



# MELD

The Grand Lodge of Georgia  
Free and Accepted Masons

Masonic Education  
&  
Leadership Development

Rules  
of  
Order

## **Contents**

Why “RULES OF ORDER”.....	3
ORDER OF BUSINESS.....	4
What Is A Motion?.....	6
How Are Motions Classified?.....	6
Incidental Motions .....	7
How Should A Motion Progress?.....	7
How May A Motion Be Amended?.....	9
Types Of Amendments.....	9
Types of Motions	
Motion, Main.....	12
Motion for consideration.....	12
Motion, Privileged .....	12
Motion, Subsidiary .....	12
Object to Consideration .....	12
Order .....	12
Order, General .....	12
Conclusions.....	14
Principles are more important than rules.....	14
Courtesy and tact accomplish more than authority.....	15
Chart I: Precedence of Motions.....	17
Chart II: Proper presentation of Motions.....	18

# **An Outline of Rules of Order (Parliamentary Procedure)**

for use in

## **Georgia Masonic Lodges**

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Over the years certain procedures, known as Rules of Order, have been developed to govern the making of group decisions in an orderly fashion. Often known as "Parliamentary Procedure" (and many times governed by a specific set of rules known and published as "Robert's Rules of Order"), usual rules of order are, in many details, inapplicable to Masonic Lodges, which have developed a special set of rules to govern business procedures within themselves.

The rules of order for the Grand Lodge of Georgia, as outlined in Chapter 3-1 of the Masonic Code of Georgia, recognize general rules of parliamentary law as used in other legislative bodies, unless they conflict with the Masonic Code or Masonic usage. However, the Grand Lodge rules of order are not necessarily applicable in the individual subordinate lodge. There are no specific Code chapters or sections that outline the Rules of Order the individual Lodges must follow. Usually 'custom', or 'rules of order' within the individual Masonic Lodges<sup>2</sup>, governs their parliamentary procedures. While often followed in general, "Rules of Order" are actually the Master's 'will and pleasure'<sup>3</sup> and "should never be introduced where they, in any way, interfere with the established customs or Landmarks of Freemasonry, or with the high prerogatives of the Master."<sup>4</sup>

In a secular body, the presiding officer is subject to the dictates of the organization and may be removed by it...The Master of a Lodge is not controlled by the Lodge and can only be removed by the Grand Master<sup>5</sup>. In a secular body the presiding officer's decision can be overturned by the body itself...The Master's Decision in a Masonic Lodge can only be appealed to the Grand Master or the Grand Lodge<sup>6</sup>. The Presiding officer of a secular body is supposed to conduct its meetings according to the "Rules of Order"...The Master of a Masonic Lodge is totally responsible to the Grand Lodge, The Grand Master and the fraternity in general for all that his Lodge does and, as such, is clothed with all the authority needed to exercise full control<sup>7</sup>.

But, just as the Masonic Lodge is sometimes said to represent King Solomon's Temple and the Master is said to represent King Solomon; so must the good Master exercise the wisdom of Solomon in his governing of the Craft. He must be careful not to either over-exercise his authority or fail to exercise it; for either way he will drive his members away from the meetings.

## **Why “RULES OF ORDER”**

The term “Rules of Order” is more descriptive, less intimidating and frightening, and more applicable to a Masonic Lodge than the term “parliamentary procedure”. Simply stated, rules of order are a set of guidelines based on common sense and courtesy, which enable a group to make decisions in an orderly manner. Masonically they have a fourfold purpose:

- (1) to protect the authority of the Master and customs of the Craft;
- (2) to enable the Lodge to transact business with speed and efficiency;
- (3) to preserve the spirit of peace and harmony; and
- (4) to protect the individual rights of each member of the Craft.

Fair play, courtesy and justice are the keys to all rules of order and they must be generally known and adhered to by all. They cannot simply be created or “made up” to suit the whims of the Master. The Master is responsible to set the example and keep all others “in line”. A contradiction you say – rules and flexibility? Look at the basic principles that our ‘Rules of Order’ are intended to do:

1. The will of the majority must be carried out; the rights of the minority must be protected; the prerogatives and responsibilities of the Master and the customs of the Craft must be preserved.
2. Each Brother has rights and obligations equal to those of every other member, subject only the responsibilities of the Master and the traditions of the Fraternity.
3. Each question or proposition presented is entitled to full and free debate if peace and harmony prevail among the Craft and debate does not degenerate into argument.
4. Only one subject may claim the attention of the Lodge at any one time.
5. Brothers have the right to ask for information or instruction in using the procedure (point of parliamentary inquiry).
6. Certain motions take precedence over (may interrupt) other motions.
7. The personalities and desires of each Brother must be merged into the larger unit of the Lodge.

