



# *Procedures and Formats for the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly*

Prepared by  
Legislation and House Planning  
Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs  
Government of the Northwest Territories  
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## ***How to Get it Done During Session***

This manual has been created to help you get your Minister's statements and documents through the system quickly and efficiently.

The procedures and formats in this manual have been developed in accordance with Executive Council direction, Rules of the Legislative Assembly and the conventions of the House.

If you have any questions or require additional information please contact Legislative Officer at 767-9146 Ext. 11032 or Legislative Coordinator at Ext. 11030. Comments and suggestions on this document are always welcome.

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# ***GENERAL INFORMATION***

## **Legislation and House Planning Division**

The Legislation and House Planning Division:

- provides advice to Cabinet, the Government House Leader and Departments on the development of government legislation;
- provides administrative support services to Cabinet, the Government House Leader and Departments during sessions of the Legislative Assembly;
- provides a focal point for all paper flowing through the Legislative Assembly (or House) from the Ministers and their Departments. (i.e. Minister's Statements, Tabled Documents, Returns to Questions, Opening Remarks to Department Budgets, Bills, etc.);
- provides Ministers with the text for readings of Bills in the Legislative Assembly and tracks progress of Bills, from idea/need identified by a Department to Assent in the House;
- monitors Question Period, provide daily reports, process all returns and follow-up on all outstanding returns. Ensures that any follow-up letters for Oral Questions are tabled in the House in accordance with Rule 7.2(6). (See Page 24 "Oral Questions");
- provides advice to Cabinet and Minister's Offices on Legislative Assembly Rules, procedures and requirements;
- provides administrative support for the GNWT's legislative agenda. The Legislative Coordinator is the Chair of the Legislative Initiatives Committee (LIC) which reviews all legislative proposals, bills and regulations and prepares assessment reports and recommendations for Cabinet. See the Executive Council Submissions Handbook for additional information regarding Legislative Proposals; and,
- co-ordinates our activities with sessional support services provided by the Office of the Clerk and collaborates on the development of sessional planning documents. Legislation and House Planning produces, in co-operation with the Clerk's Office, a daily listing of House Business as a guide for the Speaker, Members and staff.

## **Cabinet House Strategy**

Cabinet House Strategy meetings are planning meetings of the Members of the Executive Council held daily at 9:00 am (Mon-Thurs) and 8:00 am (Friday) during sittings of the Legislative Assembly to prepare Ministers and Cabinet as a whole for that day's business in the House. The meeting is chaired by the Premier, but the Government House Leader plays a leading role in dealing with agenda items. All Ministers are required to attend.

On behalf of the Government House Leader, Legislation and House Planning is responsible for preparing the CHS agenda and materials daily during sittings of the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Coordinator distributes a CHS agenda and package of materials the evening before each meeting.

For any items that require review in CHS, an e-version must be provided to Legislation and House Planning, who will ensure the item is on the agenda. Other items for discussion may be placed on the CHS agenda upon request of Cabinet Advisors or Minister's Offices. The cut-off e-submissions for inclusion in the CHS package is **4 pm the day before the meeting**. After 4 pm Minister's office will be required to provide an e-version and 18 hard-copies to the Legislative Coordinator prior to the meeting.

The following Cabinet advisors regularly attend Cabinet House Strategy meetings:

- Secretary to Cabinet
- Secretary to FMB
- Principal Secretary
- Director, Cabinet Communications

- Deputy Secretary to Cabinet
- Deputy Minister of Justice
- Legislative Coordinator

### Cabinet House Strategy vs Cabinet Meetings

A Cabinet House Strategy meeting is not a formal Cabinet meeting. Minutes are not taken and Records of Decision are not issued. The rules and deadlines for submitting materials to Cabinet House Strategy are more relaxed than for a formal Cabinet meeting.

If formal Cabinet decisions are required, a Cabinet House Strategy meeting will convert into a special Cabinet meeting to make those formal decisions. Usually this is done to consider legislative proposals, draft bills or other items directly related to government House business which are time sensitive in nature.

