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## **Fact Sheet No. 5**

### **HOW STANDING COMMITTEES OPERATE**

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Committees examine matters referred to them by the House, and must report their findings back to the House.

After receiving First and Second Reading, a Bill is referred to a Standing or Special Committee, or to a Committee of the Whole House for consideration. It is during this third stage, the Committee Stage, that the content of a Bill is reviewed in detail.

Citizens interested in making a public presentation relating to a particular Bill referred to a Standing Committee may register on a "presenters list" by contacting the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Committees may also consider Annual Reports.

#### **HOW ARE STANDING COMMITTEES SELECTED?**

At the start of the first session of each Legislature, the House Leaders determine the proportional representation of Members by party to serve on the various Committees based on the number of seats held by each party.

#### **ARE SUBSTITUTIONS ALLOWED?**

At the start of each committee meeting, the Whip or the Whip's designate must provide in writing to the Committee Clerk the membership list of Members to serve on the committee for that particular meeting. Membership substitutions can be made during the meetings.

#### **WHO PRESIDES OVER THE MEETINGS?**

Every committee has a Chairperson. At the first meeting of a Committee or in the case of a vacancy, the first order of business is the election of a Chairperson.

#### **THE CHAIRPERSON'S ROLE**

The Chairperson maintains order and decides all questions of order, subject to an appeal to the Committee.

#### **CAN THE CHAIRPERSON VOTE?**

Only when votes are tied, can a Chairperson cast the deciding vote.

#### **MEETING LOCATION AND TIME**

Committee meetings are usually held at the Legislative Building. There have been a number of occasions in the past, however, where meetings have been held in rural areas.

#### **WHO CALLS THE MEETINGS?**

After consulting with the Opposition House Leader, the Government House Leader schedules the meetings after the Bill receives Second Reading.

## **REGISTRATION TO MAKE A PRESENTATION**

Once the Bill receives First Reading, members of the public may register to speak at Committee stage by completing the online [presenter registration form](#) on our website. Alternately, you may register by phoning the Office of the Clerk at (204) 945-3636.

When registering, you must provide your name, address and contact information. You will also be asked to indicate whether you will be speaking as a private citizen or on behalf of an organization and, if so, which organization you are representing. Only one person may register to speak on behalf of an organization and each presenter is only allowed to speak once on a given Bill.

In accordance with our Rules, registrations will not be accepted after midnight on the third evening that a Committee meets to consider a specific Bill.

## **OUT OF TOWN PRESENTERS**

Upon arrival, out of town presenters should notify the Committee Clerk or staff present that they are from out of town. The Chairperson will usually request that the Committee decide whether or not to hear from out of town presenters first.

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

There is no way of knowing how far in advance a Committee meeting will be scheduled. If presenters are registered to speak to a bill, two calendar days' notice must be given during sittings of the Legislature of the first meeting considering the Bill. Intersessionally, ten days' notice is required for the first meeting, and five days' notice for subsequent meetings.

## **CONTACTING REGISTERED PRESENTERS**

Presenters are placed on a "list of presenters," in order of registration. Once the Government House Leader has called a meeting, presenters are contacted by staff in the Office of the Clerk as soon as possible and informed of the meeting's date, time and location.

## **WHAT IF A PRESENTER IS ABSENT WHEN THEIR NAME IS CALLED AT THE MEETING?**

Except by unanimous consent, the names of absent presenters' are dropped to the end of the list. If the presenter is absent when called a second time, that name is removed from the list.

## **TIME LIMITS**

Each presenter is allowed a maximum of 10 minutes to make a presentation, and an additional 5 minutes to respond to questions from Members of the Committee. Questions are asked in a rotation and have a 30 second time limit per question. As an exception, the Chairperson may, with the unanimous consent of the Committee, allow a presenter who has spoken for 10 minutes more time to present and to respond to questions.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN MATERIALS**

Should you wish to provide supplementary information to accompany your oral presentation (optional), we request that you provide us with 20 copies of that material. Please note that it is not necessary to provide a written copy of your oral presentation.

## **CAN I SEND A WRITTEN SUBMISSION IN LIEU OF MAKING AN ORAL PRESENTATION?**

If you cannot attend the meeting you may send a written submission on the Bill using our online presenter registration form on our website: (INSERT LINK).

You may also email your submission to: [committees@leg.gov.mb.ca](mailto:committees@leg.gov.mb.ca)

### **WHAT IS A WRITTEN SUBMISSION?**

Instead of making a verbal presentation, you also have the option of providing a written submission which would be distributed to all MLAs on the Committee. The written submission will, with the agreement of the Committee, be included at the end of the Hansard transcript of the meeting. This transcript will be published in hard copy and also appear on the Legislative Assembly website (see below).

Please note, only text will be included in the Hansard transcript, any images submitted will be provided to the MLAs but not included in the transcript. Also, for written submissions there is a limit of 9,999 characters.

### **NO PRESENTATIONS AFTER MIDNIGHT**

Unless unanimous agreement is given by the committee, presentations will not be heard after midnight.

### **VIEWING PROCEEDINGS**

The public may watch the proceedings of a Committee meeting in Rooms 254 and/or 255 of the Legislative Building. Both rooms are wheelchair accessible. All Standing Committee meetings are also broadcast and are available to watch on our website: [Committee Broadcasts](#) and on our YouTube channels: [Room 255](#) and [Room 254](#).

### **NO INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS**

It has been established that unless agreed to by the Government and Opposition House Leaders, Standing Committees cannot meet to hear public presentation on legislation during the following months: January, February, June, July and August.

### **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

Presenters may access committee manuscripts on line by accessing the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba website at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html> or by viewing copies at the Legislative Library.

### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

Once a Committee considers a Bill, the Chairperson reports all findings to the House. This is followed by the Report Stage, Concurrence and Third Reading, and Royal Assent.

Please see [Fact Sheet No. 4: "How Laws are Made"](#), for further details.

### **Note:**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, presentations have been made virtually over Zoom to Standing Committees.