Just as our Fraternity has a vocabulary of its own that must be known to fully understand what we are saying (i.e., such words as Communication, Work, Refreshment,

Wages, etc.), so too does a special vocabulary exist for discussion of Rules of Order. A brief glossary of such common terms applicable to Lodges is included at the end of this discussion.

Certain usually acceptable practices in common Rules of Order are totally inapplicable in a Masonic Lodge, including, among others, the following:

- (a) A motion "*for the previous question*" (to end debate and vote immediately): although the "Lodge is not a place for round-table discussion. Debate should be used only as a means to clarify the question"<sup>9</sup>, each Brother is entitled to speak on the subject and the time of putting a question to the Lodge for a vote lies solely within the Master's discretion<sup>10</sup>.
- (b) A motion to "*lay on the table*" or "*take from the table*"; "*close, limit, or extend debate*"; "*postpone indefinitely or definitely*"; "*object to consideration*"; "*refer to a committee*"; or "*calling for a point of Order*" may, depending on the circumstances, infringe upon the authority and duty of the Master who must control the subject matter to be considered by his Lodge, the debate and/or when a question is ready for vote<sup>11</sup>.
- (c) A motion to "*recess or adjourn*": as it is totally within the Master's discretion to close his Lodge whenever he deems it necessary or proper, and no action of the Craft can control this prerogative. A Lodge is never "recessed" or "adjourned" – it is placed "at refreshment" or "closed"<sup>12</sup>.
- (d) A motion to "*appeal the decision of the chair*": The only appeal from the decision of a Worshipful Master is to the Grand Master or Grand Lodge<sup>13</sup>.
- (e) A motion to "*suspend the rules or to refer to a committee of the whole*": A Masonic Lodge can neither suspend its by-laws nor force the Master to assume the job of a committee chairman and avoid his authority, or abrogate the Master's sole authority to appoint members of committees<sup>14</sup>. The Master has full control of opening, debate within, work, acts and closing of his Lodge and any rule of order that might interfere with that control simply does not apply<sup>15</sup>.

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

Rules of Order help ensure that the order is maintained in transaction of a Lodge's business. The first step a Master must take in maintaining order is to have a specific plan for each individual Communication or meeting. This means that both a general and specific list of the business to be considered must be developed in advance. Many Lodges specify a general order of business in their by-laws. Even so, the Master must remember

that he is "in charge" and should have his own written 'Order of Business' prepared for each meeting. Although the business of a stated communication should contain many different items, after the ritualistic opening and before closing, the particular order of business is not as critical as having a set order that is known to all present.

Certain general rules should be observed during the transaction of business, such as:

No alarms should be attended to at the door, nor members or visitors admitted while the Lodge is opening or closing, or during the reading of the minutes or conferring a degree<sup>16</sup>.

After business has begun, it is not proper for the Junior Deacon to interrupt the Master but he should report to the Senior Warden. Members may, if necessary, enter or retire by direction of the Senior Warden who is to help the Worshipful Master in governing the Lodge.

All votes (except the election of candidates, members, or officers, or the granting of proficiency, advancement, transfers or demits, or the acceptance of charges) should be taken by a show of hands<sup>17</sup>.

Minutes are "confirmed" by the Master after he is satisfied they are correct (Minutes are not "approved" by a vote of the membership)<sup>18</sup>; and no Lodge can be reduced into a "Committee of the Whole"<sup>19</sup>.

An example of an order of business for a Lodge might be as follows (some language governed by ritual):

**Ritualistic Opening** – proficiently.

**Reading and Confirming of Minutes** – of last regular and all intervening communications. After the minutes of the last regular communication, begin with the oldest and work to the most recent – individually, so that each set of minutes is confirmed on its own merits. The Master satisfies himself that the minutes are correct by asking if the Wardens or any Brother about the Lodge knows of any errors or omissions. Hearing none, he declares those minutes confirmed as read. If errors or omissions are noted and the Master is satisfied that they should be included in the minutes, he directs they be included and declares the minutes confirmed as corrected. A motion that the minutes be approved (or rejected or corrected) is out of order.

