

# **GREATER HOLLYWOOD AREA OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS AREA SERVICE COMMITTEE GUIDELINES**

*(Last revised: September 26, 2016; Approved: November 27, 2016)*

## **I. Name, Description, and Boundaries**

- A. This body shall be known as the Greater Hollywood Area Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous (hereinafter referred to as the "GHASC"), and shall serve the Greater Hollywood Area of Narcotics Anonymous (hereinafter referred to as the "GHANA").
- B. The GHASC is a service body of Narcotics Anonymous directly responsible to the NA groups of the GHANA. It consists of Group Service Representatives (hereinafter referred to individually as a "GSR" and collectively as the "GSRs") from NA groups in the GHANA, along with elected officers, subcommittee chairpersons, and other participants who meet monthly in a general assembly to serve the common needs of the groups in the GHANA.
- C. This committee shall serve that portion of Los Angeles County approximately bounded on the North by the Hollywood Hills - Mulholland Drive, on the East by Alvarado Street, on the South by Olympic Boulevard, and on the West by Beverly Drive.

## **II. Purpose**

The purpose of the GHASC is to carry out services on behalf of groups in the GHANA so that the groups can focus on their primary purpose of carrying NA's message to the still-suffering addict through their meetings and to further the unity of the fellowship within our area and other areas by maintaining communication between the groups represented and Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, in accordance with our Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service.

## **III. Functions**

- A. Conduct a monthly business meeting.
- B. Disseminate information to and receive information from Narcotics Anonymous groups through their Group Service Representatives (GSRs).
- C. Provide orientation to new GSRs.
- D. Distribute Narcotics Anonymous literature.
- E. Administer and maintain a 24-hour helpline.
- F. Administer and maintain a website.
- G. Provide Regional Committee Member (RCM) for active participation in the Southern California Regional Service Committee (SCRSC).
- H. Establish, fund and support subcommittees that are responsible to the ASC as determined by group conscience.
- I. Maintain a post office box for the GHASC to serve Narcotics Anonymous. The current post office box address is "P.O. Box 931322, Los Angeles, California 90093-1322."
- J. Maintain a storage unit for GHASC materials. The Area Vice Chair shall hold the key to the storage unit.
- K. Support existing groups and encourage the development of new groups.

- L. Maintain bank accounts as deemed necessary by the GHASC.
- M. Complete an Area inventory (4th Step) annually at the March GHASC meeting.
- N. Supply Area NA meeting directories. Any Narcotics Anonymous meeting may be included in the print directory and on the website after convening at least once at the stated time and location. Requests for inclusion in the Directory must be made by a member of the group legitimately given the group's conscience at the GHASC meeting. Meetings can be excluded from the directory for the following reasons:
  - Once it has been established that a meeting has closed
  - A facility denies access to any addict seeking recovery
  - The group is not following the 12 steps and 12 traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

#### **IV. Meetings**

- A. The GHASC shall hold one regular business meeting on the fourth Sunday of each month. Meetings should not exceed two hours-with the exception of March and April, which should not exceed three hours (per inventories and elections). The GHASC shall designate meeting time and place. A special meeting may be called by:
  - 1. A Majority of the GSRs, or;
  - 2. The Chair or Vice Chair, on being advised of a matter of special urgency.
- B. Committee, Subcommittee, and Ad-hoc Subcommittee written reports shall be copied and made available to all GSRs as well as submitted to the GHASC Secretary at the GHASC meeting. Such reports shall be included in the minutes.
- C. Suggested GHASC meeting format:
  - 1) Opening Prayer.
  - 2) Reading of our 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts of Service.
  - 3) RCM Report.
  - 4) NAYC Representative Report.
  - 5) Subcommittee Reports.
  - 6) Roll Call/GSR Reports: Immediate issues regarding meetings.
  - 7) Old Business.
  - 8) New Business.
  - 9) Approval of the last GHASC meeting minutes.
  - 10) Treasurer's Report.
  - 11) Announcements/Next Business Meeting Date and Location.
  - 12) Closing Prayer.
- D. All GHASC meetings shall be open to any member of Narcotics Anonymous as non-participant observers, but shall be closed to the general public. The only participants shall be those listed below, unless the Chair requests special input or clarification.

