

# call to order

## *The Motion to Amend*

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Very often members find the need to revise the motion once it is introduced and debated, especially the motions that are complex and controversial. The motion to change the wording, and with some limits the meaning of the main motion, is called the motion to *Amend*. It is the most used of all the motions that affect or dispose of the main motion.

The adoption of the subsidiary motion to *Amend* does not adopt the main motion. The main motion is still pending as modified. If the motion to *Amend* is rejected, the main motion is pending in its original form.

The motion to *Amend* takes precedent over the main motion and the motion to *Postpone Indefinitely*. The motion to *Amend* also

1. Can be applied to itself;
2. Is out of order when another has the floor;
3. Must be seconded;
4. Is generally amendable;
5. Requires a majority vote;
6. Can be reconsidered;
7. And, is generally debatable.

The motion to *Amend* is debatable when the motion to be amended is debatable; however, debate must be limited to the merits of the amendment and must not extend into the merits of the motion to be amended. If the motion to

be amended is not debatable, the amendment is also not debatable.

There are two types of amendments – primary and secondary amendments. The primary amendment applies directly to the pending question. The secondary amendment applies to the primary amendment. A primary amendment must be germane to the main motion to be in order. A secondary amendment must be germane to the primary amendment, not just to the motion the primary amendment attempts to amend. No more than one primary amendment or one secondary amendment are allowed at one time, therefore the secondary amendment is not amendable.

An amendment must always be germane, meaning that it must be closely related to or have bearing to the subject matter to be amended. When the presiding officer is in doubt of whether an amendment is germane, the amendment should be allowed.

If the main motion is to purchase five new squad cars, an amendment to strike out “squad cars” and add “snow plow trucks” is out of order. This action would completely change the meaning of the motion. Further, a motion to add “not” between “to purchase” is also out of order, since the same can be accomplished by defeating the main motion.

*continues*

*As always, keep the discussion friendly and read ‘Call to Order’ to avoid mistakes!*

However, if the body has a motion to support a particular assembly bill, an amendment to strikeout “support” and add “oppose” is in order because the body is expressing an opinion.

Amendments are made by adding or striking words or a combination of both. If the amendment involves significant change such as, adding and striking out words and paragraphs, it is referred to as a motion to *Substitute*. The motion to *Substitute* is a primary amendment and can only be offered when no other amendment is pending. Remember, if the primary amendment to *Substitute* is adopted then the main motion as amended is still pending subject to more amendments or a vote.

Sometimes a member will propose a very simple amendment and ask, “Will the maker of the motion accept a *friendly amendment*?” The presiding officer will then ask the maker and the second of the motion if they will accept the amendment. There is no such thing as a friendly amendment. The amendment must be treated as any other motion. However, if the presiding officer believes that everyone is supportive, then it can be adopted by unanimous consent.

As always, keep the discussion friendly and read *Call to Order* to avoid mistakes!

*Source: Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 11th Edition*



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