**Introduction and Welcoming of Visitors** – Introductions by the Master or another Brother appointed for that purpose (such as the Senior Deacon), giving the visitor's name, rank, his Lodge's name, number and location. Although the manner of introduction is at the prerogative of the Worshipful Master, who may have the visitors introduce themselves, it is suggested that such practice be avoided and the visitor not be asked to introduce himself; the Master should welcome the visitors.

**Reception of Petitions** – Petitions for the degrees, affiliation, reinstatement, etc. After reading, committee(s) should be immediately appointed.

**Second Reading of Petitions and Balloting** – any petitions for which a committee report has been received. Balloting follows Masonic Ritual.

**Reports of Committees (in writing)** – request all reports, at least all final reports, to be in writing. “Brother have you a report from the Committee?” After the report, open the floor for discussion and motions for any appropriate action. It is noted that many progress reports may be made verbally, however, this should be at the prerogative of the Worshipful Master.

**Applications for Relief** – “Brother Secretary, are there any applications for relief?”...“Any about the Lodge?” Take any appropriate action. It is noted that often this action is included under the topic “Sick and Distressed”.

**Reading of Communications** – “Brother Secretary, are there any communications to be read?” At this time the Worshipful Master may also call for any bills to be read to the Lodge. This may be an appropriate time to dispose of the subject matters of the communications (letters, notices, etc.) and bills.

**Unfinished Business** – “We now come to unfinished business. The first item of unfinished business is `\*\*\*\*` ‘...The second item of unfinished business is `\*\*\*\*` `” etc. “Is there any other unfinished business to come before the Lodge?” \*

**New Business** – “Next, we will consider new business. The first item is `\*\*\*\*` `” etc. “Is there any other new business to come before the Lodge?”

\* **NOTE:** The Master should control (with wisdom) the business presented to the Lodge and, preferably, be informed before any matter is presented.

**Business for the Good of the Order** – “Has anyone any business for the good of the Order?” (Announcements, thanks, remarks, sick reports, etc.).

**Work and Lectures** – To be done as prescribed in the ritual or, if none, this is the appropriate place for the Masonic Education program.

**Ritualistic Closing** – never “recessed” or “adjourned”. A motion to adjourn or close is out-of-order.

## ***What Is A Motion?***<sup>20</sup>

A motion is a proposal that the Lodge take certain action.

## ***How Are Motions Classified?***

**Main Motions** – Motions of this group have for their object the bringing of questions, or propositions, before the Lodge for consideration. Only one main motion can be considered at a given time by the Lodge and such a motion, when introduced, excludes all other main motions being brought, until it has been disposed of.

**Subsidiary Motions** – Motions of this group have for their object the modification or disposition of the main motion that is being considered. Their existence as motions depends entirely upon the main motion to which they are subordinate. Since they relate to the questions before the Lodge, it is “in order” to propose them when a main motion is still before the Lodge and to vote upon them before voting upon the main motion.

**Incidental Motions** – *Motions of this group have few general characteristics in common but for convenience have been grouped into one class. The name “incidental” has been chosen because they arise only incidentally out of the business of the Lodge.*

**Privileged Motions** – Motions of this group have no connection at all with the main motion before the Lodge but are motions of such importance that they are entitled to immediate consideration. These motions have the privilege of temporarily setting aside the main business before the Lodge.

See, Chart I for the precedence of motions and a summary of rules governing them; see also the definitions in the Glossary and Chart II.

### ***How Should A Motion Progress?***

**(1) A member rises, salutes and addresses the Worshipful Master.**

The Master should be addressed by title: “Worshipful Master” or “Worshipful Sir”, not just “Worshipful”. It is not correct to use the term “Mr. Chairman” in a Masonic Lodge.

**(2) The Master recognizes the member.** The master recognizes a member by name: “Brother \_\_\_\_\_”. Having thus received formal recognition from the Master, a member is said to “have the floor” and is the only member entitled to present a motion.

**(3) The member proposes a motion.** A motion is always introduced in the form: “I move that...” followed by a statement of the proposal. This is the only correct wording. All discussion must wait until after the Master has stated the motion to the Lodge and has called for discussion.

**(4) Another member seconds the motion.** Another member, who also rises and salutes the Master, may say, “I second the motion.” Seconding a motion is merely an indication that the member seconding it wishes the matter to come before the Lodge for consideration. If none seconds the motion, the Master may ask, “is there a second to the motion?” If none, he may declare, “the motion is lost for want of a second.”; or he may state the motion and call for discussion. The Master does not have to require a second to a motion to have the lodge consider it but it is very advisable. In fact, the Master does not even have to have a motion to have the Lodge consider a matter; he can simply put a question for discussion and vote, however, this is ill-advised.