## **V. Participants**

### **A. Definition:**

- 1) GSR and GSR-Alternates who have been elected to represent their group's conscience
- 2) Duly elected officers:
  - a. Administrative Body: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Vice-Treasurer
  - b. Subcommittee Chairs
  - c. RCM and RCM-Alternate
  - d. Regional NA Youth Committee (NAYC) Representative

### **B. Participation:**

- 1) These participants are expected to attend all GHASC meetings. NA Members from groups within the GHANA are encouraged to attend GHASC meetings and to use their GSRs to express their groups' conscience. Non-participant members may speak if the Chair grants them the floor.
- 2) Absence from two consecutive GHASC meetings by any GSR, GSR-Alternate, or substitute, implies inactivity of that group as a voting member of the GHASC. That group will not be considered active again until such a representative attends two GHASC meetings consecutively (vote will be reinstated upon Roll Call at the second attendance).
- 3) Absence from two consecutive GHASC meetings by any participants elected by the GHASC will be cause enough for removal by a 2/3 vote.

## **VI. Business Procedure**

### **A. Definitions**

GHASC meetings will be conducted according to the Sample Rules of Order contained in *A Guide to Local Service in Narcotics Anonymous*, adapted from *Robert's Rules of Order*, except in instances where the GHASC guidelines contained herein (hereinafter referred to as the "GHASC Guidelines") conflict with those rules.

### **B. Vote Allocation**

- 1) Each group is entitled to one vote through their GSR or GSR-Alternate. In the event of such a representative's absence, a person who represents a group's conscience may vote for the group, provided they are not voting on behalf of any other groups. Hereinafter, the term "GSR" will be implied to mean GSR, GSR-Alternate, or any other NA member legitimately given a group's conscience in place of a GSR.
- 2) *Participants* as outlined previously in Section V shall have one vote on matters directly related to GHASC meetings, times, date and locations. Only GSRs may vote during other business.
- 3) The Chair shall have one vote only in the event of a tie.

C. Quorum

- 1) Quorum is defined as the minimum number of voting members that must be present in order for business to be legitimately transacted. In the GHASC, quorum is defined as 2/3 of eligible voting groups' GSRs being present.
- 2) When a minimum of 2/3 of the voting GSRs of the GHASC are present, business may be conducted.
- 3) Once quorum is determined at roll call, business shall be conducted regardless of attendance fluctuations.

D. Abstentions

Abstentions shall be excluded from calculations.

E. Motions Requiring a 2/3 Vote

- 1) Waiving or changing the GHASC Guidelines. It is strongly recommended to NOT waive the GHASC Guidelines.
- 2) Removal of officers and/or subcommittee Chairs
- 3) Expenditures of funds outside the Area's customary operating expenses, operating expenses, above any subcommittee's prudent reserve.

F. New Motion Procedure (See Addendum: Sample Rules of Order for detail not covered here)

- 1) GSRs are the only participants who may make and second motions except in the case of Subsection 2, below.
- 2) Subcommittee Chairs may make motions only on matters that directly affect their subcommittees and may not vote. Similarly, the RCM may make motions only on matters directly related to the SCRSC and may not vote, and the Regional NAYC Representative may make motions only on matters directly related to the Regional NAYC, and may not vote.
- 3) Using a form provided, the motion maker submits the written motion to the Secretary.
- 4) The Chair will instruct the Secretary to read the motion aloud.
- 5) The Chair will ask if anyone is willing to second the motion. If seconded, the motion will be addressed by the ASC. If not, the motion dies.
- 6) The Chair will ask for a show of hands both pro and con to the motion; if no one indicates an objection, the Chair will declare the motion to have passed by unanimous consent. Otherwise, business continues as below:
- 7) The Chair will acknowledge those members wishing to speak; there will be two pros and two cons heard on the motion.
- 8) Discussion may be extended beyond two pros and two cons only by a majority vote.
- 9) Any member speaking on a motion must stand before the body.
- 10) All questions regarding the motion are directed to the Chair.
- 11) The Chair will determine the person most knowledgeable to answer a question, and will direct that person to answer.
- 12) Once discussion is completed, a vote will be taken.

