motion then has the floor.
5) Delegates debate the question.
6) The Speaker puts the question (takes the vote).
7) The Speaker announces the result of the vote.

Classes of Motions

A subject can be considered by the House of Delegates only after it has been offered in the form of a motion. The Main Motion is the means by which a member may present a proposal to the assembly for consideration and action. In the AAOMS House of Delegates, most Main Motions are presented through the Reference Committees.

Motions are classified as follows:

1) **Main Motion**: These are the most important and most frequently used. It is the foundation of the conduct of business. Its purpose is to bring a proposal before an assembly for discussion and decision. This is the lowest ranking motion.

2) **Specific Main Motions**

   There are six main motions that perform unique and specific functions. They do not present a new proposal but concern actions that were previously taken.

3) **Subsidiary Motions**: There are six subsidiary motions which help treat or dispose of the Main Motion. These motions are usually applied to the Main Motion.

4) **Privileged Motions**: These motions have no direct connection with the main motion. They are motions of such importance and/or urgency that they receive immediate consideration. These relate to the members and to the organization rather than to particular items of business.

5) **Incidental Motions**: These motions relate in different ways to the pending business. They arise only incidentally out of the business before the assembly and do not relate directly to the main motion or to the specific main motion. They have no order of precedence.
**Precedence of Motions**

In order to allow an assembly to propose, consider, and decide each motion without confusion, a rank or order is assigned to each motion. This becomes the priority in which motions must be proposed, considered and disposed of. There are two basic rules of precedence:

1) When a particular motion is being considered, any motion of higher precedence may be proposed but no motion of lower precedence may be proposed.

2) Motions are considered and voted on in reverse order to their proposal. The motion last proposed is considered first.

From the highest ranking to the lowest ranking the order of precedence is:

**Privileged Motions**
1) Adjourn  
2) Recess  
3) Question of privilege

**Subsidiary Motions**
4) Table  
5) Close debate and vote immediately  
6) Limit debate or extend  
7) Postpone to a certain time  
8) Refer to a committee  
9) Amend

**Main Motions**
10 a) The main motion  
   b) Specific main motions  
      i) Adopt-in-lieu-of  
      ii) Amend a previous action  
      iii) Ratify  
      iv) Recall from committee  
      v) Reconsider  
      vi) Rescind