**(5) The Master states the motion to the Lodge.** When a motion has been properly proposed and seconded, the Master repeats the motion to the Lodge. After it has been formally stated to the Lodge, it may be spoken of as a "question," a "proposition," or a "measure."

**(6) The Lodge discusses or debates the motion.** After the motion has been formally stated by the Master, he should first call upon the Brother who made the motion to speak to (discuss) the proposition first; after which any member has a right to discuss it. He must first obtain the floor in the same manner as when presenting a motion. Normally the first person who asks recognition is entitled to speak, but when several members wish to speak or present motions simultaneously, certain principles should guide the decision of the Master.

1. A Brother who has not spoken has prior claim over one who has already discussed the question.
2. If the Master knows the opinions of the various members regarding the measure before the Lodge, he should alternate between those favoring the measure and those opposing it.
3. The Master should recognize a Brother who seldom speaks in preference to one who frequently claims the attention of the Lodge. Discussion must be confined to the question that is "before the Lodge."
4. If the discussion of a Brother becomes inappropriate, or is the discussion in general degenerates into argument, the master should close or limit the debate (after a reasonable attempt is made to control the problem).

**(7) The Master takes the vote on the motion.** When all members who desire to discuss the question have done so, the Master "puts the motion to a vote." The Master may, before taking the vote, ask, "Is there any further discussion?" or "Are you ready for the question?" If none rises, the Master presumes discussion is closed. He proceeds to take the vote by announcing, "All favoring the motion (re-state the motion) signify by the Masonic voting sign." Following response from the Lodge, the Master then says, "Those opposed signify by the same sign." Certain motions must be voted on by ballot, but these are not normally ones on which discussion is allowed (ie, petitions for degrees, etc.).

**(8) The Master announces the result of the vote.** The master formally announces the result of the vote, saying "The motion is carried; therefore (state the intent of the motion)." If a majority voted in the negative or in case of a tie, "The motion is lost." After the Master has announced the result of the vote, another motion is in order. Note: The Master is not deprived of his vote. He may vote with everyone else, or he may refrain from voting if he chooses, or he may cast his vote to make or break a tie that will either defeat or carry the motion.

### ***How May A Motion Be Amended?***

The purpose of a motion to amend is to modify a motion that has already been presented.

There are three methods of amending:

- 1. By addition or insertion** – To add something to the motion that it did not previously contain.
- 2. By elimination or by striking out** – To subtract or eliminate something from a motion that was originally a part of it.
- 3. By Substitution** – This method is a combination of the first two methods, since in amending by substitution something is stricken out and something is inserted in its place. The substituted portion may consist of a word, phrase, clause or an entirely new motion.

The most important principle to understand is that an amendment must be germane. By 'germane' is meant having direct bearing upon the subject matter of the motion; that is, relevant or relating to it. An amendment may be opposed to the actual intent of the original motion and, in fact, nullify it, but if it relates to the same subject matter, it is germane.

### ***Types Of Amendments***

**Amendment of the First Rank** – An amendment to a motion.

**Amendment of the Second Rank** – An amendment to the amendment. The amendment to the amendment must modify and relate directly to the amendment and not just to the main motion, otherwise it is "out of order."

**No amendment beyond that of second rank is possible.** It is never in order to consider more than one amendment of each rank at any one time. If one desires to amend

two separate and unrelated parts of a motion, this must be done by two amendments of the first rank, and one must be voted upon before the other is proposed.

It is possible, however, to have a motion, one (First Rank) amendment to the motion and one (Second Rank) amendment to the amendment before the Lodge at the same time. Until the amendment of the second rank has been voted upon, no other amendment of the second rank is in order. Until the amendment of the first rank has been voted upon, no other amendment of the first rank can be proposed.

**Order Of Voting** – Amendments are voted upon in reverse order; that is, the one of the second rank is disposed of first.

1. Discussion is called for and the vote taken upon the amendment to the amendment (amendment of second rank).
2. Discussion is called for and the vote is taken upon the amendment to the motion (amendment of first rank).
3. Discussion upon the original or main motion (as amended) is called for and the vote taken upon the main motion.

## ***GLOSSARY OF STANDARD TERMS OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE*** <sup>21</sup>

***Amend*** To change a motion, either by adding to it, taking from it, or altering it in another way.

***Blanks, Filling*** “Filling Blanks” is a term used to indicate a method of decision regarding a matter where several different courses of action are possible. The term “blank” is used because; usually this method is applied in motions where an exact amount, a name, date or another essential, specific information is not available at the time a t motion is made.