- 13) In the case of votes requiring only a simple majority, the chair may declare a motion to have passed or failed without a count if there is a visually obvious majority; however, any GHASC participant may call for a count of hands which will then be carried out. Votes requiring 2/3 majority must always be counted and recorded in the GHASC minutes if consent is not unanimous.

## **VII. Elections**

- A. Nominations and elections for all elected positions (listed in Section IX & X) will be held in April of each year.
- B. Nominations may only be made by GSRs.
- C. All nominees must be present at the time of their nomination in order to be elected to a position in the GHASC.
- D. In the event of a prematurely vacated office, the GHASC will elect a replacement to fill that office until the next regularly scheduled election.
- E. If, at the time of election, an elected Administrative Body member or Literature Chair is currently a GSR or GSR-Alternate, that person shall resign from the GSR position.
- F. The Area Vice Chair, RCM-Alternate, and Subcommittee Vice Chairs do not automatically assume the next higher position. They must be elected by the GHASC.
- G. Members must be clean to be participants of the GHASC.
- H. Election of Subcommittee Chairs and/or GHASC officers is by simple plurality (i.e. whoever gets the most votes wins).
- I. All elected participants are expected to serve until the following May's ASC meeting to ensure that the trusted servant who takes their position next is properly oriented.

## **VIII. Subcommittees – Purpose and Function**

- A. Definitions
  - 1) Subcommittees are directly responsible to the GHASC. Newly proposed subcommittees shall function as ad-hoc (temporary) committees until they are established with guidelines and officers, both approved by the GHASC. It is necessary to clearly define responsibilities of these created subcommittees so that they may fulfill the purpose for which they were created.
  - 2) Subcommittee guidelines should include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - a) Name.
    - b) Purpose and Need.
    - c) Functions: Each subcommittee should maintain contacts and procedures for the activities it performs.
    - d) Voting procedures
    - e) Meetings (including time and place).
    - f) Clean time requirements for officers and members.
    - g) Procedures for financial accountability.
    - h) Each subcommittee, to insure its purpose is being carried out, should have an established budget in written form.

- i) All statements, invoices and correspondence will be addressed to the GHASCNA Post Office Box. The current post office box address is “P.O. Box 931322, Los Angeles, California 90093-1322.”

**B. Requirements:**

- 1) All Subcommittee Chairs shall attend all GHASC meetings. A Subcommittee Vice Chair may attend in the Chair's absence. The Subcommittee Chair is responsible for creating a working committee made up of members willing to serve.
- 2) Every Subcommittee Chair shall attend the appropriate RSC meeting, or will arrange for another Subcommittee member to attend in his or her place.
- 3) The GHASC shall approve and implement Subcommittee guidelines; said guidelines are to be drafted by subcommittee officers and active members utilizing the GHASC's suggested guidelines and shall be presented for approval at any GHASC meeting.
- 4) Each Subcommittee shall perform an annual review of existing guidelines. Any revisions to its existing guidelines must be presented for approval at any GHASC meeting.
- 5) In the event of conflict between the GHASC Guidelines and a particular Subcommittee's guidelines, the GHASC Guidelines shall supersede.
- 6) Any subcommittee that does not have its own bank account will utilize the ASC's through the ASC Treasurer.
- 7) Subcommittees are responsible for maintaining continuity and rotation of all subcommittee material in the GHASC storage unit. Each outgoing Subcommittee Chair is to do an annual inventory of its assets with the newly elected Subcommittee Chair, which said inventory shall be facilitated by the Area Vice Chair.

**IX. Subcommittees - Definitions**

**A. Subcommittees may include:**

**1) Hospitals and Institutions (H&I)**

- a) To coordinate the efforts of carrying the message of Narcotics Anonymous to addicts living in controlled environments.
- b) Subcommittee Chairperson to attend Regional H&I subcommittee each month; to attend monthly subcommittee meeting with area panel chairpersons.
- c) H&I's pre-approved budget for literature is \$300 per month.

**2) Literature**

- a) Committee handles all literature purchases and sales for groups within the GHANA.

- b) Literature has an established combination of inventory and cash on hand totaling \$3,000. Excesses are to be returned to the GHASC and shortages are to be compensated by the GHASC Treasurer.
- c) Exceptional losses due to circumstances other than normal operating expenses are to be compensated by a vote of the GHASC.

