

HOUSE STATE ADMINISTRATION - RULES OF PROCEDURE - 2013**I. Public Hearings on Proposed Legislation****A. Hearing Process**

1. At the time set for hearing, the Presiding Officer will recognize the sponsor of the bill who will open the presentation.
2. Proponents of the bill will present testimony.
3. Opponents of the bill will present testimony.
4. Informational witnesses will present testimony.
5. Questions will then be asked by committee members only.
6. All questions will be directed through the Presiding Officer.
7. All discussion will begin and end at the discretion of the Presiding Officer.
8. The sponsor of the bill will close the presentation.

B. Witnesses

1. All witnesses shall sign the witness sheet before presenting testimony. The Presiding Officer may ask them to spell their name at the start of testifying.
2. Proponents and opponents should try to state new points of testimony only. If they wish to agree with points already made, they should simply say that they agree.
3. Witnesses presenting testimony should remain in the room until the hearing is closed to answer any questions from committee members. If this is not possible, ask permission to leave.
4. When possible, written copies of testimony are to be submitted for the permanent committee record and to help the secretary. Any written testimony will be posted on the internet so witnesses are responsible for redacting any personal information that they do not want made public.
5. The presiding officer may announce time limits on bills with proponents and opponents having an equal amount of time. It is up to proponents and opponents to be courteous and share that time. If time runs out, a proponent or opponent may be limited to announcing their name and who they represent and whether they support or oppose the bill.

C. General

1. Everyone will act and be treated in a courteous manner.
2. The presiding officer shall maintain order within the committee room and the surrounding area during all committee meetings, including the positioning of media representatives.
3. Suggested amendments to bills should be presented to the committee in writing.
4. Cell phones must be turned off or turned to vibrate mode during committee meetings. Messages that are received while in committee, concerning business before the committee, should be disclosed by a member.
5. Testimony requiring the use of video, audio, or other equipment will be permitted at the discretion of the Presiding Officer, if arrangements are made in advance.
6. Absentee video or audio testimony is not permitted
7. Committee meetings will be broadcast live via the Internet and streaming audio. Most meetings also are televised.

II. Executive Session

- A.** Generally, executive sessions will not be held the same day as the public hearing on the bill.
- B.** Although executive sessions are open to the public, no comments may be made by anyone but committee members. On occasion, members of the public may be asked questions by committee members at the discretion of the Presiding Officer if without objection by committee members.
- C. VOTING**
 - a. Absentee voting by committee members is permitted through the use of the standard form proxy. Authorization for proxy voting must be reflected in the committee minutes and through the adoption of rules and procedures.
 - b. The vice presiding officer or minority vice presiding officer holds the forms.
 - c. Proxy voting is discouraged and meeting attendance is requested.
 - d. Pairs in standing are prohibited
- D. MOTIONS**
 - a. Motions by committee members do not require a second.
 - b. The motion to "indefinitely postpone" will not be recognized by the Presiding Officer. The proper motion is to "table" the bill.

III. Amendments

- A.** Amendments to be presented to the committee for consideration during executive session must be requested by a committee member, including amendments proposed by a sponsor.
- B.** Committee members are the only legislators who may move amendments to a bill while the bill is in the committee.
- C.** No lobbyist amendments should be directly requested of staff without a legislator's approval (signature or note). All amendments must be submitted in writing to the committee staff researcher by noon of the day prior to executive action on a bill. A simple amendment may be considered on shorter notice at the discretion of the Presiding Officer. For example, a change in a single date or number could be a simple amendment. Amendments may be requested in writing, e-mail, via a phone call, or personally. Staff will not write amendments for bills outside of this procedure.
- D.** Conceptual amendments should not be offered.
- E.** Pursuant to Article V, Section 11 of the Montana Constitution, amendments must be within the title of the bill.