A Guide to Parliamentary Procedure for Delegates and Alternates

Michigan Dental Association

2011

Acknowledgement

The Speaker of the House of Delegates acknowledges the assistance of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons in developing this booklet, as well as the American Dental Association, which has been customized to incorporate the rules and procedures of the Michigan Dental Association House of Delegates.
# Table of Contents

I. Introduction and Purpose ...................................................... 1  
II. Fundamental Principles of Parliamentary Law ..................... 1  
III. Sources of Parliamentary Rules ......................................... 1  
IV. Duties of Delegates and Alternates ..................................... 2  
V. MDA House of Delegates .................................................. 2  
VI. Presentation of Motions ................................................... 3  
VII. Rules of Debate ............................................................ 3  
VIII. Motions—Sturgis* .......................................................... 4  
IX. General Consent ........................................................... 5  
X. What Motion Should I Use? ............................................... 6  
XI. Table of Motions ........................................................... 7  
XII. Main Motions and Resolutions ......................................... 8  
XIII. Amendments ............................................................... 8  
XIV. Limiting Debate ............................................................ 8  
XV. Consent Calendar .......................................................... 9  
XVI. Previous Notice ............................................................ 9  
XVII. Actions of the House of Delegates .................................. 10  
XVIII. The Life of a Resolution ............................................... 11

The Guide for Delegates and Alternates is provided as supplemental information to the Manual of the House of Delegates.

Guide for Delegates and Alternates

I. Introduction and Purpose
A. To introduce new delegates and alternates to the procedures of the MDA House of Delegates.
B. To present basic parliamentary rules as found in Sturgis and their effect on the MDA House.
C. To assist all MDA delegates and alternates, and all interested members when participating in other deliberative bodies:
   1. Hospital Medical Staff
   2. Related Dental Organizations
   3. Local and state professional societies
   4. Other: business, civic, social and church groups

II. Fundamental Principles of Parliamentary Law
A. Purpose of Parliamentary Law—The purpose of parliamentary rules is to assist the members of an assembly to conduct the business of the organization with efficiency, fairness and harmony.
B. Equality of Rights—All members have equal rights and, unless the bylaws provide otherwise, all members have equal privileges and obligations.
C. Majority Rule—The decision of the majority (more than half) of the members is binding on the entire membership; and all members should accept and abide by this decision.
D. Minority Rights—The rights of individual members and of the minority must be protected.
E. Right to Notice and Information—Each member has the right to be sent notice of meetings and important proposals; and each member has the right to know the meaning of any proposal before the assembly, and what its effect would be.
F. Right to Discussion—Each member has the basic right to discuss any item of business before the assembly freely and without interference, provided the rules adopted by the assembly are observed.
G. Fairness and Good Faith—The use of parliamentary rules and procedures should be constructive, i.e., to promote fairness and good faith in the conduct of business in the assembly, rather than destructive, i.e., to gain an unfair advantage over other members through trickery, deceit or dilatory tactics.

III. Sources of Parliamentary Rules
A. Law
   1. Constitutional and statutory law
   2. Common parliamentary law and court decisions
B. Charter
   1. Articles of Incorporation
   2. Charter issued by parent or superior organization
C. Governing Rules and Regulations

1. Constitution
2. Bylaws
3. Standing Rules of Procedure
   a. Administrative Standing Rules—Policies
      (1) Parliamentary standing rules
      (2) Ordinary standing rules
   c. Committee Standing Rules
4. Custom and Precedent


E. Other

1. Majority vote of the assembly
2. Rules by the presiding officer

IV. Duties of Delegates and Alternates

A delegate is one who is chosen to represent the members of his/her constituent dental society, or the Michigan dental schools in the MDA House of Delegates.

The duties of a delegate are:

1. to attend the annual meeting and all business sessions and caucuses before and during the annual meeting;
2. to be informed regarding the issues proposed for action during the annual meeting;
3. to be informed regarding the rules of procedure, conduct and decorum in the business sessions of the annual meeting;
4. to vote for what the delegate believes is best for the profession and the public it serves;
5. to be prepared to report to the delegate’s constituency after the annual meeting on the business that was transacted during the annual meeting.

An alternate is one who is chosen to act as a substitute for a delegate. An alternate can either be paired with a specific delegate or can be chosen according to a numerical rank (1st alternate, 2nd alternate, etc.).