### **3) Activities**

- a) To organize activities (dances, picnics, etc.) for the GHANA fellowship.
- b) Activities representative attends regional activities meeting regularly.
- c) Activities' pre-approved budget is \$1,800. Any funds in excess of \$1,800 shall be given to the GHASC. The subcommittee is expected to replenish its own funds.
- d) Where any activity costs more than \$1,800 to produce, further approval and funds must be obtained by a vote of the Area.

### **4) Public Relations (PR)**

- a) Coordinate the efforts of carrying the NA message via public service announcements and public literature distribution to professionals in our community who have regular contact with addicts.
- b) PR Chair will attend Regional PR meeting regularly.
- c) Compile, print, and distribute a regularly updated area meeting directory.
- d) PR's pre-approved budget is \$250 per month.

### **5) Phonelines**

- a) Operate and maintain a 24-hour, 12-Step Area Narcotics Anonymous Phoneline/Hotline/Helpline in accordance with NA World guidelines and to coordinate all aspects of said phone line with GHASC activities and subcommittees.
- b) Pre-approved budget is \$200 per month.

### **6) Unity Day**

- a) To coordinate, organize, and carry out an annual event within the GHANA to foster unity within the fellowship.
- b) Unity Day has a pre-approved budget of \$7,000 for the event. Any funds in excess of \$7,000 will be given to the GHASC. Unity Day is expected to replenish its funds.

### **7) Merchandise**

- a) To design, manufacture, & sell GHANA merchandise.
- b) Merchandising budget is \$1000. If there is no functioning Merchandise committee, GHASC Treasurer will only hold \$250 for the committee and the operational budget will be reinstated to \$1,000 once the committee reforms.

## **8) Policy**

- a) To resolve policy matters.
- b) To make recommendations to be voted on by the GHASC.
- c) In order to fulfill these responsibilities, the Policy Subcommittee meets from time to time to: **(1)** carefully review the GHASC Guidelines, and **(2)** recommend updates and/or revisions to the GHASC Guidelines to address any policy concerns.

## **9) Website**

- a) Maintain a website with the following address: [www.hollywoodna.org](http://www.hollywoodna.org).
- b) Liaise with PI; ensure accurate display of GHANA meeting schedules.
- c) Liaise with Activities; ensure accurate display of GHANA activities.
- d) Liaise with Regional web coordinator; ensure accurate display of outbound links.
- e) Prudent reserve of \$200.

## **10) Newsletter**

- a) Create and distribute a newsletter containing information pertinent to the GHANA.
- b) Pre-approved budget is \$150 per month.

## **X. Elected Officers**

A. It is strongly suggested that all elected officers have:

- 1) The willingness to serve.
- 2) A working knowledge of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions.
- 3) An active participation in the area they are to serve.
- 4) Either a working knowledge of the 12 Concepts of Service or the stated desire to gain such knowledge.
- 5) Required duties of the Administrative Body:
  - a) Responsible for correspondence, maintaining GHASC files and archives.
  - b) Conducts new GSR orientation one half hour prior to the ASC meeting.

B. **Chair's Requirements and duties:**

- 1) At least two years of Service at the Area level within the last three years.
- 2) Four years clean time.
- 3) Ability to chair in a firm and understanding manner.
- 4) Plan an agenda for and preside over the monthly GHASC meeting.
- 5) Coordinate duties of the Administrative Body.
- 6) Co-signer on GHASC bank account.

**C. Vice Chair's Requirements and duties:**

- 1) Willingness to serve as Chair, if elected the following term.
- 2) Three years clean.
- 3) Perform Chair's duties in the Chair's absence.
- 4) Stay informed of subcommittee activities & be available for to assist with any subcommittee problem.
- 5) Chair of policy committee.
- 6) Assume the duties of Treasurer in the event of the Treasurer's absence.
- 7) After an NA meeting has been absent for three consecutive GHASC meetings, the Vice Chair will be responsible to check the status of the meeting and report to the GHASC by the following meeting.
- 8) Inform appropriate Subcommittee immediately so changes to directory and website can be made.
- 9) Co-signer on GHASC bank account.
- 10) Provide accessibility to the GHASC storage unit and facilitate annual subcommittee inventories of their assets contained therein.

