

# A Guide to Primacy



How to be *effective*, *efficient* and *expressive*  
as an Assembly speaking with one voice

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## What is Primacy?

**Primacy** is the power of an Assembly to raise a Judgement for immediate scrutiny and closure.

It requires:

- ❖ One or more Members of the Synod who have not used their Judgement
- ❖ A **Greater Majority** of the relevant Assembly (more than half of the available votes of that Assembly)

If a Member can demonstrate to the Tribune there are sufficient votes present to carry a Judgement with a Greater Majority, then it can be immediately voted on and put into effect.

## Why use Primacy?

Primacy has some distinct advantages.

- ❖ The Judgement goes into effect **immediately** – this is particularly relevant for revocations, sanctions and the like
- ❖ Judgements requiring a Lesser Majority can be submitted via Primacy after 11am Sunday, where there is otherwise insufficient time for scrutiny

Otherwise, such a Judgement does not have a further reach than any other that achieves a Greater Majority.

## When can Primacy be employed?

Primacy is available **whenever the Synod is open for business** – that is 6pm–10pm Friday, 10am–2pm Saturday, 3pm–6pm Saturday, 7pm–10pm Saturday, and 10am–2pm Sunday.

**In critical situations**, with the **prior** agreement of the Tribune, it may be possible to employ Primacy outside of these times. Please raise this to the attention of the Tribune as early in the summit as is possible.

## How can Primacy be used efficiently?

It is the right and responsibility of each Assembly to judge how to use Primacy in service of their goals. However, the Tribune is pleased to offer advice on what behaviours have been shown to be useful.

It is highly advantageous for the gathered Members to **be fully aware of all Judgements** that are being raised with Primacy. Some Assemblies adopt pithy taglines for Judgements (the Freeborn Assembly once coined “*votes for boats*” to great effect), some make it clear who is raising which Judgement, and others have thoroughly discussed the Judgements in advance. This greatly improves the ability of Members to vote in line with their intentions and speeds up the process.

**Prior consultation with the Tribune** can help devise a suitable time for Primacy to be conducted. This is particularly relevant during busy periods. In addition, if staffing allows, **the Tribune may be able to send one of their number** to attend upon the Assembly at their meeting-place if pre-arranged. This allows Primacy to be conducted in the comfort of one’s own camp.

Some Assemblies choose to conduct Primacy on Sunday, being the last day of the summit. This is the busiest time for the Synod, and can lead to considerable delays as multiple Assemblies queue for their Primacy to be counted whilst the Tribune attempts to balance both their needs and those of Members coming to vote in a regular fashion. It is strongly recommended to **pursue Primacy where possible on Saturday evening** in preference to Sunday for the convenience of all. This also enables Judgements for which a Greater Majority is not present to be raised in the normal fashion.

## What other considerations exist?

It is important to note that a Judgement raised with Primacy **cannot be amended** after it has been raised.

It is perfectly permissible for some of the gathered Members to **abstain or vote against** some or all of the Judgements raised by making their intent clear to the Tribune.

A Judgement sheet must be **completed in advance** of being submitted for Primacy. Convenors, preceptors and speakers of Assemblies should be aware that they may **take multiple blank sheets from the Hub** to enable this, and all Members should be aware that sheets can even be printed and completed **before attending Anvil** to aid legibility.

Primacy often comes with an unnecessary sense of urgency. There is almost always time, even at a summit, to **gather one's thoughts** and ensure the wording of a Judgement is as one intends.

It is often impractical for larger Assemblies to pursue Primacy. The Highborn Assembly, for example, is typically the second-largest Assembly, and is not expected to ever be capable of herding its members sufficiently to gather a Greater Majority. Similarly, Primacy of the General Assembly is an almost laughable concept that is not recommended outside of the Festival of the Broken Wheel. Such Assemblies are advised to raise their Judgements in good order to enable regular voting instead.

The Tribune of the Synod can be prevailed upon in the Hub to provide further advice and guidance around the topic of Primacy. Wherever possible, talk to us in advance.