***Business, Order of*** The regular program of procedure of a society, set by the by-laws and or Master in a Masonic Lodge.

***Chair*** The Worshipful Master. “addressing the Chair” means speaking to the Worshipful Master, Master pro tem, or other presiding officer. This is done by; rising to one’s feet when no one else is speaking (with some exceptions), saluting, and saying “Worshipful Master.” Being “recognized by the chair” means being given permission to speak further. (See: How Should a Motion Progress?)

***Chair, Power of*** The Master has the following parliamentary authority:

- (a) He may decide in what order speakers shall be recognized.

- (b) He may refuse to recognize members offering dilatory, absurd or frivolous motions or motions intended, in his judgment, to obstruct business or motions that would be harmful to the peace and harmony of the Craft.
- (c) He may restrain speakers within time limits or to preserve peace and harmony.
- (d) He may enforce good decorum.
- (e) He appoints committees.
- (f) He may decide points of order.
- (g) He may vote with the group or vote after the other votes are counted to make or break a tie. He may even refrain from voting and he usually does so when it is apparent that his vote would not change the results
- (h) He should avoid influencing a vote by his own comments.

**REMEMBER:** Actions of the Worshipful Master are subject to appeal to the Grand Master or Grand Lodge only.

**Committee of the Whole** \_Not applicable in a Masonic Lodge. Because of its nature it removes certain authority of the Master.

**Consideration, Informal** Not applicable in a Masonic Lodge. The Master should control all discussion.

**Debate** Discussion or argument over a motion.

**Division of the House** A method of voting by which the members are actually counted as they vote, usually by rising or by a show of hands.

**Division of Question** To separate a motion so that different parts of it may be considered individually.

**Floor** The privilege of speaking before the Lodge. Thus, when one has the "floor", he is granted an opportunity to speak.

**Inquiry, Parliamentary** A question directed to the Master by a member in order to determine the effect of any action under consideration or the proper course of procedure.

**Motion** A formal proposal to the Lodge that it take certain action.

**Motion, Incidental** An incidental motion is one growing out of another already under consideration, which second motion must be disposed of before returning to the original motion. (See: Chart I)

**Motion, Main** A main motion is one that independently presents an idea for consideration.

**Motion, Privileged** A privileged motion is one that is so vital in character that it takes precedence over all others. (See: Privilege below and Chart I).

**Motion, Subsidiary** A subsidiary motion is one growing out of and applied to another already under consideration. It is used to enable the Lodge to dispose of the main motion in the most appropriate manner.

**Object to Consideration** Not applicable in a Masonic Lodge; The Master alone, has the authority to suppress trivial, irrelevant, or any inappropriate motion.

**Order** When this term is applied to an act of a Lodge, it means an expression of a will of the Lodge in the form of a command. An "order" differs from a "resolution" in that the latter is not a command but a declaration of fact or an expression of opinion or purpose.

**Order, General** Making a "General Order" is setting a future time for the discussion of a special matter. (See note at the end of this section.)

**Order of the Day** Regular order or 'program' of business. A motion calling for the "Orders of the Day" is a motion demanding that the present discussion be dropped and that the Master announce the next matter to be taken up according to the Lodge's customary and established business routine. The term "Orders of the Day" has more specific meaning when a certain time has been set aside for the consideration of a given matter. Then a demand for the "Orders of the Day" is a request that this specific item be taken up at the time set for it. (See note at the end of this section.)

**Postponement, Indefinite** This term is clear in the ordinary meaning of the words included in it, except that the object of indefinite postponement is not merely to postpone, but, in effect, to reject. (See note at the end of this section.)

**Privilege** The term "Privilege" in parliamentary law has a restricted meaning.

It refers specifically to the privileges or rights of the Lodge or those attending (chiefly concerning matters of physical comfort, inability to hear a speaker, heating, lighting and ventilation of the meeting room, noises and other disturbances, etc. and the ineligibility or misconduct of a member in meeting at the time). These "questions of privilege" should not be confused with "privileged motions". Questions of privilege may be involved in motions, but privileged motions are those having the highest order of precedence.

**Question**

The "question" in parliamentary law is the proposition or motion after it has been placed before the Lodge by the Master. To move the "previous question" is not proper in a Masonic Lodge, but in secular organizations it is to demand that the chairman take a vote on the motion that is being discussed. A "question" when adopted becomes an "order", "resolution", or "vote".