The duties of an alternate are:

1. to be available to perform the duties of a delegate for the entire annual meeting, or any portion thereof, should the delegate be required to withdraw;
2. to register with the House Committee on Credentials, Rules and Order and to obtain the proper delegate credentials prior to assuming the delegate’s duties;
3. to fulfill the responsibilities of a delegate should he/she be required to do so.

V. MDA House of Delegates

A. Officers

1. Chair—Speaker, who presides at all meetings
2. Secretary—Recording officer and custodian of the records. The MDA Secretary serves as Secretary of the House.
B. Composition

1. Delegates—102 voting members representing 26 constituent societies and the two Michigan dental schools.
2. Alternates—no more than an equal number of alternate delegates as delegates may be selected.
3. Elective and Appointive Officers and Trustees—ex officio members of the House without the power to vote.
4. Past Presidents—ex officio members of the House of Delegates without the power to vote unless designated as delegates.

C. Committees

1. Standing Committees
   a. Credentials, Rules and Order—consists of three members that are delegates. Presents for approval the agendas, actions from the previous years House meeting and the Manual of the House of Delegates, maintains a continuous roll call, determines the presence of a quorum and supervises disputes over: 1) the seating of the delegates in the House; 2) the assignment of an alternate to replace a delegate; 3) the interpretation of the MDA Bylaws, Chapter III, Section 3 entitled “Certification of Delegates and Alternate Delegates”; 4) the interpretation of the Manual of the House of Delegates.

2. Two Reference Committees (A and B)

VI. Presentation of Motions

A. Delegate stands, states name and component for the record, addresses the Chair, and obtains recognition.
B. Delegate presents a motion.
C. Presiding officer states the motion, thereby placing it before the assembly for action.
D. Debate, amendments and/or other subsidiary motions.
E. Presiding officer re-states the motion before calling for the vote.
F. Vote is taken—majority, 2/3, general consent (electronic, voice vote, hands, voting cards, stand and counted, ballot, roll call).
G. Presiding officer announces the results of the vote—and its effect.

VII. Rules of Debate

A. The right of every delegate to participate in the discussion of any matter of business is one of the fundamental principles of parliamentary law.
B. Debate is regulated by parliamentary rules adopted by the House to assure every delegate a reasonable and equal opportunity to be heard.
C. Motions are classified as:
   1. Fully debatable—main motions, amendments to debatable motions, rescind, appeal, ratify, amend something previously adopted.
2. Debatable with restrictions—recess, limit debate, postpone definitely, refer to committee, and reconsider.
3. Non-debatable—all others.

D. Length and number of speeches:

1. No limit, except as provided by motion or standing rule.
2. A member should not seek recognition to speak a second time until all who wish to speak have had the opportunity to speak at least once.
3. No member should monopolize the debate.
4. Irrelevant debate and dilatory tactics should be ruled out of order by the Chair.

E. Conduct during debate:

1. Debate must be fundamentally impersonal.
2. Ideas may be attacked, but not the motives, character or personality of a member.
3. All discussion is addressed to the Chair, not to any individual.

VIII. Motions

A. Classification

1. Main Motions
   a. The main motion
   b. Restorative-main motions
2. Secondary Motions *
   a. Privileged motions
   b. Subsidiary motions
   c. Incidental motions

* (Secondary motions can be classified as main motions if proposed when no main motion is pending.)

B. Order of Precedence—Ranked 9-1 (see item XI. Table of Motions)

C. Interrupt Business? – questions of privilege, reconsider, appeal, requests (except division of question)

D. Second Required? – not required at MDA meetings (both House and committee)

E. Debatable?

1. Fully Debatable—main motions, amendments to debatable motions, rescind, appeal, ratify, amend something previously adopted.
2. Restrict Debate—recess, limit debate, postpone definitely, refer to committee, and reconsider.
3. Non-debatable—all others.

F. Amendable?

1. Amendable—main motions, primary amendments, ratify, amend something previously adopted.
2. Restricted Amendment—adjourn, recess, limit debate, postpone definitely, refer to committee.
3. Non-amendable—all others.

G. Vote Required

1. Majority vote for all motions—except:
a. 2/3 vote for motions that deprive a member of a basic right: i.e., close debate, limit debate, suspend the rules
b. Constitution and Bylaws amendments
c. General Consent (see item IX. General Consent)

2. The Chair decides requests.
3. Division of the assembly—request by one member

H. Reconsider:

1. Only the vote on main motions may be reconsidered.
2. Any member may move to reconsider regardless of how they voted.
3. Reconsideration in the House of Delegates is limited to the same annual meeting.
4. Reconsideration in a committee may be moved any time.

