

Handout 4

Steps in Processing a Motion

A motion is a proposal on which a group takes a specific action or stand.	
Step 1: Making A Motion	A member needs to seek recognition from the presiding officer, typically by raising your hand or standing. After the presiding officer recognizes you, you are free to make your motion by stating, <i>"I move that..."</i> .
Step 2: Seconding the Motion	To second a motion is to publicly agree that the motion should be considered, it doesn't mean that you have to agree with the motion. The purpose of this step is to make sure that at least two members want to discuss this issue before the group spends time on it. If no member is willing to second the motion, the process stops at that point. The group can then proceed to the next item of business.
Step 3: The Chair States the Motion	Proper restatement of the motion by the presiding officer helps make sure everyone has heard the motion exactly as it was proposed. The chair states, <i>"It has been moved and seconded that..."</i> .
Step 4: Members Discuss the Motion	<i>"Is there any discussion?"</i> Step 4 is the time for members to talk about the motion and fix it by amendment, if necessary. Members may spend time discussing, negotiating and compromising before they are ready to take a vote. The discussion must be limited to the specific motion that is being considered. If this principle is followed, the debate portion of the motion process will not only say focused, but it will usually take far less time than it otherwise would. If the members begin to stray from the subject matter, bring them back on task by asking, <i>"Is there any further discussion on the motion to...?"</i>
Step 5: Putting the Motion to a Vote	When it is clear that the members are finished discussing the motion, it is time to vote. The presiding officer should restate the motion to remind members of the exact issue they will be voting on. <i>"We will now vote on the motion to ..."</i> The simplest form of voting is a voice vote; the presiding officer might say, <i>"All those in favor say 'Aye'. All those opposed say 'No'."</i> A majority vote decides most actions, except in cases of suspending the rules, previous question, limit or extend debate and amend a previously adopted motion, which require a 2/3 vote.
Step 6: Announce the Result	It is the responsibility of the presiding officer to determine whether the motion passed or failed and then to announce that determination to the members. The announcement of the results of the voting should include the following four elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which side has the vote. <i>"The 'ayes' have it" or "The 'nos' have it".</i> • Whether the motion passed or failed. Simply state either <i>"The motion is adopted" or "The motion is lost."</i> • Effect of the vote. If the motion was to purchase a computer and it passed, this part might sound like, <i>"And we will be purchasing a computer."</i> • The next step. Where applicable, announce the next item of business. <p>The four steps of the complete announcement of the vote lend closure to an issue and prepare the group to move on to the next item of business.</p>