**D. Secretary's Requirements and duties:**

- 1) Two years clean.
- 2) Keep accurate minutes of each GHASC meeting, including all motions made and seconded, whether those motions passed or failed, and the names of the motion makers. Stay informed of all subcommittee activities and is available for any subcommittee problem.
- 3) Distribute copies of the agenda and minutes-at each GHASC meeting.
- 4) Informs appropriate Subcommittee immediately so changes to directory and website can be made (when necessary).
- 5) Co-signer on GHASC bank account.
- 6) Submit the minutes to be archived on the website.

**E. Treasurer's Requirements and duties:**

- 1) Five years clean.
- 2) Must have a steady source of income and maintain a personal bank account.
- 3) Have and know how to use spreadsheet software, and understand bank reconciliations in order to maintain the current Monthly Treasurer's Report (which cannot be changed without consent of a majority of the Administrative Body).
- 4) Ability and access to use online banking to manage the GHASC bank account.
- 5) Custodian of the GHASC bank account.
- 6) Co-signer on GHASC bank account.
- 7) Report contributions and expenditures at every regular GHASC meeting, as well as in an annual report at the end of the calendar year. As available, all funds over and above prudent reserve and operating budgets shall be donated to SCRSC.
- 8) Maintain GHASC Prudent of \$1,200.00 and budgets for all subcommittees that do not have their own bank accounts.
- 9) Pay regular and customary monthly and annual expenses.

10) Pick up the mail at the GHASC Post Office box a minimum of once a month.

**F. Vice-Treasurer's Requirements and duties:**

- 1) Must meet the same minimum requirements as Treasurer and have the ability to perform the same duties required of Treasurer.
- 2) Assists Treasurer in all duties as needed and delegated.
- 3) Willingness to serve as Treasurer, if elected the following term.

**G. Regional Committee Member's Requirements and duties:**

- 1) Two years clean.
- 2) Speak for members and groups in the GHANA.
- 3) Liaison between the Greater Hollywood Area and the Southern California Region.
- 4) Attend all SCRSC meetings, taking part in any decisions which affect the Region, speaking as the voice of the GHASC conscience
- 5) One year's service as an RCM-Alternate.
- 6) Chairs yearly Conference Agenda Report workshop for the Area.

**H. Regional Committee Member Alternate's (RCM-Alt.) Requirements and duties:**

- 1) One year clean.
- 2) Willingness to serve as RCM, if elected the following term.
- 3) Attends all SCRSC meetings.
- 4) Stands in for RCM if the RCM is absent or for any reason the RCM is unable to fulfill his/her term.
- 5) Assists the RCM in matters pertaining to Narcotics Anonymous.

**I. Regional NAYC Representative's Requirements and duties:**

- 1) One year clean
- 2) An active interest in the issues confronting young people recovering in Southern California NA
- 3) The willingness and commitment to attend a monthly SCR NAYC meeting
- 4) The willingness and commitment to attend a monthly GHASC meeting

**XI. Finances**

**A.** No personal checks will be accepted by the GHASC.

**B.** With the exception of Unity Day, all revenues and/or funds collected at a GHASC function must be deposited/delivered after receipt within seven (7) business working days to the GHASC Treasurer. The GHASC Treasurer will keep a detailed record of each deposit as a permanent record. A separate deposit will be made for each event. If funds are not deposited, or cannot be deposited, within seven (7) business days, then the Area Chair and Area Vice-Chair must to be immediately notified by the GHASC Treasurer.

**C.** Any funds collected at Unity Day in excess of the preapproved budget must be delivered within seven (7) business working days to the GHASC Treasurer.