**Refer**

To refer to a committee. Only the Worshipful Master may appoint the committee.

**Resolution**

An act of the Lodge, the purpose of which is to declare facts or express opinions or purposes and not to command.

**Rules, Suspension**

Not applicable in a Masonic Lodge. The Worshipful Master should have control of Rules and may allow the Lodge to do anything that does not violate its own by-laws or the Masonic laws, customs or Ancient Landmarks.

**Second**

Usually a motion, to be considered by the Brethren, must have a "second", i.e., a second member who indicates that he wants the motion considered by saying "I second the motion." However, just as the Master can put a measure before the Lodge for discussion, consideration and vote, without a motion, he also does not have to require a motion to have a second to proceed. However, it is the better practice to have a second.

**Table**

The 'table' in parliamentary law is literally the speaker's table. To "lay on the table" or "table" a motion means to delay action on it. To "take from the table" means to bring up for consideration a motion previously "tabled". (See note at the end of this section.)

**Withdrawing a Motion**

An incidental motion that enables the proposer to remove his motion from the floor. It is in order any time before the vote is taken.

*NOTE: The above motions from which this is referenced may, under certain circumstances, be out-of-order in a Masonic Lodge if they infringe on the Master's prerogative to control the agenda.*

## **Conclusions**

### **Principles are more important than rules.**

Members of Masonic Lodges are not usually concerned about the Legal side of Rules of Order. We should realize, however, that the actions of groups such as Lodges are occasionally reviewed in the courts. Generally, with questions involving Rules of Order, a decision of a court is based on whether the principles of the Rules of Order were violated rather than whether, in a technical sense, some rule was broken.

The Rules presented here are helps, or guides, to effective group action. They are not laws. These rules are but means to an end. They may be adapted to meet the varying needs of a Lodge. The principles, however, are inherent in a combination of our democratic way of life and the responsibilities and duties that have evolved within our fraternity. They may not be compromised without impairing the character of the organization. However, it is remembered – the Master is charged with maintaining control at all times.

These principles are repeated below, not only for emphasis, but also as a final summation of all that has been said.

- 1) Majority Rule** A majority vote taken after due deliberation determines the action to be taken. Minority members, having been given equal opportunity in the discussion preceding the vote, must now accept the decision. Anything more than 50% of those voting constitutes a majority. With a tie the motion is lost. Although all present have a responsibility to vote, those who abstain from voting are not considered in determining a majority (at least one half (50%) + 1 of those members present and voting). If the Master considers a subject inappropriate for the consideration of the Lodge, he should not allow it to be brought to the floor. He should stop the debate thereon if already on the floor and he should refuse to put the question for a vote.
  
- 2) Equal Rights** All members of the Lodge have equal rights and equal responsibilities. The first and most important duty of the Master is to follow Masonic Law and maintain peace and harmony within his Lodge. Part of this should be to see that equal privileges and obligations are accorded to all Brothers.
  
- 3) Full and Free Discussion** Each Brother has the right to present his opinion fully and freely, without interference, so long as he observes the rules of decorum and so long as he stays within any time limits set by the Master. Temporary interruptions are permitted only as explained under the rules of precedence. (See: Chart I)
  
- 4) One Question at a Time** To avoid confusion, the Lodge must consider only one question at a time. When one motion takes precedence over another, consideration of the first is postponed until the second is disposed

of. The Master then takes up the motions in reverse order to that in which they were introduced. I.e., a motion to amend may interrupt a main motion. This may give way to a motion to amend the amendment. The Master must first take the vote on the amendment to the amendment; next on the amendment to the main motion (with any changes if amended) and finally to the main motion with whatever changes that might have been adopted in the amendments.

**5) Parliamentary Inquiry** Every action should be taken intelligently. This requires that members have the right to ask what would be the effect of any action under consideration. It is the duty of the Master to explain the procedure and any effects, if requested.

**6) Order of Precedence** Certain motions take precedence over (come before) others, because they are designed to facilitate full consideration of a main motion or to conserve the Lodge's time. Subsidiary motions take precedence over a main motion. Motions regarding emergencies or personal privileges are assigned an even higher order of precedence. (See: Chart I)

**7) Lodge Unity** Any action taken expresses the will of the Lodge as a whole. No individual or clique may take credit or assign blame without violating an obligation to the Lodge. Dissenters may seek to have an action reconsidered, rescinded or adjusted. If they fail in this, they must support the decision of the majority. The personality and desires of each member should be merged into the larger unit of the organization.

