The Manitoba Legislative Assembly adopted rule changes in June, 2015. Some of these changes will take effect in October 2015 while other changes will take effect after the next provincial general election.

This document provides a summary explanation of these changes. To see the complete description of these rule changes, and a discussion by MLAs regarding these changes at a meeting of the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House please go to: [http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/40th_4th/hansardpdf/rh1.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/40th_4th/hansardpdf/rh1.pdf).

**PART 1 – RULE CHANGES TAKING EFFECT ON OCTOBER 20, 2015**

1) **Routine Proceedings**

*What has changed?*

The order of Routine Proceedings has changed. Members’ Statements will now be heard before Oral Questions and Petitions will follow after Oral Questions. The new order is as follows:

- Introduction of Bills
- Committee Reports
- Tabling of Reports
- Ministerial Statements
- Members’ Statements
- Oral Questions
- Petitions
- Grievances

As a consequential rule change the rule governing Matters of Urgent Public Importance was also changed to reflect re-ordering the sequence of events in Routine Proceedings. MUPIs will now occur following Petitions.

2) **Oral Questions – Points of Order & Matters of Privilege**

*What has changed?*

Oral Questions now has a new section in the rule book. The rules in this section include:

- Points of Order and Matters of Privilege may not be raised during Oral Questions
- Time limits of 45 seconds for questions and answers (60 seconds for leaders).
- At the beginning of each Legislature the House Leaders are to establish a rotation for questioning between parties to be followed for the duration of the Legislature (unless the composition of the House changes).

3) **Matters of Privilege**

*What has changed?*

The rule relating to Matters of Privilege has been updated to reflect the prohibition on matters of privilege during Oral Questions. As well, the Matter of Privilege appendix has been deleted – with the exception of the reference to the need for a motion which has been included in the new rule 34(2) – as the references are dated and the content is more accurately represented in Manitoba Speaker’s Rulings.

4) **Electronics during Oral Questions**

*What has changed?*

Members can now use electronic devices during Oral Questions, but only in the Loges.
5) Challenges to Speaker's & Chairperson's Rulings

*What has changed?*

The ruling of the Speaker on points of order cannot be challenged. Rulings by Chairpersons in Committee of Supply and in Committee of the Whole House on points of order also cannot be challenged, but this change does not apply to Standing Committee Chairpersons, whose rulings may still be challenged.

6) Speeches

*What has changed?*

The former rule 38 – which stated that Members must not read their speeches – has been deleted to reflect the modern realities of the House.

7) Question Time during Second Reading Debates on Government Bills

*What has changed?*

There will now be provision for a question period of up to 15 minutes to be held on Government Bills after the sponsor has moved and spoken to the Second Reading motion.

During this question period:

- One question at a time may be addressed to the Minister by any Member in the following sequence:
  - first question asked by the Official Opposition critic or designate;
  - subsequent questions asked by critic(s) or designate(s) from other Recognized Opposition Parties;
  - subsequent questions asked by each Independent Member;
  - remaining questions asked by any opposition Members.
- No question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

8) Question Time during Private Members’ Bill Debates

*What has changed?*

A question period of up to 10 minutes will now be held on Private Member's Bills to allow for Members to ask questions of the Bill Sponsor. This will occur after the sponsor has moved and spoken to the Second Reading motion.

During this question period:

- questions may be addressed to the Sponsor by any Member, with the first question being asked by a Member from another party, followed by a rotation between parties;
- each Independent Member may ask one question; and
- no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

9) Rules Committee Meetings

*What has changed?*

The Standing Committee on the Rules of the House should meet at least twice every year.

10) Orders for Return and Addresses for Papers

*What has changed?*

The chapter on Orders for Return and Addresses for Papers has been deleted (along with any cross references) as these processes have not been used for decades.
PART 2 – RULE CHANGES TAKING EFFECT ON APRIL 20, 2016

1) Sessional Calendar

What has changed?
There are new rules outlining when the House can sit, and actions that must take place during the sessional year.

The new sessional calendar identifies the following House Sitting Periods:

- **November Sittings**
  The House may meet from Tuesday following the Remembrance Day week break to the first Thursday in December.

- **Spring Sittings**
  The House must begin to meet on the first Wednesday in March and may meet until the first sitting day in June.

- **Fall Sittings**
  The House may meet from the first Wednesday in October to Thursday of the week prior to the Remembrance Day Week.

There are also four Constituency Weeks when the House shall not meet:
- the week in which Remembrance Day falls if it falls on a weekday, or the week following Remembrance Day if it falls on a Saturday or Sunday;
- the week designated under The Public Schools Act as a spring break or vacation;
- the week in which May 1 falls if it falls on a weekday, or the week following May 1 if it falls on a Saturday or Sunday; and
- the week commencing on the third Monday of October.

If certain business (Specified Bills) is not finished by the time the House is to rise in June, the House can sit for an additional four sitting days to complete that business. There can also be extended sitting hours in the Fall sittings to complete consideration of certain legislation (Designated Bills).

When the House is called into session outside of these sitting periods because of an emergency or extraordinary circumstances, the government must provide a reason for the recall in the letter sent to the Speaker advising of the recall. The recalled House may meet for up to three weeks, followed by a one week recess, and then for a further three week period.

If the House Leaders agree, the House may also meet at a time other than during any of these specified sitting periods.

