

# NFPA Technical Meeting Convention Rules

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(Amended November 2017)

The NFPA technical meetings are an important step in developing a complete record to assist the Standards Council in determining the degree of consensus achieved. These convention rules, or any part of same, may not be suspended. The transaction of business at NFPA technical meetings shall be governed, in order of precedence, by the *Regulations Governing the Development of NFPA Standards (Regs)* (see especially Section 4.5) and these convention rules.

## 1.0 General.

### 1.1 Meeting Agenda.

(a) The secretary of the Standards Council shall, in consultation with the chair of the Standards Council, appoint at least one presiding officer and shall develop and publish in advance, an initial agenda for each NFPA technical meeting. Such agenda shall generally include those technical committee reports due for presentation to the assembly in accordance with the schedules for reporting of NFPA documents that have been approved by the Standards Council.

(b) Following the certification of motions in accordance with 2.0, the secretary shall publish an updated agenda reflecting the removal of technical committee reports from the agenda in accordance with 4.5.2.6 of the *Regs*.

**1.2 Meeting Sessions.** At the discretion of the secretary, the meeting may take place in a single session or may be divided into more than one session. All items on the agenda scheduled for consideration at a session shall be completed before the adjournment of that session.

**1.3 Distribution of Materials.** All materials distributed within the NFPA technical meeting room shall have prior approval by the secretary of the Standards Council. Only NFPA staff shall be permitted to distribute such approved materials.

**1.4 Visual Aids and Physical Simulations.** Visual aids and physical simulations of any kind are prohibited. Only verbal presentations are allowed.

**1.5 Appeal.** Decisions of the presiding officer can be appealed except as otherwise prohibited by these rules. The proper venue for appeal of these rules is by an appeal filed with the Standards Council.

## 2.0 Certification of Amending Motions.

**2.1 Appointment of a Motions Committee.** Prior to each NFPA technical meeting, a motions committee shall be constituted for the purpose of reviewing all amending motions, which have been noticed according to 4.5 of the *Regs*, and to provide such other assistance as the presiding officer(s) may request. The motions committee shall consist of a minimum of three members of the Standards Council, one of whom shall also generally be a presiding officer. Members of the committee shall be appointed by the chair of the Standards Council or designee, and may be appointed, substituted, or replaced as necessary to ensure the fulfillment of the responsibilities of the motions committee.

**2.2 Determination of Proper Motions.** As to each amending motion submitted, the motions committee shall determine whether the motion is proper, i.e., is permitted under the *Regs*, and has been submitted by a person entitled under the *Regs* to make the motion.

**2.3 Restating and Grouping of Motions.** Upon request or on its own initiative, and in consultation with the mover(s), the motions committee may: (a) restate an amending motion to facilitate the making of a proper motion or to clarify the intent of the mover; and (b) group amending motions which are dependent on one another into a single amending motion. Dependent motions are motions that the mover(s) wish to be considered by the assembly and voted on as single up or down package. In addition to the foregoing the motions committee may take such other actions or make such other recommendations as will facilitate the fair and efficient consideration of motions within the available time.

**2.4 Multiple Notices for a Single Motion.** The motions committee shall generally treat any motion that has been noticed by more than one person as a single motion. In such a case, any of the persons giving notice, or their designated representative, may make the motion, subject to the requirements of 2.7.

**2.5 Certification of Amending Motions and Motions Committee Report.** The motions committee shall certify for presentation to the assembly all proper amending motions, either as submitted or as modified pursuant to 2.3. The motions committee shall publish a report in advance of the meeting. At a minimum, the report shall set forth each certified amending motion, the person(s) authorized to make such motion, and the recommended order in which motions should be entertained. In addition, the report may include motions committee notes or comments aimed at assisting the presiding officer or facilitating the understanding of the assembly or the orderly and efficient consideration of motions.

**2.6 Permissible Amending Motions.** Only the following amending motions may be presented to the assembly: (a) certified amending motions made by authorized persons or their designated representatives; and (b) follow-up motions pursuant to 3.4.4.

**2.7 Sign-in Requirement for Certified Motions Prior to NFPA Technical Meeting.** The person(s) authorized in the motions committee report to make a certified amending motion or his or her designated representative identified in writing by the authorized maker of the motion [see *Regs* at 4.5.3.6] shall appear in person and sign in at the designated location in the meeting registration area, as soon as possible after the opening of the registration but no later than 1 hour before the beginning of the NFPA technical meeting at which a certified amending motion is scheduled for consideration. Any motion, as to which an authorized maker of the motion or designated representative has not signed in, may not be considered by the assembly as a certified amending motion. A final list of certified amending motions shall be created reflecting the remaining certified amending motions for consideration of the assembly. At the discretion of the presiding officer or his or her designee, the sign-in requirement may be waived or the failure to sign-in may be excused.

### 3.0 Conduct of the Session.

**3.1 General.** In conducting the session, the presiding officer shall have discretion to manage the session so as to maintain an orderly debate and maximize broad participation within the available time limits. Where these rules do not govern, *Robert's Rules of Order* shall serve as a guide but are not binding on the presiding officer in conducting the session.

