



Motions: Amendment

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Last month's column focused on some basic rules for making a motion. Here, a few guidelines for amending motions are highlighted.

Not all motions are subject to amendment. Some motions are not subject to debate and, thus, are not subject to amendment. For example, a motion to adjourn cannot be amended. Most incidental motions (i.e., parliamentary inquiry, point of order, appeal of chair's decision) are also not subject to debate or amendment.

In general, any amendment must be germane to the action proposed in the original motion. If it is not, then the chair may rule the amendment out of order or seek a vote from the body on whether the proposed amendment is germane.

Unless established by rule, there are no limits on the number of times a motion may be amended nor on amendments to a proposed amendment. However, to prevent confusion, only one amendment to a proposed amendment may be pending at one time.

To amend or change a motion, the maker or other member, upon recognition from the presiding officer, would state, "I move to amend the main motion by... striking out, adding, or inserting" words or phrases. This motion must be seconded. The motion to amend may be debated, amended, and requires a majority vote.

When a motion to amend or change a motion is made and seconded, the discussion of the body is limited to the proposed amendment or change. Any further discussion on the main motion is out of order until the motion to amend is resolved.

To amend a motion to amend a main motion, a member would state, "I move to amend the amendment by...". This motion must be seconded, may be debated, may not be amended and requires a majority vote for approval.

Debate on a motion to amend a motion to amend is again limited to the motion to amend the motion to amend. Discussion of other information or matters is out of order.

A motion may also be amended by proposing a substitute motion. The substitute motion, like any other amendment, must be germane to the subject matter of the original motion.

All motions and amendments must be voted on in the order they were made. So, a vote on a motion to amend a motion to amend must precede a vote on the motion to amend. And, a vote on the motion to amend the main motion must precede a vote on the main motion.