- D.** Any GHASC participant may demand a statement of finances from the Area Treasurer, or from any Subcommittee, at any time.
- E.** If a statement of finances is not provided, or if the statement of finances suggests that GHASC funds have been misappropriated and/or grossly mismanaged, the following actions may be taken:
- 1) The Administrative Body will inform the GHASC, at the soonest opportunity, of the allegation(s).
  - 2) Through consensus, and as recorded in writing by a member thereof, the Administrative Body may remove the name of the member in question from access to the GHASC bank account.
  - 3) The Administrative Body may initiate an internal investigation into the allegation(s) of financial misconduct.
  - 4) The Administrative Body reserves the right to contact the local Police Department and may ask that they initiate an investigation into the allegation(s).
  - 5) The Administrative Body will report any such activities to the RSC via the RCM.
- F.** If the member in question is a GHASC member and/or a subcommittee member:
- 1) The Administrative Body will inform the GHASC, at the soonest opportunity, of the allegation(s).
  - 2) The Administrative Body may direct the Area Treasurer to conduct an audit of the finances in question.
  - 3) The Administrative Body reserves the right to contact the local Police Department and may ask that they initiate an investigation into the allegation(s).
  - 4) The Administrative Body will report any and all such activities to the RSC via the RCM.
- G.** All trusted servants performing money-handling services must have a minimum of 2 years clean.

## **ADDENDUM: SAMPLE RULES OF ORDER**

from *A Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous*

On the following pages, you'll find a simple set of rules of order. They have been adapted from *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, which in turn are based on the Rules of the US House of Representatives. These sample rules differ in some details from *Robert's Rules*; to cover such differences, your committee may wish to make a blanket decision to accept these rules as authoritative. In countries where *Robert's Rules of Order* are not in common use and where some other body of parliamentary rules is more commonly used by deliberative assemblies, service committees may want to consider adapting these rules so that they conform to those commonly in use in their own lands.

### **DECORUM STATEMENT**

Meetings will be conducted according to these rules of order, adapted from *Robert's Rules of Order*. This time-honored system for conducting business is the clearest way yet devised for getting a maximum amount of business done in a minimum of time, regardless of the degree of disagreement among the participants.

These rules are meant to be used as tools to help us make orderly collective decisions in a cooperative, respectful way in the spirit of our Twelve Concepts; please do not use them as weapons against one another. We encourage all participants to become familiar with these rules of order and conduct themselves accordingly.

Once the meeting is under way, only one matter will be before the committee at any one time and no other discussion is in order. Please respect the chairperson's right to be in control of the process of this meeting so that you can have maximum benefit of its content.

### **DEBATE, LIMITS**

Debate is the formal exchange of views on an idea. Unless otherwise specified, debate on both main motions and parliamentary motions is usually limited to two or three pros and two or three cons (speakers for and against the motion). Speakers addressing a motion in debate usually have two or three minutes in which to speak their minds.

### **MOTIONS**

There are two basic types of motions. It is important to understand the difference between them. The two kinds of motions are *main motions* and *parliamentary motions*.

#### **MAIN MOTIONS**

A *motion* is a statement of an idea a committee member wants the committee to put into practice. After being recognized by the chairperson, the member says, "I move that such-and-such be done by (this committee, one of its subcommittees, or a particular individual) under these terms." The person making the motion then speaks briefly about why he or she feels the idea is important; this is called speaking to the intent of a motion. Because the exact wording of all motions must be recorded in the minutes, the maker of the

motion should write it out whenever possible. This is especially important for long or complicated motions.

Every motion requires a *second*—the backing of another person who either wants the idea put into practice or simply wants to see further discussion of the idea take place. After one person makes a motion, the chairperson will ask whether the motion has a second. The seconder simply raises a hand and, when recognized by the chair, says, “I second that.” If nobody seconds a motion, the chair will say, “The motion dies for lack of a second.” This means that the idea will not be discussed any further because there is not enough interest in it. The committee then moves on to other business.

Once a motion has been made, the chairperson may rule it *out of order*. A motion may be ruled out of order for any one of a number of reasons: the motion goes against the committee’s standing policy, clearly contradicts one of the Twelve Traditions or Twelve Concepts for NA Service, or is inappropriate at the particular point in the meeting at which it is made. *Robert’s Rules of Order* can be consulted for more specific examples of motions, which are out of order at any given time.

Any member of the committee who wishes to challenge a ruling made by the chairperson may *appeal* that ruling, as described below. If no appeal is made, or if the decision of the chair is upheld, the committee moves on to other business.

## PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS

*Parliamentary motions* can be best understood as “sub-motions” made during debate on a main motion that affect that motion in some way. There are many more of these than space and practicality permit us to include here, but a few that seem to be the most practical are discussed below.

