

Common Parliamentary Motions

HOW TO READ THE HIERARCHY Ranked motions retain their numbers from the full AIPSC hierarchy, so gaps are expected in this quick guide. A higher-ranked motion may be made while a lower-ranked motion is pending; a lower-ranked motion is out of order until the higher-ranked motion is disposed of. For the full list of parliamentary maneuvers, see AIPSC, 2nd ed.

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS | Highest precedence; urgent meeting needs

Rank	Motion	What it does / when to use it	Vote
1	Adjourn	Ends the meeting. Use when the House's work is complete.	Majority
2	Recess	Pauses the meeting for a specified period while keeping it in session.	Majority
3	Question of privilege	Raises an urgent matter affecting the rights, comfort, safety, or reputation of the assembly or a member.	None

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS | Applied to a pending motion; selected ranks shown

Rank	Motion	What it does / when to use it	Vote
5	Close debate	Ends debate and moves directly to the vote on a debatable motion.	2/3
6	Limit or extend debate	Changes the time, number, or length of speeches on a debatable motion.	2/3
8	Refer to committee	Sends a main motion to a committee for study, action, or recommendation.	Majority
9	Amend	Changes the wording of a motion by adding, deleting, or replacing words.	Majority

MAIN MOTIONS | Lowest precedence; introduces substantive business

Rank	Motion	What it does / when to use it	Vote
10	Main motion	Places a new substantive proposal before the House.	Majority

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS | Arise from the pending business; no fixed precedence

Rank	Motion	What it does / when to use it	Vote
—	Appeal	Asks the House to review a ruling of the Speaker.	Majority§
—	Suspend the rules	Temporarily sets aside a procedural rule for a specific purpose.	2/3

REQUESTS | Seek a ruling, information, permission, or a more definite vote

Rank	Motion	What it does / when to use it	Vote
—	Point of order	Calls attention to a procedural error so the Speaker can rule.	None
—	Inquiries	Requests parliamentary information or facts relevant to the pending business.	None
—	Withdraw a motion	Requests removal of a motion from consideration.	No vote normally†
—	Division of question	Separates independent parts of a main motion for separate votes.	No vote normally†
—	Division of assembly	Requests a more definite vote when a voice vote appears indecisive.	No vote normally†

§ On appeal, a tie or majority sustains the Speaker's ruling; a majority vote in the negative reverses it.

† These requests normally require no vote. If the Speaker asks the House to decide, a majority vote determines the result.

WHEN UNSURE Rise to a parliamentary inquiry and ask the Speaker what motion will accomplish your purpose.