

Tips for **Leading** an **Effective Meeting**



1. Become familiar with the rules for your organization's meetings. Review the by-laws.
2. Know how to use the gavel.
 - 1 tap** = sit down if standing; after the announcement of a vote; when the meeting is adjourned
 - 2 taps** = call the meeting to order
 - 3 taps** = members stand on third tap
 - Series of taps** = restore order
3. Give all members an opportunity to be heard.
4. Maintain control; keep discussion to one topic at a time.
5. Know the following types of motions:
 - **Main motion:** brings business before the assembly
 - **Subsidiary motions:** assist the assembly in treating or disposing of a main motion (e.g., amendment, lay on the table, postpone definitely, postpone indefinitely, refer to committee, previous question)
 - Previous question is a motion to stop debate and is appropriate when the floor is available. It is not debatable and requires a two-thirds vote. If passed, immediately vote on the main motion.
 - **Privileged motions:** do not relate to the pending motion but to special matters of immediate importance (e.g., motion to adjourn)
 - **Incidental motions:** help group handle some aspect of the meeting (e.g., point of order, withdraw a motion)
6. Repeat the motion on the floor frequently so the membership understands what is being discussed and the meaning of the vote.
7. A simple majority vote is usually needed for approval. However, two-thirds majority vote is needed when the action limits the opportunity for debate, sets aside or changes the rules, or involves changing the constitution or bylaws.



Tips for Participating in Effective Meetings

1. Become familiar with the use of the gavel.
2. Obtain the floor before speaking on a topic.
 - Stand or raise your hand.
 - Address the chair appropriately (e.g., Madam President, Mr. Chairman).
3. Bring motions to the assembly in the appropriate form; say, “I move ... ”
4. Keep discussion to one topic at a time.
5. Be courteous; do not interrupt others while they have the floor.
6. Speak slowly, clearly and loud enough so all can hear what you have to say.
7. Use the appropriate motions:
 - **Amendment** – appropriate to improve/change a motion on the floor by adding, striking out or changing words – be specific
 - **Table a motion** – most appropriate when the intent is to bring the motion back to the assembly in the same meeting
 - **Postpone definitely** – appropriate when the intent is to take up the motion at a later meeting
 - **Postpone indefinitely** – this ends consideration of a motion because it has no direction on when the motion should be considered
 - **Refer to committee** – appropriate when additional information is needed and the issue may be best handled by a smaller group
 - **Previous question** – appropriate when debate has been going on and a vote is needed
 - **Motion to adjourn** – appropriate for closing the meeting; not needed if all business has been completed