

Electronic Documents (eDOCS) for Legislators and Web Messaging from Constituents

What are eDocs? Why use eDocs?

eDocs are electronic documents that help you manage information and use less paper.

The eDocs system allows legislators to receive the following documents electronically (by email) instead of receiving hardcopies. We will send them to the email address you specify.

- Bill requester review letters and draft bills
- Preintroduction letters
- Committee meeting notices (white slips from committee secretaries)
- Phone messages (yellow slips from the Legislative Information Desk during session)
- Web messages (blue slips from the Legislative Information Desk during session)

What can I receive via eDocs?

You will receive the following documents electronically, unless you are attending in person and choose hardcopies.

1. Letters and forms related to bills and drafts (preintroduction and review). These will be PDF files attached to a message sent to you by the Legislative Services bill drafter.
2. Phone and internet form messages from constituents. These will be emails (not attachments) with all the information that is on the printed versions. The Legislative Information Office staff will send them to you.
3. Hearing notices for your bills and your committees. These will be emails (not attachments) with all the information that is on the printed notices. The committee secretary of the committee where your bill is scheduled to be heard, or a committee you are a member of, will send them to you.

Check your email regularly.

You need to provide an email address that you check often and then regularly monitor it. Bill draft reviews, preintroduction letters, and committee meeting notices are time sensitive. If you do not respond to the letters sent to you, your bills can be delayed and/or miss deadlines.

We will send these documents to the email account you give Legislative Services staff – this can be different than the email address listed on your public contact page on the legislative website. If you change your email address between now and the end of the 2023 session, it is imperative that you let Legislative Services know before your account changes.

Manage your messages.

You will receive a lot of constituent messages and hearing notices. Without routine maintenance, the volume could overwhelm your email account. You could consider using special folders or other techniques to help manage this legislative business email. One way to set up rules is by subject header. Here are examples of the subject headers for your eDocs emails:

- Letters and forms related to bills and drafts (preintroduction and review)

Initial Review: "Requester Review of Initial Bill Draft (LC9999)"

Change Review: "Requester Review of Changes to Initial Bill Draft (LC9999)"

Redo Review: "Requester Review of the "Redo" (LC9999)"

Preintroduction notices: "Pre-introduction of Bill Draft LC9999"

- Phone and internet form messages from constituents

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION - Phone Message.msg

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION - Internet Web Message.msg

- Hearing notices for your bills and your committees

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION - Committee Meeting Notice.msg

Also, if you aren't receiving eDocs emails, check your junk folder and make sure your settings allow Legislative Services email to reach your inbox or other designated folders.

How do I get started with eDocs?

Soon after the election, the Legislative Services Division will send you a SurveyMonkey link, and that questionnaire includes an eDocs sign up form. You are automatically signed up for eDocs, and you can list which email address you want to use for eDocs. If you want to receive materials in hardcopy, you can email the OLIS Service Desk to change your eDocs options: OLIS-ServiceDesk@legmt.gov.

Before electronic delivery of documents begins, we will email you to validate the email address we have for you in the system. The subject for this validation message is "LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION - Electronic Notices Validation EMail - ACTION REQUIRED.msg." When we receive your emailed reply to that, you will start receiving legislative documents via eDocs.

What if I change my mind about eDocs?

Should you decide later to change your delivery method for some of or all the document types, call the LSD Service Desk at (406) 444-0912 or email OLIS-ServiceDesk@legmt.gov with your desired changes.

Questions? Feedback?

If you have feedback, or need additional information, contact Molly Petersen, 444-2957, Molly.Petersen@legmt.gov.

PUBLIC RECORDS

What counts as a public record?

Please be aware that Montana has a very broad public records law. Most written communications to or from state officials are public records available to the public and media upon request. Email communications, along with other forms of public records, may be subject to public disclosure.