### 1. Motion to AMEND.

**SIMPLE majority required.**

**Is DEBATABLE.**

This is perhaps the most commonly used parliamentary motion. During debate on a motion, if a member feels that the motion would benefit from a change in its language, that member can say, “*I move to amend the motion...*” and suggest specific language changes in the motion. Ordinarily, an amendment must be moved and seconded before it can be debated. When debate on the amendment is exhausted, the body votes on the amendment. Then, debate resumes on the merits of the main motion (as amended, if the amendment has carried). When debate is exhausted on the merits of the main motion itself, a vote is taken and the body moves on to the next item of business.

If an amendment is offered and the persons making and seconding the original motion accept it, no second is required, no debate is called for, and no vote need be taken on the amendment; debate proceeds as if the main motion had been formally amended. This is called making a *friendly amendment*.

**2. Motion to call the PREVIOUS QUESTION.****TWO-THIRDS majority required.****Is NOT DEBATABLE.**

For our purposes, this may be the most important parliamentary motion. Use it often. This motion is made by a member saying, *“I call for the question,”* or *“I move the previous question.”* It is another way of saying, “I move that debate stop right now and that we vote immediately.” This is one of many motions that can be used to prevent needless, lengthy debate once an issue is clearly understood. This motion is in order after any speaker is finished. You need not be called on. The chair must recognize you when you make this motion, and a vote must be taken with no debate. If two-thirds of the body feels that no more debate is necessary, then it is time to vote and move on.

One point worth making about this motion is that you must be careful not to squelch debate before an issue has been thoroughly aired. Be sure to vote “no” to this motion if you are still confused about the issue at hand or are unsure of how to vote. By allowing debate to continue, we avoid half-baked decisions about half-understood questions. On the other hand, the liberal use of this motion makes it unnecessary for the chair to be heavy-handed in stopping discussion, because the chair knows you will stop it soon enough.

**3. Motion to TABLE.****SIMPLE majority required.****Is NOT DEBATABLE.**

One way of disposing of a motion that is not ready for a vote is to table it. This is done by saying, *“I move we table this motion until such-and-such a date/meeting.”* This motion is not debatable; if it is made and seconded, it is voted on immediately. If it fails, debate continues on the motion itself. If it passes, the committee moves on to its next item of business. The tabled motion will be included in the committee agenda on the date specified.

**4. Motion to REMOVE FROM THE TABLE.****SIMPLE majority required.****Is NOT DEBATABLE.**

A motion that has been tabled can be taken up before the time originally set in the motion to table. This is done by saying, “I move to remove from the table the motion to such-and-such.” If this motion passes, the motion that had been tabled becomes the main motion and debate on it begins again. If the motion to remove from the table fails, the body moves on to the next item of business.

**5. Motion to REFER.****SIMPLE majority required.****Is DEBATABLE.**

Sometimes the committee does not have enough information to make an immediate decision on a main motion. Such motions can be removed from debate and sent to either a standing subcommittee or an ad hoc committee for further study. This can be done by a

member saying, “I move to refer the motion to the such-and-such subcommittee.” If the motion to refer is seconded, the body may debate it before voting. If the motion to refer passes, the committee moves on to its next item of business. If the motion to refer does not pass, the committee either continues debating the main motion or votes on it.

The subcommittee to which a motion is referred will take it up at its next meeting. The subcommittee will report back on what it has come up with at the next meeting of the full committee.

**6. Motions to RECONSIDER or RESCIND.**  
**MAJORITY required varies.**  
**Is DEBATABLE.**

Sometimes a member feels that a motion the committee has passed will prove harmful. That member can move to either reconsider (reopen for debate and voting) or rescind (void the effect of) the original motion.

There are a few conditions on motions to reconsider or rescind:

- The motion must have been passed in either the last or the current meeting.
- The member making the motion must have information on the issue that was not available in the original debate on the motion.
- The member must have been with the winning side in the original vote.

These limits are placed to protect the committee from having to reconsider again and again the motions it passes while still allowing it to examine potentially harmful situations it has created inadvertently. If any of these requirements are not met, the chairperson will declare the motion out of order.

The motion to reconsider requires a simple majority.

The motion to rescind requires a simple majority, provided that committee members were informed prior to the meeting that such a motion would be made. If prior notice is not given, the motion to rescind requires a two-thirds majority.

