

Public Meetings Checklist

The Public Meetings Law applies to all meetings of a quorum of a governing body of a public body for which a quorum is required to make a decision or to deliberate toward a decision on any matter. This checklist is intended to assist governing bodies in complying with the provisions of this law; however, you should consult the appropriate section(s) of this manual for a complete description of the law's requirements.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Unless an executive session is authorized by statute, the meeting must be open to the public.

NOTICE. The governing body must notify the public of the time and place of the meeting, as well as the principal subject to be discussed. Notice should be sent to:

- News media;
- Mailing lists; and
- Other interested persons.

The notice for a regular meeting must be reasonably calculated to give "actual" notice of the meeting's time and place. Special meetings require at least 24-hours' notice. Emergency meetings may be called on less than 24-hours' notice, but the minutes must describe the emergency justifying less than 24-hours' notice.

SPACE AND LOCATION

Space. The governing body should consider the probable public attendance and should meet where there is sufficient room for that expected attendance.

Geographic location. Meetings must be held within the geographic boundaries over which the public body has jurisdiction, at its administrative headquarters or at "the other nearest practical location."

Nondiscriminatory site. The governing body may not meet at a place where discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age or disability is practiced.

Smoking is prohibited.

ACCESSIBILITY TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Accessibility. Meetings must be held in places accessible to individuals with mobility and other impairments.

Interpreters. The governing body must make a good faith effort to provide an interpreter for hearing-impaired persons.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The governing body should familiarize itself with the ADA, which may impose requirements beyond state law.

VOTING. All official actions by governing bodies must be taken by public vote. Secret ballots are prohibited.

MINUTES and RECORDKEEPING. Written minutes or a sound, video or digital recording must be taken at all meetings, including executive sessions. Minutes or another recording must include at least the following:

- Members present;
- Motions, proposals, resolutions, orders, ordinances and measures proposed and their disposition;
- Results of all votes and, except for bodies with more than 25 members unless requested by a member, the vote of each member by name;
- The substance of any discussion on any matter; and
- A reference to any document discussed at the meeting. (Reference to a document exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Law does not affect its exempt status.)

The minutes or alternative recording must be available to the public within a “reasonable time after the meeting.”

For executive sessions, see separate checklist on p. K-6.