IX. General Consent

Routine or non-controversial matters often can be decided by general consent without taking a formal vote, thereby saving time and expediting business. General consent, also known as “unanimous consent,” means that there is no opposition to approving an action.

Should any member object to deciding an issue by general consent, he/she may call out “I object,” without being recognized. In such a case it would be obvious to all that consent was not unanimous, and it would be necessary for the Chair to submit the question to the assembly for a formal vote.

A member who objects to the use of general consent to decide an issue might not necessarily be opposed to the issue itself, but might prefer, instead, to have a formal vote taken on the subject.

Examples of business that can be decided by general consent include correction and approval of minutes, closing debate, suspension of the rules, closing nominations, taking a recess and adjournment.
### What Motion Should I Use?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Motion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present an idea for consideration and action</td>
<td>Resolution, Main motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve a pending motion</td>
<td>Amend, Division of the question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend, limit or cut off debate</td>
<td>Limit or extend debate, Close debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay a decision</td>
<td>Refer to a committee, Postpone to a certain time, Recess, Adjourn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet an emergency</td>
<td>Question of privilege, Suspend the rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain information on resolution</td>
<td>Parliamentary inquiry, Request for information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question the decision of the presiding officer</td>
<td>Point of order, Appeal from the decision of the Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforce rights and privileges</td>
<td>Division of the assembly, Parliamentary inquiry, Point of order, Appeal from the decision of the Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider a resolution again</td>
<td>Reconsider, Rescind, Amend a previous action, Ratify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change an action already taken</td>
<td>Reconsider, Rescind, Amend by a previous action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To terminate a meeting</td>
<td>Recess, Adjourn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

XI. Table of Motions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIONS</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>V</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRIVILEGED MOTIONS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Adjourn</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Recess</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Question of Privilege</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Close Debate (Previous Question)</td>
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<td>2/3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Limit/Extend Debate</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Postpone Definitely</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Refer</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Amend</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAIN MOTIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Main Motion</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restorative Main Motions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ratify</td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconsider</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rescind</td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Amend a previous action</td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M**</td>
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<tr>
<td>INCIDENTAL MOTIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M(-)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspend Rules</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2/3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider Informally</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Point of Order</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Inquiry</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Withdraw Motion</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Division of Question</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Division of Assembly</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I = Interrupt</td>
<td>V = Vote</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D = Debatable</td>
<td>M = Majority Vote</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d = Restricted Debate</td>
<td>2/3 = 2/3 Vote</td>
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<tr>
<td>A = Amendable</td>
<td>C = Chair decides</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a = Restricted Amendment</td>
<td>O = One Member</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>** = 2/3s vote, if original motion required a 2/3s vote</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
XII. **Main Motions and Resolutions**

    Resolutions are main motions which are submitted in writing and which begin with the words “Resolved, that...”. Resolutions and all main motions are debatable, and they can be amended; they are adopted by a majority vote (unless the *Bylaws* require a higher vote, e.g., an amendment to the *Bylaws*); and they can be reconsidered during the same convention (with appropriate notice, if required).

XIII. **Amendments**

    The subsidiary motion “amend” is used to modify a main motion, a primary amendment, and certain other secondary motions: refer, postpone to a specified time, limit or extend debate, recess, adjourn. Amendments must be germane, i.e., they must be closely related to the subject of the pending motion.

    Amendments to debatable motions are debatable. Primary amendments may be amended (secondary amendments), but secondary amendments may not be amended (no tertiary amendments). Only one primary amendment and one secondary amendment may be pending at any time.

    Amendments are voted on in reverse order, i.e., the secondary amendment first, then the primary amendment, then, finally, the main motion. Amendments are adopted by a majority vote regardless of the vote required to adopt the main motion.

    There are three methods of amending a motion:

    1. Insert (between) or add (at the end) words or a paragraph.
    2. Strike out or delete words or a paragraph.
    3. Strike out and insert words or substitute a paragraph, or a new main motion or resolution.