**7. Request to WITHDRAW A MOTION.**  
**UNANIMOUS CONSENT required.**  
**Is NOT DEBATABLE.**

Once a motion is made and the debate begins, the maker of the motion may ask to withdraw it. The chair asks if there are any objections. If there is even one objection, the motion stays on the floor and debate resumes. If there are no objections, the motion is withdrawn and the body moves on.

**8. Offering a SUBSTITUTE MOTION.**  
**SIMPLE majority required.**  
**Is DEBATABLE.**

A *substitute motion* is the same thing as an amendment to a main motion. The only difference is that it is offered to entirely replace the original idea, instead of merely revising a portion of it. It is handled in the same way an amendment is handled.

### **9. Motion to ADJOURN.**

**SIMPLE majority required.**

**Is NOT DEBATABLE.**

Any voting member may move to adjourn at any time. This motion is always in order, is not debatable, and requires a simple majority to pass. Obviously frivolous motions to adjourn may be ruled out of order. After all business is finished, the chair may declare the meeting adjourned without a motion.

## **OTHER PROCEDURES**

In addition to parliamentary motions, there are other ways in which members may alter or clarify the proceedings. Here are a few of the most common.

### **Order of the day**

If a committee member feels that business is going too far astray from the original agenda, that member can help get things back on track. The member says, “*I call for the order of the day.*” This means, “I move that the chair bring us back on track and conduct the meeting according to procedure, adhering to the agenda.” This does not require a second, is not debatable, and does not even require a vote—the chairperson is obligated to enforce the request unless two-thirds of the body tell the chair otherwise.

### **Point of information**

If a committee member needs certain information before making a decision about a motion at hand, that member can say at any time to the chairperson, “*Point of information.*” This means, “I have a question to ask,” *not* “I have information to offer.” One does not need a second to raise a point of information; it is neither debatable nor to be voted upon. The person raising the point of information may ask the question of either the chairperson or another member of the body.

### **Point of order**

If it appears to a committee member that something is happening in violation of the rules of order, and if the chairperson has not yet done anything about it, the member can ask the chairperson for clarification of the rules at any time. The member may simply say out loud, “*Point of order.*” The chairperson then says, “What is your point of order?” The member then states the question and asks the chairperson for clarification. If the chair agrees that the rules are not being followed, the chair says “Your point is well taken” and restates the appropriate rule. If the chair does not agree, the chair says, “Overruled.” This decision, as all others, can be appealed.

**Point of appeal**

Any time the chair makes a decision, that decision may be appealed. Any voting member who wishes to appeal a decision may do so by saying, “*I appeal the decision of the chair.*” If the appeal is seconded, the chair then asks, “On what grounds do you appeal my decision?” The member states the reasons. The chairperson then speaks briefly to the intent of the ruling being appealed. The body may then debate the ruling and the merits of the appeal. A vote is taken, requiring a simple majority to overrule the original decision of the chairperson.

**Parliamentary inquiry**

If a committee member wants to do something but doesn’t know how it fits in with the rules of order, all that member has to do is ask. At any time, a member may simply say out loud, “*Point of parliamentary inquiry.*” The chairperson must immediately recognize the member so that person may ask how to do such-and-such. The chair will answer the question, possibly by referring to a specific passage in this document in explanation. A point of parliamentary inquiry needs no second, is not debatable, and is not voted upon.

**Point of personal privilege**

If the smoke is getting too heavy for you, the air conditioner or heater is on too high, or if there is too much noise in the room, you can ask that something be done about it. If the matter is urgent, you may interrupt the proceedings by saying, “*Point of personal privilege;*” if the matter is not particularly urgent, you are encouraged to wait until the person speaking has finished. Such a request generally requires no second, and the chairperson must recognize you immediately. State the situation and ask that it be corrected. If your request seems reasonable, the chair will accommodate you.

**VOTING PROCEDURES**

There are several ways that votes can be taken. The most commonly used method is the *show of hands*. With rare exceptions, votes will be taken by a request from the chair to see the hands of all in favor, then all opposed, then all abstaining on each issue. The chairperson should ask for all three categories every time, just to be thorough, even when the majority is overwhelming.

These are only brief notes on rules of order for business meetings. For further information, see *Robert’s Rules of Order—Newly Revised*.