

# Parliamentary Procedures

Parliamentary rules are established to aid organizations in the orderly, expeditious, and equitable accomplishment of business. Because order and good will are essential to working together and achieving common goals, it is essential that association members understand parliamentary procedures. The following overview is a guide to participating in business meetings of the Medical Library Association.

## PARLIAMENTARY

### AUTHORITY

Article XIII of the 2009 revised bylaws of the Medical Library Association provides that rules in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the association in all cases where they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws of the association.

### RULES OF THE ASSEMBLY

The following rules govern the conduct of MLA business meetings.

#### The Floor

When addressing the chair, the person desiring recognition moves to a microphone and gives proper identification, including name and institution, as well as city and state or province. Only MLA members are permitted to speak on the floor of the assembly.

#### Motions and Resolutions

Main motions (those introducing new business) may be brought to the assembly only if written copies have been distributed at least twenty-four hours before the meeting to each Voting Member present or by unanimous consent of Voting Members present. Resolutions are motions presented formally.

#### Debate

Debate is limited to two minutes for each speaker; no speaker may have the floor twice on the same question until all who wish to speak have spoken. Members speaking a second time are limited to one minute.

#### Quorum

A quorum of 250 Voting Members is required for the transaction of business. For purposes of determining a quorum, a person eligible to cast 2 votes is counted as 2 Voting Members.

#### Voting

To facilitate the counting of votes, voting paddles are provided to all eligible voters attending the annual meeting. Voting paddles are color-coded to distinguish between Institutional and Regular Members. General consent may be used as a method of voting, if there is no objection. Any of the foregoing rules may be suspended by a two-thirds vote.

## UNDERSTANDING MOTIONS

Motions are classified according to their purposes and characteristics.

#### Main Motions

An original main motion brings a new substantive question before the assembly for consideration and action. An incidental main motion relates to other business of the assembly or its past or future action. Incidental main motions include motions to amend something previously adopted and to rescind.

#### Subsidiary Motions

These motions may alter the main motion and are related to it.

- Lay on the table (a temporary delay)
- Previous question (to stop debate)
- Limit or extend debate
- Postpone to a certain time
- Commit or refer to a committee
- Amend
- Postpone indefinitely (to kill)

#### Privileged Motions

These motions have no direct connection to the main motion. They are the highest-ranking motions and are designed to take care of emergencies that arise in the assembly.

- Fix the time at which to adjourn—set an adjourned meeting
- Adjourn
- Recess
- Question of privilege

- Call for the orders of the day

#### Incidental Motions

These motions arise only incidentally out of business before the assembly. Most of these motions are not debatable and are handled as soon as they arise. Some incidental motions are:

- Appeal from the decision of the chair
- Consider seriatim (consideration by paragraph)
- Division of the question
- Parliamentary inquiry
- Point of information
- Point of order
- Suspend the rules
- Withdraw a motion

#### Motions that Bring a Question before the Assembly Again

- Take from the table
- Reconsider
- Rescind or amend something previously adopted

## PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS

Precedence sets the priority of motions and the order in which they must be proposed and considered. Subsidiary and privileged motions are ranked in this descending order:

Fix the time at which to adjourn (highest ranking)

- Adjourn
- Recess
- Question of privilege
- Call for the orders of the day
- Lay on the table
- Previous question
- Limit or extend debate
- Postpone to a certain time
- Commit or refer
- Amend
- Postpone indefinitely
- Main motion

Only those motions that are higher in rank than the pending motion are in order and may be made. For example, when the main motion and the motion to commit are pending, only motions of higher rank than "commit" may be made.