

6 Steps to Handling a Main Motion

Adapted from Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (12th Edition)

(In-person Meetings)

Step 1. Member Obtains Floor & Makes a Motion

a. Member Obtains the Floor

Member rises (or raises hand, if small group) and waits to speak until recognized by the Chair (by voice, or by nod). Note: It is improper to rise (or raise hand) while another is speaking.

b. Member Makes a Motion

To make a motion, say *"I move that (to) ..."* After seconded and Chair states motion, you may speak first to provide supporting statements.

Step 2. Another Member Seconds the Motion

To second a motion, say *"Second"* which indicates at least two members wish to discuss, not necessarily whether in favour. If the motion does not receive a second, time is not consumed if only one person wants to see it introduced.

Step 3. The Chair States the Motion

The chair may facilitate the perfecting of the motion before placing it before the group for debate. The process for taking the motion from the maker to the group is called "stating the question". *"It is moved and seconded that (to) ..."* followed by *"Are you ready for the question?"* or *"Is there any discussion?"*

Step 4. Members Debate the Motion

Before speaking, members must obtain the floor. The maker has the first right to speak in debate. Debate must be confined to the merits of the pending motion. Members may speak twice for ten minutes unless members vote to limit or extend debate. The Chair may alternate between proponents and opponents of the motion. During debate, secondary motions may be made while the main motion is pending. To speak to a pending motion, say *"I am in favour of (opposed to) the motion because...."*

Step 5. Chair Puts the Question (Motion)

a. Chair Restates the Motion

The Chair confirms there is no further debate, *"Are you ready for the question (are you ready to vote / is there any further discussion)?"* If there are no further requests to obtain the floor, the Chair proceeds to restate the question. *"The question is that(to) [states motion]."* Restating the motion ensures clarity on the final and exact motion immediately prior to the vote. (This restatement is the motion to be recorded in the minutes.)

b. Chair Puts the Question (Motion) to a Vote

The Chair asks, *"Those in favour, say 'aye' (or raise hand). [pause] Those opposed, say 'no' (or raise hand)."* **Note:** For routine or uncontentious matters, the chair may use unanimous consent (informal vote).

Step 6. The Chair Announces the Result and Effect of the Vote

The Chair states, *"The affirmative has it, the motion is adopted, and [the effect of the vote]."* or *"The negative has it, the motion is lost, and [the effect of the vote]."* To add clarity, the chair states the effect to confirm the action to be taken (or not) based on the result of the vote.

Note: if there are 12 or fewer members, "small board procedures" (modified rules) may be used.

