The Legislative Assembly *of* Manitoba

Fact Sheet No. 5
HOW STANDING COMMITTEES OPERATE

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, a Special Committee of seven Members submits a report recommending the proportional representation of Members by party to serve on the various Committees. On adoption of the Report, the Committees are established.

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 calling the Office of the Clerk (204) 945-3636.

Required registration information includes: the presenter's name, address, contact information, whether or not the presenter is a private citizen or is speaking on behalf of an organization – which organization – as well as the name and number of the 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 HIS/HER 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. 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.

20 COPIES OF WRITTEN MATERIALS
Should you wish to provide a written version to accompany your oral presentation (optional), we request that you provide us with 20 copies of that material.

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 to:

Clerk of Committees
Room 251 – 450 Broadway
Winnipeg MB
R3C 0V8

You may also fax your submission to (204) 945-0038, or send it by email to:
committees@leg.gov.mb.ca.

It should be noted that in order for a written presentation to be included in the Committee Hansard, consent from the Committee must be granted. Also, written submissions must be received before the Committee considering the Bill concludes its deliberations so that it may be provided to Committee Members.

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.

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.