

# POCKET GUIDE

## TO GREAT BUSINESS MEETINGS

---

---

### Simple Meeting Agenda

1. Call the meeting to order.
2. Recognize and “seat” the delegates (have them stand).
  - Standing delegates
    - Church members for local church meetings.
    - Ordained ministers and deacons for local, state, and national association meetings.
  - Elected delegates
    - From local churches for district meetings.
    - From district meetings for state associations.
3. Recognize the clerk or secretary for the written record of the previous meeting’s proceedings (minutes).
  - Ask for a motion\* and second to receive the report.
  - Ask for questions or discussion.
  - Approve the minutes.
4. Recognize the treasurer to give the financial report.
  - Ask for a motion\* and second to receive the report.
  - Ask for questions or discussion.
  - Approve the minutes.
5. Introduce Board and Committee reports
  - Ask for a motion\* and second to receive each report
  - Ask for questions or discussion.
  - Approve the minutes.
6. Review any unfinished business from previous meetings (old business).
7. Ask if there is any new business to come before the body.
8. When you’ve covered your last item, ask for a motion to adjourn.

\*If minutes and reports are printed and distributed, there may be no need to read them aloud. Ask for additions or corrections. If none are required, approve the minutes as read, no motion needed.

# Know Your Motions

The list below cites common motions in business meetings:

## **MAIN MOTIONS**

(Ordered by priority. Any motion below can be made, and is in order, if it appears higher on the list than the one already made below it.)

**Motion to adjourn:** Everyone enjoys this motion as it signals an end to the meeting. However, the motion to adjourn cannot interrupt a person speaking, requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a majority vote.

**Motion to table (or lay on the table):** Defers an item of business to another time. It must meet the following requirements: It cannot interrupt a person speaking, requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a majority vote. Note: Outside the United States, to table a motion means you make the item available for consideration.

**Motion for previous question:** Calls for an end to discussion. It cannot interrupt a person speaking, requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a two-thirds majority.

**Motion to postpone:** Delays the action as determined by the body. It cannot interrupt a person speaking, requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a majority vote.

**Motion to refer the matter to a committee:** Defers the item of business to a smaller subsection of the voting body. A committee is often used when more research is required or details need to be handled outside of a public forum. It cannot interrupt a person speaking, requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a majority vote.

**Motion to amend:** Adds to or alters an existing motion to make it more acceptable to the voting body, usually based on discussion. It cannot interrupt a person speaking, requires a second, is debatable, can be amended once, and requires a majority vote.

**Motion to postpone indefinitely:** This motion effectively kills the item of business. It cannot interrupt a person speaking, requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a majority vote.

## **INCIDENTAL MOTIONS**

(No order of priority and dealt with immediately.)

**Point of order:** Indicates a breach of protocol. Can interrupt someone speaking, does not require a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, no vote is taken, and the moderator decides the validity of the point.

**Appeal the decision of the chair:** Occurs when an individual does not agree with the ruling of the moderator. The motion may interrupt someone speaking, requires a second, is debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a majority vote to overrule the moderator's decision.

**Motion to suspend the rules:** Permits the voting body to supersede the established rules. The motion cannot interrupt someone speaking, requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a two-thirds vote.

**Objection to the consideration of a question:** Prevents an embarrassing or manipulative question from public forum. The motion can interrupt a person speaking, does not need a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a two-thirds vote.

## **MOTIONS TO RETURN A PREVIOUS MOTION**

**Remove from the table:** Brings back a motion tabled earlier. The motion cannot interrupt a person speaking, requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a majority vote.

**Rescind a previous motion:** Reverses an action upon which the voting body has already agreed. It cannot interrupt a person speaking, must be made by a person who voted for the previously adopted motion, requires a second, is debatable, can be amended, and requires a majority vote providing the body has been notified ahead of time.

Adapted from, "It's Just Good Business," by Roy Harris. Visit [royharris.info](http://royharris.info) to learn more.