In the Masonic Lodge the purpose of rules of order is to insure democratic action and to preserve the customs of the Craft and integrity of the office of the Master. A few individuals would employ the Rules to obstruct democratic action and get personal advantage, while other well-intentioned members are too rule-conscious. Don't let the use of Rules make it more difficult for others to participate. Courtesy, justice and a sense of fair play should characterize every group action. The Master is the final authority within his Lodge and should not only govern with wisdom and equality, but also, with firmness.

**Courtesy and tact accomplish more than authority.**

The skillful Master does not censor a Brother for breaking a rule; nor does he make a point of instructing the "erring" Brother. He will, however, help the Brother make his contribution according to the Rules. In any well-run meeting it is easy for the beginner to contribute. Attention is focused on the contribution, not the form.

The Tactful, group-minded Brother will use the "I rise to a point of order" technique, sparingly. The danger of making oneself obnoxious by too frequent insistence on Rules is so obvious as to need no further consideration here. Used properly, the Rules promote orderly conduct of business. When they are misused. Participation becomes a sort of game or contest.



## FOOTNOTES:

- 1 Masonic Code of Georgia (Grand Lodge of Georgia, F.& A.M.), Section 3-110
- 2 Officers Manual (Grand Lodge of Virginia, A.F. & A.M.) p.57
- 3 The Art of Presiding (Short Talk Bulletin, Masonic Service Association)
- 4 "Application of Parliamentary Law to the Government of Masonic Bodies", Quarterly Review of Freemasonry, Vol.I, p.325  
Jurisprudence of Freemasonry (Mackey) p.277
- 5 Masonic Code of Georgia, Section 25-112
- 6 Masonic Code of Georgia, Section 25-109
- 7 Masonic Code of Georgia, Section 25-108 & Chapter 25-1
- 8 Adapted from "A guide to Parliamentary Procedure" (U.Ga., Dept. of Student Activities – 1966) p.1
- 9 Officers Manual, id., p.58
- 10 Officers Manual, id., p.58 The Art of Presiding, id.; A Handbook for the York Rite Presiding Officer (GA. York Rite Educational  
and Historical Commission); The Maryland Master Mason Handbook (1976), p.168
- 11 Ibid
- 12 Masonic Code of Georgia, Section 25-109; A handbook for the York Rite Presiding Officer, id.
- 13 Masonic Code of Georgia, Section 25-109
- 14 Masonic Code of Georgia, Sections 22-105 & 23-124; The Art of Presiding, id.; Jurisprudence of Freemasonry, p.278
- 15 The Maryland Master Mason Handbook, id., p.168
- 16 Jurisprudence of Freemasonry, id., p.278
- 17 Masonic Code of Georgia, Section 23-124; and Jurisprudence of Freemasonry, id., p.278
- 18 Georgia Uniform Work
- 19 Masonic Code of Georgia, Section 23-124; The Art of Presiding, id.; Jurisprudence of Freemasonry, id., p.278
- 20 Adapted from "A Guide to Parliamentary Procedure", id.
- 21 ibid.
- 22 ibid.

*This work was reviewed by the Board of Custodians of the Uniform Work of the Grand Lodge of Georgia, F.& A.M. on March 17, 1990 and changes recommended by said Board are incorporated herein.*