### Submissions to Cabinet House Strategy Meetings vs. Cabinet Meetings?

By existing Cabinet direction, a number of House related documents must be reviewed in either a formal Cabinet meeting or at Cabinet House Strategy before they are taken to the House.

Documents that must go to Cabinet before submission to CHS:

- Legislative proposals
- Bills (including Plain Language Document)
- Responses to Committee Reports and/or Motions
- Substantive amendments to Bills at the Standing Committee Review
- Tabled Documents that are controversial, politically sensitive or that make commitments

Documents that only go to CHS:

- Minister's Statements (includes Sessional Statements)
- Opening Remarks to Department Budgets
- Returns to Oral and Written Questions
- Responses to Petitions

Finally there are also documents that may warrant review at either a Cabinet or Cabinet House Strategy (depending on issues associated with the item).

- Documents for Tabling
- Opening Remarks for Bills
- Responses to Petitions

\*Note that all documents related to business in the House on a particular day are included in the CHS package as information even if they have already been formally approved by Cabinet. Any Minister's office or Cabinet Advisor can request the Legislative Coordinator to place an item on the CHS agenda. Documents or materials related to a CHS agenda item for inclusion in the CHS package must be received directly from a Minister's office. This is to ensure that a Minister is made aware in advance of any item they have on the meeting agenda and can prepare accordingly.

Minister's offices should advise the Legislative Coordinator about new CHS agenda items as soon as they become aware.

### Walk-in Items for Cabinet House Strategy

The rules regarding walk-ins for CHS meetings are relaxed compared to formal Cabinet meetings. This is by design as a CHS meeting is a planning meeting and must be flexible to adapt to emerging issues in the House.

Ministers are free to bring any material they wish to the CHS table for discussion by advising the Legislative Coordinator in advance so that the item can be placed on the meeting agenda and materials can be distributed before the meeting commences.

If a walk-in item appears to require formal Cabinet approval, the Legislative Coordinator will consult with the Deputy Secretary to Cabinet to confirm. If yes, the Minister will have to seek permission from the Premier's office to have Cabinet convened during CHS to consider the item. If the item can be left for the next available Cabinet meeting, the Premier will not approve it for CHS consideration. The Premier also has the discretion to refuse any submission as a CHS-Cabinet Walk-in.

Note: see also the section entitled "Session Protocols and Conventions" below.

### Minister's Daily House Business Folders

The Minister's Daily House Business Folder contains the daily House Business listing and all pertinent information and documents that the Minister will require for that day's business in the House. For example, if the Minister is giving a statement that day it will be highlighted on the House Business list and a copy of the statement for the Minister to read will be included in the House Business Folder. This procedure is followed for all items relevant to that particular Minister. The books are prepared by the Legislative Officer and placed directly on the Minister's desk in the Chamber prior to the commencement of each day's sitting.

### Session Protocols and Conventions

There are protocols and conventions governing session activities that have been established over the years by different Cabinets. The existing Cabinet direction for session protocols and conventions are as follows:

1. **Cabinet House Strategy Meetings** – Cabinet meets every morning during Session to review various documents and discuss issues in preparation for the business in the House that day.
2. **Cabinet Approval of Bills** – All bills (complete with French translation) must be approved by formal Cabinet decision prior to introduction in the House. All Bills must be accompanied by a Plain Language Summary document of the Bill, to be tabled on the day following 1<sup>st</sup> Reading.
3. **Minister's Statements** – All Minister's Statements must be reviewed in Cabinet House Strategy prior to delivery in the House. As well, Minister's Statements should be developed in accordance with established guidelines. All statements will be reviewed by the Director, Cabinet Communications once submitted to Minister's Offices before submission to Cabinet House Strategy.
4. **Opening Remarks to Department Budgets** – All Opening Remarks to Department Budgets must be reviewed and approved in Cabinet House Strategy prior to delivery in the House. All Opening Remarks to Department Budgets will be reviewed by the Department of Finance once submitted to Minister's Offices before submission to Cabinet House Strategy.
5. **Opening Remarks to Bills** – Although not required, Ministers are encouraged to bring opening remarks to politically sensitive or controversial bills to Cabinet House Strategy for review.

