

# Guidelines for Legislative Branch Committees Reentry - Phase 2

Proposed Effective Date: June 8, 2020

These guidelines are being provided to ensure a safe and orderly operation of the Legislative Branch legislative committees. This document is prepared in conjunction with a separate one for Legislative Branch staff. The phases in this document are based on the April 22, 2020, Governor's directive implementing Executive Orders 2-2020 and 3-2020 for the phased reopening of Montana and the May 19, 2020 directive on Phase 2. All provisions are subject to change if there is a spike in COVID-19 cases, emergency orders, or additional change in circumstances.

## Guidelines for Legislative Committees during the interim

Effective May 4, 2020

**FOR PHASE 1 INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETINGS (will follow for all meetings in May regardless of whether the state moves to Phase II to allow adequate notice to legislators and public).**

- **Interim committees that planned to meet in Phase 1 will meet to conduct important legislative business, including executive agency oversight, administrative rule review, and preparation for the 2021 Legislative Session. Committees should continue to study and make recommendations as outlined in interim committee workplans and revisit priorities, as needed, to address the most pressing issues.**

Interim committee meetings may be held in the Option 1 format during Phase 1. Only Option 1 will be offered in May to provide advance notice to legislators, staff, and the public.

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### Option 1: Remote Video Conferencing

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The committee and participants may meet electronically via Zoom. The meeting will be held as outlined in the *Interim Remote Video Conferencing Service for Legislative Committee Meetings Procedure*. The procedure provides guidance for video conferencing services provided by OLIS to Legislative Branch staff during the interim for Legislative Committee meetings. Participants are defined as committee members, staff, presenters, and the public, as outlined below.

- Video conferencing can be provided via remote access to Room 102 and Room 137 for remote meetings. Sound and video quality of meeting largely depends on the technical capabilities of participants and the devices and equipment they are using to connect to the meeting.
- Meetings should be broken into 2- to 3-hour blocks. Presiding officers and vice-presiding officers may hold additional meetings due to the limitations on time. However, coordination with other committees and staffers is necessary to ensure virtual rooms are not overbooked and resources are not overextended.

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- To reduce the risk of unauthorized content sharing during live remote meetings, OLIS and legislative staff will follow all security guidelines, as established in the video conferencing procedures.

**Public participation under Option 1:** This meeting is open to the public. The meeting will be streamed live on [www.leg.mt.gov](http://www.leg.mt.gov) and broadcast on the Montana Public Affairs Network (MPAN) if you wish to view only. If you want to participate, please email the committee staffer at [staffer's email] with your name and a request and you will be sent a calendar invite with instructions for joining and participating in the call by 5 p.m. the day before the call. A time will be provided for oral public comment on the agenda; at that time, members of the public who have joined may “raise their hand” and participate after being recognized by the presiding officer or the meeting host.

## Effective on June 8, 2020:

### Proposed Guidance FOR PHASE II INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Upon Reaching Phase II, Interim committee meetings may be held in the format -- Option 1 or 2 -- that best meets the needs of the committee, as determined by the presiding officer in consultation with the vice-presiding officer. Zoom meetings are strongly encouraged to save time, money, and effort. Hybrid meetings should also consider organizing shorter meetings as a courtesy to those who can only participate remotely.

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#### Option 2: In-Person Gatherings/Hybrid

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If the committee's presiding officers determine that committee members and staff will meet in the Capitol, participants must wear protective gear, which may include cloth face masks, and adhere to social distancing requirements. Participants are defined as committee members, staff, and invited presenters and stakeholders. Presenters and stakeholders are strongly encouraged to participate remotely. Requirements also may be modified, based on limitations set by the Department of Administration for use of the Capitol to maintain compliance with any directives.

If a participant is considered a vulnerable person or does not wish to attend the meeting in person, the participant will be able to participate electronically. Electronic participation in this hybrid setting with video will be subject to technological and practical limitations. Audio participation will be available if video capabilities are limited.

- All participants will be asked to perform the self-evaluation and symptom screening before entering the meeting room. [Reserve an option to contract with a health care professional to temperature check or other test.]
- Group size shall be limited to include only committee members, presenters, and staff. Rooms must be rearranged to provide for a minimum of 6-feet between committee members and staff. [Room availability may be limited.] All participants will wear cloth face masks during the

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meeting. Participants will be responsible for providing their own masks. If a participant does not have a mask, one will be issued to them upon request. If a participant declines to wear a mask they must ensure that they practice strict social distancing requirements or may be asked to leave. (This will be at presiding officer or committee member discretion, but not required.)

- The meeting room must be sanitized prior to and after the meeting, by staff who will be asked to wipe down surfaces-gloves and spray/towels/wipes will be provided. Janitorial services must be coordinated with the General Services Division in the event that a staffer is unwilling or unable to clean the surfaces. OLIS staff will clean microphones, but staff should sanitize their personal electronic equipment with appropriate tools that will be provided.
- Clean microphone protectors will be placed on each microphone prior to each meeting. If a public microphone is being used, a protocol will be in place for the speakers and presenters to be issued a clean microphone protector to be removed after use.
- Staff will not provide coffee or snacks or distribute note pads or pencils. Each member and staffer is required to take or discard their own materials after each meeting.

**Public participation under Option 2:** Due to COVID-19 public health concerns, the public is prohibited from physically attending meetings in the State Capitol Building. The meeting will be streamed live on [www.leg.mt.gov](http://www.leg.mt.gov) and broadcast on the Montana Public Affairs Network (MPAN) if you wish to view only. If you want to participate, please email the committee staffer at [staffer's email] with your name and a request, and you will be sent conference call information to participate. A time will be provided for oral public comment on the agenda. Requests for conference call participation must be received by legislative staff prior to 5 p.m. on {the day before your meeting}.

### **Proposed Guidance for interim committee meetings occurring under Phase III - dependent upon state directives and subject to further analysis and change.**

**Interim committees will meet regularly in the Capitol as outlined in workplans and schedules. If committee budgets allow, committees may hold additional meetings to study and develop materials that were not covered because of scheduling limitation from March to June. This provision is subject to change if there is a spike in COVID-19 cases, emergency orders, or additional change in circumstances.**

## **APPENDICES**

### **Sanitation Guidelines**

- Secretary and Committee staffer are asked to sanitize their personal electronic equipment (computer, keyboard) and surfaces inside the room, before and after meetings. They will be provided with instructions and sanitizing equipment.
- Speakers and invited participants or speakers attending in-person and wishing to make comment will be asked to wait in a designated location (limited number of audience

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chairs) and will be provided with their own disposable microphone cover by a legislative staffer.

- When it is time for presenter or stakeholder comment, Legislative staff will manage the speaker one at a time, speakers will be responsible for covering the microphone, speaking, uncovering their microphone, and disposing of the cover.
- At the end of the last meeting of the day or prior to the next meeting, a foam microphone cleaner will be used to sanitize each microphone cover by OLIS.

Capitol Meeting and Conference Room Status -- see attached

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