

ITEM 11 | MAIN OR PRINCIPAL MOTIONS

A Main or Principal Motion is a motion made to bring before the assembly, for its consideration, any particular subject. It takes precedence of nothing -- that is, it cannot be made when any other question is before the assembly; and it yields to all Privileged, Incidental, and Subsidiary Motions -- that is, any of these motions can be made while a main motion is pending. Main motions are debatable, and subject to amendment, and can have any subsidiary [12] motions applied to them. When a main motion is laid on the table, or postponed to a certain time, it carries with it all pending subsidiary motions. If a main motion is referred to a committee it carries with it only the pending amendments. As a general rule, they require for their adoption only a majority vote -- that is, a majority of the votes cast; but amendments to constitutions, by-laws, and rules of order already adopted, all of which are main motions, require a two-thirds vote for their adoption, unless the by-laws, etc., specify a different vote for their amendment; and the motion to rescind action previously taken requires a two-thirds vote, or a vote of a majority of the entire membership, unless previous notice of the motion has been given.

Main motions may be subdivided into Original Main Motions and Incidental Main Motions. Original Main Motions are those which bring before the assembly some new subject, generally in the form of a resolution, upon which action by the assembly is desired. Incidental Main Motions are those main motions that are incidental to, or relate to, the business of the assembly, or its past or future action, as, a committee's report on a resolution referred to it. A motion to accept or adopt the report of a standing committee upon a subject not referred to it is an original main motion, but a motion to adopt a report on a subject referred to a committee is an incidental main motion. The introduction of an original main motion can be prevented by sustaining by a two-thirds vote an objection to its consideration [23], made just after the main motion is stated and before it is discussed. An objection to its consideration cannot be applied to an incidental main motion, but a two-thirds vote can immediately suppress it by ordering the previous question [29]. This is the only difference between the two classes of main motions. The following list contains some of the most common



Incidental Main Motions.

Accept or Adopt a Report upon a subject referred to a committee	54
Adjourn at, or to, a future time	17
Adjourn, if qualified in any way, or to adjourn when the effect is to dissolve the assembly with no provision for its reconvening	17
Appoint the Time and Place for the next meeting, if introduced when no business is pending	16
Amend the Constitution, By-laws, Standing Rules, or Resolutions, etc., already adopted	68
Ratify or Confirm action taken	39
Rescind or Repeal action taken	37



All of these motions are essentially main motions, and are treated as such, though they may appear otherwise.

Though a question of privilege is of high rank so far as interrupting a pending question is concerned, yet when the question has interrupted business and is pending, it is treated as a main motion so far as having incidental and subsidiary motions applied to it. So an order of the day, even though a special order, after it has been taken up is treated in the same way, as is also a question that has been reconsidered.

No motion is in order that conflicts with the constitution, by-laws, or standing rules or resolutions of the assembly, and if such a motion is adopted it is null and void. Before introducing such a motion it is necessary to amend the constitution or by-laws, or amend or rescind the conflicting standing rule or resolution. So, too, a motion is not in order that conflicts with a resolution previously adopted by the assembly at the same session, or that has been introduced and has not been finally disposed of. If it is not too late the proper course is to reconsider [36] the vote on the motion previously adopted, and then amend it so as to express the desired idea. If it cannot be reconsidered, then by a two-thirds vote the old resolution may be rescinded when the new one can be introduced, or by giving notice it may be rescinded by a majority vote at the next meeting. In ordinary societies, where the quorum is a small percentage of the membership, and the meetings are as frequent as quarterly, no resolution that conflicts with one adopted at a previous session should be entertained until the old one has been rescinded, which requires a two-thirds vote unless proper notice has been given. [See 37.]