XIV. **Limiting Debate**

    Every delegate has the basic parliamentary right to full and free discussion of every resolution presented for action. Also, every delegate has the basic parliamentary right to be able to transact the business of the House efficiently and with harmony. Debate is regulated by parliamentary rules to assure every delegate a reasonable and equal opportunity to be heard, without unnecessarily delaying the business to the detriment of the other delegates.

    The presiding officer cannot limit or close debate, unless the assembly has previously adopted a standing rule or a motion to limit debate, or a motion to close debate at a specific time.

    On the other hand, the members of the House of Delegates have several methods by which the length of debate can be controlled:

    i. The House can assign routine and non-controversial resolutions to a 'consent calendar' and then adopt the entire list of resolutions without debate by a single vote on the entire block of resolutions instead of by individual votes on each item.

    ii. The House can adopt, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, motions to limit debate:
        1. To limit the number of speeches per delegate, or the length of time allotted to each delegate speaking in debate;
        2. To limit the number of delegates who would speak pro and con on each motion or resolution;
        3. To limit the total length of time for debate on a specific motion or resolution.

    iii. The House can adopt, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, a motion to close debate on the immediately pending motion. In the MDA House of Delegates a motion to vote immediately on all pending motions is not used. The motion to vote immediately cannot be made in conjunction with the proposal of another motion or following debate on a pending motion.
iv. The House can adopt a permanent standing rule whereby limitation of debate would be imposed on the members of the House on all issues. Such a standing rule could be suspended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote whenever necessary.

XV. Consent Calendar

In an effort to make the best use of the time of the House of Delegates, each reference committee will utilize a consent calendar. Only those items with which the committee agreed unanimously and which received no testimony or all positive testimony at the reference committee hearing can be included on the consent calendar.

Any delegate has the right to object to the inclusion of any item on the consent agenda that he wishes to debate or oppose. Items removed from the consent agenda are transferred to the regular agenda for separate consideration and vote. The remaining items then are approved en bloc without discussion by a single unanimous vote.

XVI. Previous Notice

Important proposals such as bylaw amendments, changes in dues, assessments, etc. require advance notice before they can be adopted.

Constitution and Bylaws

The MDA Bylaws may be amended at any official meeting of the House by a two thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the delegates present and voting, provided that the membership is notified via print and electronic communications that there will be Bylaws amendments and that the actual amendments will be posted on the MDA Web site at least forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting. Any member of the MDA, upon request, will be forwarded the entire amendment(s).

The MDA Bylaws may be amended at any meeting by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the delegates present and voting, provided the proposed amendments have been presented at a previous meeting of the same session of the House.

When an action has been taken that required previous notice, any motion that would void or change that action also requires previous notice.

Since the right to receive notice is a basic individual right of membership in a deliberative assembly, the requirement for previous notice can be waived only by a unanimous vote.

New Business

Introducing New Business (1st House Meeting): Resolutions may be presented from the floor of the House. To initiate a resolution from the floor, print the resolution on the House of Delegates Resolution Amendment Form (a copy of this form is shown in the Appendix). Take your resolution to the staff typist at the front of the House floor who will transmit it to the secretary. New resolutions should be presented as early on as possible during the first House meeting so that the Secretary can make copies available to delegates.

Introducing New Business (2nd House Meeting): Resolutions proposed as new business at the last meeting of the House may be introduced only by unanimous vote of the delegates. To present a resolution as new business, type or print your resolution on the Resolution Amendment Form and take it to the staff typist who will transmit it to the speaker for House action. Since obtaining unanimous consent to consider new business can be difficult, it is best to submit new resolutions at the first House meeting.
Dues and Assessments

The proposal for an assessment or a change in dues must be presented, in writing, to the delegates and the general membership by a direct mailing, or by publication in the Journal of this Association, at least forty-five (45) days prior to the annual session.

XVII. Actions of the House of Delegates

Once taken, the actions of this House of Delegates are no longer the opinions, wishes, suggestions, or recommendations of any individual, committee, or officer, but are now the actions of the entire House of Delegates, and as this House of Delegates is authorized under the Association Bylaws to act for the entire Association, they are the actions of the entire Association. It is incumbent on every member of this Association to accept the actions of this House of Delegates, as the actions of the Michigan Dental Association.
Acknowledgement

The Speaker of the House of Delegates acknowledges the assistance of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons in developing this booklet, as well as the American Dental Association, which has been customized to incorporate the rules and procedures of the Michigan Dental Association House of Delegates.
The Life of a Resolution
How the Michigan Dental Association Policy is Formulated