As part of these new Calendar provisions, there are now new categories for two types of Bills: Designated Bills and Specified Bills.

Designated Bills are Government Bills identified by the Official Opposition that will be held over from the Spring Sittings period to the Fall sittings period. The Official Opposition may designate up to five Government Bills for this purpose. If The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act is identified as a Designated Bill, it counts as two of the five bills that can be designated. If there is a second Opposition party, the division of Designated Bills is four for the Official Opposition and one for the Second Opposition Party. The Interim Appropriation Act may not be designated under this rule.

The new rules contain detailed provisions governing the passage of Designated Bills at the end of the Fall Sittings Period.

Specified Government Bills will be guaranteed passage by the end of the Spring Sitting Period, if they meet the following tests:
- First Reading must be moved no later than the twentieth sitting day after presentation of the Throne Speech;
- Second Reading must be moved no later than the fourteenth sitting day after the First Reading Completion Day; and
- The bill has not been included on the list of Designated Bills tabled by the Official Opposition.

The new rules contain detailed provisions governing the passage of Specified Bills at the end of the Spring Sittings Period.
2) Selected Private Members’ Bills

What has changed?

Government and Opposition caucuses may each select up to three Private Members’ Bills to come to a second reading vote each session.

Each Independent Member can select one of his or her Private Members' Bills to proceed to a vote each session and they will not require a seconder for their selected Bill.

3) Private Members’ Resolutions - Question Time

What has changed?

There will no longer be a process for Private Members’ Resolutions to be submitted within so many days of the Throne Speech and considered by House Leaders for prioritized status. The practice of weekly House Leader announcements of PMRs for consideration on the following week will become the only way PMRs come forward for debate.

In addition, each PMR can have an up to 10 minute question period for MLAs to ask the sponsor questions. This will occur ten minutes prior to the end of the second hour of Private Members’ Business. During this question period:

- questions may be addressed to the Sponsor by any Member, with the first question being asked by a Member from another party, followed by a rotation between parties;
- each Independent Member may ask one question; and
- no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

4) Opposition Day Motions

What has changed?

Opposition Day motions filed by 5:00 p.m. are automatically considered by the House on the next sitting day, with House Leaders to be notified about the filing. During the debate, all MLAs who wish to speak will get that chance, even if the House has to sit beyond the usual adjournment time.

5) Condolence Motions

What has changed?

There is a new section in the rule book to outline the process for consideration of Condolence motions as follows:

- Condolence motions are moved without notice during Orders of the Day.
- Condolence motions are not subject to amendments and speaking time limits do not apply.
- At the conclusion of the speeches the Speaker puts the question and asks Members to signify their approval of the motion by rising in their places for a moment of silence.
- Condolence motions will be considered during the Fall Sittings.

6) Debate on the Address in Reply to Throne Speech

What has changed?

There are now reductions in:

- the number of days of debate on the Address in Reply (from eight to six);
- the speaking times in the debate (from 30 minutes to 20 minutes); and
- the number of times the government can interrupt the debate (from three to two days).

All related votes are now held on the sixth date of debate and, regardless of other House activities, the debate on the Address in Reply must be terminated after eight sitting days.
7) Budget Speech Debate

**What has changed?**

There are now reductions in:

- the number of days of debate on the budget motion (from eight to six);
- the speaking times in the debate (from 30 minutes to 20 minutes); and
- the number of times the government can interrupt the debate (from three to two days).

Regardless of House activities, the Budget Debate must be terminated after eight sitting days.

8) Friday Supply Sittings

**What has changed?**

In order for the Committee of Supply to sit in estimates on Friday mornings, House Leaders from both sides of the House must provide written consent by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday of that week.

9) Speaking Time in Committees of the Whole House and the Committee of Supply

**What has changed?**

The speaking time limits in Committee of Supply and question and answer time during debates in Committees of the Whole House will be reduced to five minutes each.

Opening statements in Supply for Ministers and critics will remain ten minutes.

10) Questions taken under advisement during Estimates and Concurrence

**What has changed?**

There is a requirement that questions taken under advisement during Estimates and the concurrence debate in the Committee of Supply must be answered in writing within 45 days of being taken under advisement. The Clerk’s Office will develop protocols for Supply Chairs to address this, and the Research Branch will develop a system to track the questions and answers. This system will be modelled on the system used in the Manitoba Public Accounts Committee since 2010.

11) Concurrence Debate

**What has changed?**

The Premier may be called to appear in the concurrence debate for a maximum of three days.

12) Public Presentations to Standing Committees

**What has changed?**

Standing Committees hearing presenters may not sit past midnight. Previously the Chairperson had some discretion over this in certain circumstances, but now hearing presenters after midnight could only occur with the unanimous consent of the Committee.
13) Intersessional Committee Meetings

*What has changed?*

Unless all Party House Leaders agree, Standing Committees cannot meet to hear public presentations on legislation intersessionally during the following months:

- January
- February
- June
- July
- August

Also, intersessional committee meeting days will not count toward the new sitting day deadlines established for specified and designated bills (mentioned above in section 1).

14) Public Accounts Committee

*What has changed?*

The minimum number of Public Accounts Committee meetings held per calendar year is changed to nine from “six to eight”.

15) Written Questions

*What has changed?*

There is now a requirement for Written Questions to be responded to in writing within 30 days of the question appearing on the Order Paper.