6. **Returns to Oral and Written Questions** – All Returns to Oral and Written Questions should be reviewed in Cabinet House Strategy prior to delivery in the House.
7. **Documents for Tabling** – Documents that are controversial, politically sensitive or documents that make a commitment on behalf of a Department or the Executive Council should be submitted for Cabinet approval prior to tabling. All documents requiring Cabinet approval should be brought to Cabinet as a decision item as per the usual process. All documents ready for tabling are placed on the Cabinet House Strategy agenda for Cabinet’s information.
8. **Responses to Petitions** – All Responses to Petitions should be reviewed in Cabinet House Strategy prior to tabling in the House.
9. **Member’s Statements** – Although there is no requirement for Cabinet review of a Member’s Statement given by Ministers, Ministers are to advise Cabinet when they are going to make a Member’s Statement at the CHS meeting. It is expected that Ministers will not speak on matters of government policy in a Member’s Statement.
10. **Replies to the Commissioner’s / Budget Address** – Ministers are to advise Cabinet when they wish to make a Reply to the Budget Address or a Reply to the Commissioner’s Address at the CHS meeting. It is expected that Ministers will not speak on matters of government policy in a Reply to the Commissioner’s Address or a Reply to the Budget Address.
11. **Responses to Committee Reports/Motions** – Cabinet must approve all Responses to Committee Reports or Responses to Formal Motions before they are tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Responses should be brought to Cabinet as a decision item as per the usual process.
12. **Minister’s Absences During Session** – All absences from the House during session must be approved by the Premier in advance. Usually the only type of absence that is authorized is for attendance at Federal/Provincial/Territorial Minister’s meetings or equally important events. Ministers should request approval to be absent by letter to the Premier, copied to the Legislative Coordinator and other Executive staff as appropriate. (The letter should NOT be copied to Standing Committees or the Clerk’s Office.) The Premier will initial approval on the request letter and provide a copy to the Legislative Coordinator and other Executive and Indigenous Affairs staff as appropriate. The Clerk’s Office and Committees/Regular Members are be notified of the absence after it has been approved by the Premier through regular provision of a ‘Minister’s Absence’ calendar to the Office of the Clerk prepared by Legislation and House Planning Division. A Minister’s Statement is prepared for the Premier to deliver in the House on the day of the absence to inform the House and public, which is prepared by Legislation and House Planning Division.
13. **Assessment of Financial Bills** – Although Cabinet must formally approve all bills before introduction, Financial Management Board (FMB) has the authority under the *Financial Administration Act* to approve the entire content of financial bills. Therefore, financial bills are not assessed by central agencies and Cabinet approval is more a formality.
14. **Requirement for Legislative Proposals** – Further to item 13, because the content of financial bills is approved via FMB decision, legislative proposals are not required. As well, the *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act* bill is, by definition, non-controversial and non-substantive in nature and legislative proposals are not required. To summarize, bills that do not require legislative proposals include:
  - Appropriation Acts
  - Supplementary Appropriation Acts
  - Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Acts



15. **Standing Committee Review of Appropriation and Supplementary Appropriation Acts** - Current Legislative Assembly conventions require that Standing Committees review the Estimates documents for all Appropriation and Supplementary Appropriation bills prior to the tabling of the Estimates document in the House.
16. **Amendments to Bills at the Standing Committee Stage** – Ministers are required to seek Cabinet approval of any substantive amendments to bills moved by Standing Committee, before concurring with the proposed amendments in Standing Committee.
17. **Amendments to Bills in Committee of the Whole** – All amendments to bills in Committee of the Whole to be made by the sponsoring Minister must be approved by Cabinet before the Minister can be proceed with the motions.
18. **Legislative Process** – All correspondence related to legislation (legislative proposals and Bills) will flow through the Government House Leader and Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.
19. **Legislative Agenda Updates/Session Planning** – the Government House Leader will provide a briefing to Caucus prior to each sitting on the governments’ legislative agenda and session planning updates.
20. **Commissioner’s/Budget Address** – copies are required to be provided to the Clerk’s Office one hour prior to delivery in the House.

