



## Parliamentary Procedures – The Main Motion

Toastmaster parliamentary procedures follow Robert's Rules of Order.

**Motion:** a formal proposal made in an assembly, subsequently discussed and voted upon to reach a majority decision

**Always address the Chair with “Mr/Madam Chairperson” before speaking**

### Steps in Making a Main Motion

1. **Recognition:** Chair must acknowledge (recognize) the member before s/he may speak further  
[member] “Mr/Madam Chairperson”  
[chairperson] “The Chair recognizes (member)”
2. **Make the Motion:** Means member has a topic worthy of discussion and requiring an assembly decision; Chair may assist member with wording if it is not in best motion format for discussion  
[member] “Mr/Mdm Chairperson, I move that...”
3. **Second the Motion:** The motion seconder agrees that the question posed in the motion is worth discussion; does not mean the seconder is in agreement with the motion; if no seconder, then the motion is ignored  
[member] Mr/Mdm Chairperson, I second the motion.”
4. **Discuss the Motion:** Chair opens discussion by asking the secretary to read the motion as recorded (this confirms the motion was recorded as the mover intended and that the assembly understands it) then asks the Mover to speak to the motion  
[chairperson] “Mr/Mdm Secretary, can you read back the motion?”  
[secretary] (Reads motion as recorded and corrects wording if required)  
[chairperson] “(member), please rise to speak to the motion”  
[moving member] “Mr/Mdm Chairperson, I rise to speak for/against the motion...”
5. **Call for a Vote:** Chair restates the motion (can call on the secretary to do so) then prepares the assembly to vote; there are 5 ways to vote: voice, roll call, general consent (if there is no objection...), division (show of hands or stand), and ballot  
[chair] “The motion before us is ... Voting will occur by...”

6. **Vote:** All members vote in favour (agrees with the motion) or opposed (against or disagreeing with the motion; members can also abstain (not vote for or against) but this is rare  
[chair] “All those in favour...” “All those opposed...”
7. **Announce the Results:** Chair indicates if the motion passed or failed then taps the lectern with the gavel; Members can challenge the Chair if they disagree with the Chair’s decision – happens most often when voting is close  
[chair] “Motion is carried/defeated.”

### **Point of Information Motion**

Used to obtain clarification or additional information so you can speak to or vote on the motion with better understanding of the decision required; the Chair will ask the moving member to clarify  
[member] “Point of information Mr/Mdm Chairperson. (once recognized, address the Chair and state your question