

Local Parliamentarians

December's parli tips will cover three of the six subsidiary motions: postpone indefinitely, amend, and commit.

Postpone Indefinitely

Postpone indefinitely is used when the assembly does not want to take a direct vote on the motion. It is useful when a main motion cannot be adopted or rejected without ramifications. If adopted, the indefinitely postponed motion cannot be brought up for the remainder of the session. The great thing about this motion is it can be debated and it only requires a majority vote to adopt. The proper wording for this motion is:

Member: "I move that the resolution be postponed indefinitely."

Amend

Amend is used to modify the wording of a main motion. It is one of the most used subsidiary motions. The amendment must be germane to the main motion to be brought forward. A special rule that amend has is that "amend" can be moved on an amendment. If you like what the first amendment proposed, but you want to word it differently, you can amend the amendment. The only stipulation is that you cannot amend the amendment to the amendment: it gets too confusing. The three forms for amending a motion are: insert, strike out, and substitute. They do the things that their names imply. Insert inserts words into the motion, strike out strikes words out of a motion, and substitute substitutes words in the motion. Here are example wordings:

Member: "I move to amend the motion by striking 'Mr. Jones.'"

Member: "I move to amend the motion by inserting 'landscaped' before 'parking lot.'"

Member: "I move to amend the motion by substituting '\$100' in place of '\$1000.'"

Commit (or Refer)

Commit is used to send a motion to a committee for consideration. In some cases a motion may need extra consideration, or details need to be worked out that would take too much time in a meeting. Committees meet at a separate time to consider and perfect the motion before the assembly considers it again. To send a motion to a committee, the motion commit needs to be made. Specific details need to be included in the motion: how many members, how they are selected, and when they need to report. Here is an example:

Member: "I move to refer (or commit) the motion to a special committee of three appointed by the chair with instructions to report at the next meeting."