

ITEM 10 | PROPER MOTIONS TO USE TO ACCOMPLISH CERTAIN OBJECTS

To enable any one to ascertain what motion to use in order to accomplish what is desired, the common motions are arranged in the table below according to the objects to be attained by their use. Immediately after the table is a brief statement of the differences between the motions placed under each object, and of the circumstances under which each should be used. They include all of the Subsidiary Motions [12], which are designed for properly disposing of a question pending before the assembly; and the three motions designed to again bring before the assembly a question that has been acted upon or laid aside temporarily; and the motion designed to bring before another meeting of the assembly a main question which has been voted on in an unusually small or unrepresentative meeting. Motions, as a general rule, require for their adoption only a majority vote -- that is, a majority of the votes cast, a quorum being present; but motions to suppress or limit debate, or to prevent the consideration of a question, or, without notice to rescind action previously taken, require a two-thirds vote [48]. The figures and letters on the left in the list below correspond to similar figures and letters in the statement of differences further on. The figures to the right in the list refer to the sections where the motions are fully treated.

The Common Motions Classified According to Their Objects.

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 - (a) Reconsider and have Entered on the Minutes36
- (1) To Modify or Amend.
 - (a) When a resolution or motion is not worded properly, or requires any modification to meet the approval of the assembly, if the changes required can be made in the assembly, the proper motion to make is to amend by "inserting," or "adding," or by "striking out," or by "striking out and inserting," or by "substituting" one or more paragraphs for those in the resolution.
 - (b) But if much time will be required, or if the changes required are numerous, or if additional information is required to enable the assembly to act intelligently, then it is usually better to refer the question to a committee.
- (2) To Defer Action.
 - (a) If it is desired to put off the further consideration of a question to a certain hour, so that when that time arrives, as soon as the pending business is disposed of, it shall have the right of consideration over all questions except special orders and a reconsideration, then the proper motion to make is, to postpone to that certain time. This is also the proper motion to make if it is desired to defer action simply to another day. As the motion if adopted cannot interrupt the pending question when the appointed time arrives, nor can it



suspend any rule, it requires only a majority vote for its adoption. A question postponed to a certain time cannot be taken up before the appointed time except by suspending the rules, which requires a two-thirds vote.

(b) If it is desired to appoint for the consideration of a question a certain time when it may interrupt any pending question except one relating to adjournment or recess, or a question of privilege or a specified order that was made before it was, then the proper course is to move "that the question be made a special order for," etc., specifying the day or hour. As this motion, if adopted, suspends all rules that interfere with the consideration of the question at the appointed time, it requires a two-thirds vote for its adoption. A special order cannot be considered before the appointed time except by suspending the rules, which requires a two-thirds vote.

(c) If, however, it is desired to lay the question aside temporarily with the right to take it up at any moment when business of this class, or unfinished or new business, is in order and no other question is before the assembly, the proper motion to use is to lay the question on the table. When laid upon the table a majority vote may take it up at the same or the next session, as described in 35.

(3) To Suppress Debate.

(a) If it is desired to close debate now and bring the assembly at once to a vote on the pending question, or questions, the proper course is to move, or demand, or call for, the previous question on the motions upon which it is desired to close debate. The motion, or demand, for the previous question should always specify the motions upon which it is desired to order the previous question. If no motions are specified, the previous question applies only to the immediately pending question. It requires a two-thirds vote for its adoption. After it has been adopted, privileged and incidental motions may be made, or the pending questions may be laid on the table, but no other subsidiary motion can be made nor is any debate allowed. If it is lost the debate is resumed.

(b) If it is desired to limit the number or length of speeches, or the time allowed for debate, the proper course is to move that the speeches or debate be limited as desired,

or that the debate be closed and the vote be taken at a specified time. These motions to limit or close debate require a two-thirds vote for their adoption, and are in order, like the previous question, when any debatable question is immediately pending.

(4) To Suppress the Question. A legitimate question cannot be suppressed in a deliberative assembly without free debate, except by a two-thirds vote. If two-thirds of the assembly are opposed to the consideration of the question then it can be suppressed by the following methods:

(a) If it is desired to prevent any consideration of the question, the proper course to pursue is to object to its consideration before it has been discussed or any other motion stated, and, therefore, it may interrupt a member who has the floor before the debate has begun. It requires no second. On the question of consideration there must be a two-thirds negative vote to prevent the consideration.

(b) After the question has been considered the proper way to immediately suppress it is to close debate by ordering the previous question, which requires a two-thirds vote, and then to vote down the question. Another method of suppressing a question is to postpone it indefinitely (equivalent to rejecting it), which, however, being debatable and opening the main question to debate, is only of service in giving another opportunity to defeat the resolution should this one fail. For, if the motion to postpone indefinitely is adopted, the main question is dead for that session, and if it is lost, the main question is still pending and its enemies have another opportunity to kill it. When the motion to postpone indefinitely is pending and immediate action is desired, it is necessary to move the previous question as in case (b) above.

(d) A fourth method frequently used for suppressing a question is to lay it on the table, though this is an unfair use of the motion, except in bodies like Congress where the majority must have the power to suppress any motion immediately, as otherwise they could not transact business. But in ordinary societies, where the pressure of business is not so great, it is better policy for the majority to be fair and courteous to the minority and use the proper motions for suppressing a question without allowing full debate, all of which require a two-thirds vote. Unless the enemies of a motion have a large



majority, laying it on the table is not a safe way of suppressing it, because its friends, by watching their opportunity, may find themselves in a majority and take it from the table and adopt it, as shown in the next paragraph.

(5) To Consider a Question a Second Time.

(a) When a question has not been voted on, but has been laid on the table, a majority may take it from the table and consider it at any time when no other question is before the assembly and when business of that class, or unfinished or new business, is in order during the same session; or at the next session in ordinary societies having regular meetings as often as quarterly.

(b) If a motion has been adopted, or rejected, or postponed indefinitely, and afterwards one or more members have changed their views from the prevailing to the losing side, and it is thought that by further discussion the assembly may modify or reverse its action, the proper course is for one who voted with the prevailing side to move to reconsider the vote on the question. This can be done on the day the vote to be reconsidered is taken, or on the next succeeding day of the same session.

(c) If a main motion, including questions of privilege and orders of the day, has been adopted or rejected or postponed indefinitely, and no one is both able and willing to move to reconsider the vote, the question can be brought up again during the same session only by moving to rescind the motion. To rescind may be moved by any member, but, if notice of it was not given at a previous meeting, it requires a two-thirds vote or a vote of a majority of the enrolled membership. At any future session, the resolution, or other main motion, may be rescinded in the same way if it had been adopted; or it may be introduced anew if it had been rejected or postponed indefinitely; provided the question cannot be reached by calling up the motion to reconsider which had been made at the previous session. A by-law, or anything else that requires a definite notice and vote for its amendment, requires the same notice and vote to rescind it.

(6) To Prevent Final Action on a Question in an Unusually Small or Unrepresentative Meeting. If an important main motion should be adopted, lost, or postponed indefinitely, at a small or unrepresentative meeting of the society when it was apparent that

the action is in opposition to the views of the majority of the members, the proper course to pursue is for a member to vote with the prevailing side and then move to reconsider the vote and have it entered on the minutes. The motion to reconsider, in this form, can be made only on the day the vote was taken which it is proposed to reconsider, and the reconsideration cannot be called up on that day; thus an opportunity is given to notify absent members. The motion to reconsider is fully explained in 36.

