

BRITISH UNION CONFERENCE

RULES OF ORDER

The BUC Constitution, the *Church Manual* and Denominational working practices take precedence over the rules of order should there be any conflict.

DUTIES OF THE CHAIR

1. The chair shall preside over sessions and committee meetings in harmony with the rules of order.
2. The chair shall take up the various committee reports and items of business on the approved agenda.
3. The chair shall work for consensus in decision making by treating each side of the issue with fairness.
4. The chair may vote
 - (a) If the vote is by ballot or
 - (b) To make a tie or break a tie (if the chair has not already voted by ballot).
5. It is the duty of the chair to hold speakers to their allotted time and help move business along as expeditiously and fairly as possible.
6. The chair shall decide points of order (though the decision may be appealed by any delegate).
7. If the chairperson wishes to express personal views at length and take sides in the debate the chair should be relinquished while that issue is under consideration. This does not apply to the chair of session committees.

DUTIES OF DELEGATES AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. In view of the high privilege of serving as delegates at church sessions or as committee members, those acting in these capacities should conduct themselves with Christian decorum, realising they are doing the Lord's business, not making frivolous, irrelevant, unnecessarily time-consuming or obstructionist speeches or motions. In such cases the chair has every right to rule them out of order.
2. Delegates or committee members should not expect to speak to a motion more than once until others wishing to speak have had the opportunity to do so. (As far as this is feasible). However, the chair may give a person who has already spoken the opportunity to answer a question or clarify previous remarks.

QUORUM

At least 51% of the authorised delegates must be present to constitute a quorum for the conducting of business.

VOTING

1. Voting shall normally be by voice vote.
2. If there is no objection, the chair can declare a vote by common consent.

3. By ruling of the chair or by majority vote of the delegates present and voting, voting can be by raising of the hands, standing, secret ballot or use of electronic device.
4. The chair may ask the secretary for assistance in counting the vote and/or appoint tellers.

ELECTIONS

1. Elections shall be in harmony with the constitution and denominational practice.
2. All nominations for elective office or executive committee membership shall be made by the Nominating Committee. This precludes nominations from the floor or by any other body or person.
3. Only one name shall be presented to the floor by the Nominating committee for each position to be filled. The Nominating Committee may choose to present a series of partial reports.
4. The Nominating Committee shall meet in closed session. This does not mean that officers of higher church organisations cannot be invited to sit as counsellors to the committee.
5. Election shall be by majority vote.
6. If there is objection to a name or part of the nominating committee report, objectors may move that the report be referred back for further consideration. Public discussion of a particular name is not permitted. The motion to refer needs a second, is non-debatable and is decided by majority vote, although it is usual procedure to accept a referral.
7. A motion to refer should be based on information which the objectors may have and which could be helpful to the Nominating Committee. When referral is voted the objectors must then make known to the chair and secretary of the Nominating Committee the reasons for the objection. At the discretion of the Nominating Committee the objectors may be invited to appear before the Nominating Committee to state their objections.
8. Persistent referrals back, particularly from the same source, are inconsistent with fairness and good procedure. In such cases there is every right to refuse referral and the Nominating Committee report can then be voted upon without delay.

MOTIONS

There are basically four types of motions:

1. Main motions.
2. Privileged motions.
3. Subsidiary motions.
4. Incidental motions.

Each category has its own purposes, characteristics and order of precedence.

1. Main motion

- (a) The purpose of the main motion is to introduce and propose action regarding an item of business.
- (b) Only delegates who have the right to vote may make motions or speak to motions.
- (c) Every motion requires a second.

- (d) A majority vote is required for the motion to pass.
- (e) It may be amended by a majority vote.
- (f) A motion is not in order when another motion is being considered, unless it is a privileged, subsidiary or incidental motion.
- (g) In case of a tie vote the motion is lost.
- (h) The person who made the motion has the right to withdraw the motion and does not need the consent of the seconder.

2. **Privileged motions**

These rules recognise three kinds of privileged motions:

(a) Fixing the time of a further meeting:

- requires a second;
- cannot be debated;
- is the highest motion in rank;
- can be amended only in regard to time and place;
- requires a simple majority;
- can be reconsidered.

(b) Calling for an adjournment or recess:

- requires a second;
- cannot be debated, although the chair may provide information regarding business that needs attention;
- cannot be amended;
- requires a simple majority;
- cannot interrupt a person speaking;
- cannot be reconsidered.

(c) Questions of privilege:

A question of privilege is used to get the attention of the chair regarding a matter of business or procedure that cannot wait. They refer to the organisation of the meeting, the comfort of delegates and the conduct of delegates or others present.

- do not require a second;
- cannot be debated;
- cannot be amended;
- can interrupt a person who is speaking;
- are usually decided by determination of the chair (two delegates may appeal the chair's decision);
- can be reconsidered.

3. Subsidiary motions

These apply to a main motion and take precedence over the main motion because they need to be decided before the main motion can proceed. Privileged motions have precedence over subsidiary motions. These rules of order recognise six kinds of subsidiary motions.

(a) Motion to table:

This should be used when delegates or committee members wish to postpone to a later time consideration of an item that has been moved.

- requires a second;
- cannot be debated;
- cannot be amended;
- requires a simple majority;
- cannot be reconsidered;
- does not apply to committee reports or unfinished business.

(A motion to take from the table business previously tabled follows the same procedure).

(b) Calling the previous question:

The purpose of this motion is to stop and close debate immediately and vote on the main motion or any amendment under discussion. If previous question is ordered on an amendment, debate on the main motion continues after the vote.

- requires a second;
- cannot be debated;
- cannot be amended;
- requires a two-thirds majority.

(c) Refer to committee:

The purpose of this motion is to refer an item of business to a committee.

- requires a second;
- can be debated;
- can be amended;
- requires a simple majority;
- takes precedence, except over the motion to table or the main motion;
- can be reconsidered if the committee has not already begun its work.

(d) Amendments:

The purpose of this motion is to change or modify a main motion and therefore must be germane to the business at hand. A motion to amend (first level) may itself be amended (second level), but there cannot be a third level amendment.

- needs a second;
- can be debated;
- requires a simple majority.

(e) Postpone indefinitely:

The purpose of this motion is to suppress a motion.

- needs a second;
- is fully debatable, including both the main question and the propriety of postponing indefinitely;
- cannot be amended;
- requires a simple majority;
- applies to main motions;
- can be reconsidered.

(f) Limit or extend time for debate:

- requires a second;
- can be debated;
- can be amended;
- requires a two-thirds majority;
- can be reconsidered by moving the opposite motion.

4. Incidental motions

These rules of order recognise as incidental motions only appeals regarding points of order and division of a question.

(a) Points of Order:

- requires a second;
- generally debatable, but not when the decorum of the meeting is in question;
- cannot be amended;
- requires a simple majority;
- motions to table, privileged motions and previous question take precedence;
- can be reconsidered;
- in a question of appeal a delegate may speak only once, except by special permission of the chair, the chair has the right to present the arguments in favour of its ruling.

(b) Division of a Question:

The purpose of this motion is to divide a question having several propositions or sections into separate parts which are to be considered and voted on as distinct questions. When divided each part is voted on separately as if it had been offered alone.

- applies only to main questions and amendments;
- can be amended, but the other five kinds of subsidiary motions do not apply to the motion to divide;
- is not debatable;
- can be reconsidered.