# Chart I Precedence of Motions Used Most Frequently\* In A Masonic Lodge

		Interrupt a Speaker	Requires a Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Required	May Be Applied to	Motions That May Apply? ***	Can Be Renewed
<b>Main Motions</b>									
1	a. General Motions	NO	YES	YES	YES a	MAJ.	NONE	ALL	NO
	b. Specific Motions								
	Take from table c	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJ.	M, Am	NONE	YES b
	Reconsider	YES	YES	YES	NO	MAJ.	M, Am	LD, T	NO
	Rescind	NO	YES	YES	NO	MAJ.	M	ALL	NO
	Create Orders c	NO	YES	YES a	YES a	MAJ.	M	Am	YES b
<b>Subsidiary Motions</b>									
2	Postpone Indefinitely c	NO	YES	YES	NO	MAJ	M	LD	NO
3	Amend	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJ	See Text	All but M	NO
4	Refer to Committee c	NO	YES	LIMITED	YES a	MAJ	M, Am	Am , LD	YES b
5	Postpone Definitely c	NO	YES	LIMITED	YES a	MAJ	M	Am , LD	YES b
6	Limit or extend debate c	NO	YES	LIMITED	YES a	2/3	All Debate	Am	YES b
7	Previous Question	<b>NOT APPLICABLE IN A MASONIC LODGE (W.M. Discretion when to put question.)</b>							
8	Table (lay on table) c	<b>NOT APPLICABLE IN A MASONIC LODGE (W.M. Discretion when to put question.)</b>							
<b>Incidental Motions</b>									
9	Suspend Rules	<b>NOT APPLICABLE IN A MASONIC LODGE (Lodge cannot suspend rules or by-laws.)</b>							
9	Withdraw a Motion	NO	NO	NO	NO	NONE	ALL	NONE	YES b
9	Object to consideration	NOT APPLICABLE IN A MASONIC LODGE (W.M. Discretion - See text.)							
9	Point of Order c	YES	NO	NO	NO	W.M.	ERRORS	NONE	NO
9	Parliamentary inquiry	YES	NO	NO	NO	NONE	ALL	NONE	NO
9	Appeal (decision of W.M.)	<b>NOT APPLICABLE IN A MASONIC LODGE (Appeal is to Grand Master or Grand Lodge.)</b>							
9	Division of the House	YES	NO	NO	NO	NONE	VOICE	NONE	NO
9	Division of a question	NO	NO	NO	NO	NONE	M, Am	NONE	NO
<b>Privileged Motions</b>									
10	Order of the Day c	YES	NO	NO	NO	NONE	NONE	NONE	NO
11	Question of Privilege	YES	NO	NO	NO	W.M.	NONE	NONE	NO
12	Recess	<b>NOT APPLICABLE IN A MASONIC LODGE (W.M. Discretion when to place at refreshment.)</b>							
13	Adjourn (unqualified)	<b>NOT APPLICABLE IN A MASONIC LODGE (W.M. Discretion when to put question.)</b>							
14	Fix time to adjourn	<b>NOT APPLICABLE IN A MASONIC LODGE (W.M. Discretion when to put question.)</b>							

Abbreviations used to conserve space are: Am = Amend, LD = Limited Debate, T = Table.

\* The order of precedence is from bottom to top. A motion takes precedence over those listed above it.

\*\* No order of precedence among themselves.

\*\*\* Withdrawl applies to any motion

a - There are some restrictions.

b - After a change in parliamentary situation

c - May be out-of-order (See Text)

# Chart II Proper method of presentation of motions before the Lodge

<u>KIND OF MOTION</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>	<u>OPENING STATEMENT</u>
Amend	To improve the motion.	I move to amend by _____
Commit or refer to a committee*	To delay action, to consider more carefully.	I move to refer the motion to a committee.
Division of the house	To determine accuracy of a voice vote and/or record individual votes.	I call for a division
Division of the question	To provide for consideration of the parts separately.	I move to divide the question into ____ (Nr.) parts
Inquiry, Parliamentary	To secure advice or information.	I rise to a point of parliamentary inquiry
Limit or extend debate*	To establish or change time limits.	I move to limit the discussion to ____? (Nr.) minutes
Order of the day*	To secure adherence to the agenda	I move the order of the day.
Orders, to create*	To establish agends; organize the work.	I move we take up _____
Point of order*	To secure adherence to parliamentary procedure.	I rise to suggest a point of order.
Postpone definitely* (to a certain time)	To delay action for further consideration.	I move to postpone to _____ (time).
Postpone indefinitely*	To supress a motion to prevent a vote.	I move to postpone indefinitely.
Privilege, To raise a question of	To correct undesirable conditions.	I rise to a point of privilege.
Reconsider (any member may move)	To reconsider a question and vote on it again.	I move to reconsider the motion to _____.
Rescind	To repeal action taken previously.	I move to rescind the motion to _____.
Table, to lay on*	To delay action; clear the floor for urgent business.	I move to table the motion.
Table, To take from the table*	To resume consideration of the question.	I move to take from the table the motion to _____.
Withdraw a motion	To enable the proposer to remove his motion.	I withdraw the motion.

*With a motion that may interrupt a speaker as shown in Chart I, the mover should rise and secure recognition from the Masdter before presenting the motion. The Master should allow interruption initially, in order to determine if mover is disiring to make a 'proper' motion. All other motions listed above are to be presented after addressing the chair and securing recognition, being careful not to interrupt a speaker.???*

**\*\* Depending upon circumstances, these motions may infringe on the Master's prerogatives and, if so, are out-of-order.**