**3.2 Call for Orders of the Day.** Any change to the published agenda is to be announced by the presiding officer at the commencement of the session. This announcement shall include notice to the meeting of any reports that have, by reason of the failure of any person authorized to make a certified motion to sign in pursuant to 2.7 of the convention rules, been forwarded directly to the Standards Council for action.

**3.3 Voting on Motions.** Except as otherwise provided in these rules, the vote on motions shall be taken by electronic means unless the presiding officer determines otherwise. No proxy voting is permitted.

### 3.4 Technical Committee Reports and Amending Motions.

**3.4.1 General.** Subject to the broad discretion of the presiding officer, the presentation of technical committee reports and the making of and debate on amending motions related to each such report shall generally be conducted according to this section.

**3.4.2 Presentation of Technical Committee Reports.** All technical committee reports presented to the assembly shall have been placed on the agenda in advance of the meeting in accordance with 1.1. Each technical committee report on the agenda shall be presented by the presiding officer to the assembly for the making of amending motions in accordance with these convention rules. Following the conclusion of the presentation of amending motions, the report shall be deemed to have been adopted or returned by the assembly as reflected in its actions on the amending motions.

**3.4.3 Consideration of Certified Motions.** Following the presentation of each technical committee report, the presiding officer shall open the floor to related motions from the final list of certified amending motions, which, subject to the discretion of the presiding officer, shall generally be entertained in the order in which they appear on the list. A certified amending motion shall require one seconder.

**3.4.4 Follow-Up Amending Motions.** Upon completion of action on all certified motions related to an NFPA document, the presiding officer shall entertain any follow-up motions. A follow-up motion is a motion that becomes necessary as a result of a previous successful amending motion. A motion to return a document or to return a portion of a document, affected by a previous successful amending motion, is always in order as a follow-up motion as long as it is not repetitious. The presiding officer shall make the determination whether a motion is a proper follow-up motion. A follow-up motion shall require two seconds.

### 3.4.5 Time to Debate Each Motion.

**3.4.5.1 Amending Motions.** Following the making and seconding of the motion, the debate shall proceed in accordance with 3.4.5.2 unless the presiding officer authorizes a different procedure in accordance with 3.4.6.

**3.4.5.2 Time Restrictions.** The maker of the motion shall have 3 minutes to speak in favor of the motion.

**3.4.5.3 Rebuttal.** Thereafter, the presiding officer shall recognize speakers alternating, to the extent practicable, between those against and those that favor the motion. Each speaker shall be limited to 3 minutes or such other time as the presiding officer, in consideration of the available time, may designate.

**3.4.6 Guidelines for the Presiding Officer.** The presiding officer shall have broad discretion in managing the debate to ensure that the issues are as fully debated as possible within the available time. Without limiting that discretion, the presiding officer should give consideration to implementing one or more of the following guidelines:

(a) The presiding officer should generally refrain from calling on the same person more than once unless it appears that no others are available to speak to a position.

(b) The maker of the motion and the presenter of the report or his designee shall generally be afforded 3 minutes each at the close of the debate for closing remarks.

(c) The presiding officer may limit or disallow debate that is repetitive or not relevant to the motion.

(d) Where appropriate, and in order to encourage debaters to coordinate their presentations or to ensure that both sides are afforded equal time without affording undue time to any one speaker, or to save time where it appears that many more wish to speak to one side of an issue than the other, the presiding officer may allocate time to each side in groups or allow a side wishing to make a presentation as a group to yield additional time to one speaker. Participants are encouraged to coordinate such requests with the presiding officer in advance of the session where appropriate.

**3.5 Parliamentary Motions and Actions.** The following shall govern the types of motions allowed:

(a) Adjournment of each session shall take place only upon completion of the scheduled agenda.

(b) Amending motions. See *Regs* at Section 4.5.3 (especially 4.5.3.4 through 4.5.3.6).

(c) Commit or Refer. Not allowed.

(d) Division of Assembly. Not allowed (for rules on voting on motions, see 3.3).

(e) Division of Question. Allowable at the discretion of the presiding officer.

(f) Lay on the Table. Not allowed.

(g) Parliamentary Inquiry or Point of Information. Allowed.

(h) Point of Order. Allowed.

(i) Postpone Definitely. Not allowed.

(j) Postpone Indefinitely. Not allowed.

(k) Previous Question. Requires a second and two-thirds vote of those present. For informational purposes prior to the vote, the presiding officer has the authority to ask if there is anyone who wishes to speak who has not spoken and who has something new to add. A successful motion of the previous question will close debate on the pending motion and bring it to an immediate vote.

(l) Question of Privilege. Ruled on by the presiding officer.

(m) Recess. A session may be recessed at any time at the discretion of the presiding officer. A motion to recess shall also be allowed at the discretion of the presiding officer.

(n) Reconsider, rescind, or amend something previously adopted. Applicable only within the period of discussion of the specific document and prior to the final vote.

(o) Suspend Rules. Not allowed.

(p) Take from the Table. Not allowed.

(q) Withdraw Motion. A motion can be withdrawn only by a majority vote of the members assembled.