### **Government House Leader**

The Government House Leader (GHL) is responsible for the overall planning and scheduling of business in the House for sessions of the Legislative Assembly. The GHL presents the government’s intended House business to Caucus prior to the beginning of each sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

The GHL is also responsible for the government’s overall legislative agenda, which includes working closely with Standing Committees to accomplish the agenda set out at the beginning of the Legislative Assembly. The GHL is the point of contact for Standing Committee correspondence on all legislative initiatives.

Finally, while, the GHL is responsible for the administration and development of agendas for daily Cabinet House Strategy meetings during session, the Premier acts as the Chair of the meetings. The Premier, GHL and Legislative Coordinator meet before the beginning of CHS meetings to review the agenda and prepare for the meeting.

### Session Preparation Call Letter

Generally, about one month prior to the commencement of sitting, the Government House Leader sends out a request to all Ministers for potential business for the upcoming session (potential Minister's Statements, Documents for Tabling, etc.). For planning purposes only, the responses are compiled into several lists for Cabinet's review at the first Cabinet House Strategy meeting. These lists are only a guide for the upcoming session and used in development of various planning schedules; Ministers can be still bring additional items forward or remove items at any time during the sitting. See examples on pages 7 and 8 of a call letter and a typical response letter.



(Example GHL Call Letter)

PREMIER  
MINISTERS

**Preparation for the February-March 2021 Session**

The 2nd Session of the 19th Legislative Assembly will open on February 18, 2021 and is expected to last about three weeks.

For the purposes of session planning, please provide my office with an indication of:

- potential Minister's Statements and preferred delivery dates
- documents for tabling
- any other item of business that might require House time

I would appreciate a response no later than Friday, February 11, 2020. This information will be compiled for Cabinet review at the first Cabinet House Strategy meeting and for Caucus review at their first meeting prior to session.

R.J. Simpson  
Government House Leader

c: Secretary to Cabinet  
Secretary of FMB  
Principal Secretary  
Deputy Minister, Justice  
Deputy Secretary to Cabinet  
Director, Cabinet Communications  
Legislative Coordinator



(Example of Department Response Letter)

HONOURABLE R.J. SIMPSON  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE LEADER

**Preparation for the February-March 2021 Session**

In response to your January 15, 2021 letter requesting an indication of the potential Minister's Statements, documents for tabling or any other items of business that might require House time, I offer the following:

**Minister's Statements**

- Improving our System - HSS System Transformation Update
- Cancer Strategy

**Documents for Tabling**

- Child and Family Services Director's Report 2018-2019
- NWT Medical Travel Program: Patient Escort Supports - Report On What We Heard May 2019
- Charting Our Course: Northwest Territories Cancer Strategy 2018-2019
- GNWT Response to Committee Report on Bill 47
- GNWT Response to Motion 36-19(1) Workplace Safety at Stanton Territorial Health Authority

**Legislation**

- Mental Health Act
- An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act, No. 2

Julie Green  
Minister of Health and Social Services

- c. Secretary to Cabinet  
Secretary to FMB  
Principal Secretary  
Deputy Minister, Justice  
Deputy Secretary to Cabinet  
Director, Cabinet Communications  
Legislative Coordinator

## **Daily Session Reports**

### ***Questions Report***

This report is sent out daily during session and lists all the Oral and Written Questions asked that day and their disposition. Anyone wishing to receive these reports can contact the Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032.

### ***Commitments***

During the course of answering an oral question in the House, the Minister might make a commitment of some kind and these are indicated in the daily questions report. It is very important to note that there is now a requirement in the Rules associated with Ministerial commitments during oral question period, follow-up letters are now required to be tabled by the Minister at the earliest opportunity. E-mails should not be used when providing additional information for an Oral Question based on this Rule. Legislation and House Planning will note where commitments are made by Ministers, using the broadest possible interpretation. In noting commitments, if the Minister says that they will consider the Member's suggestion, it is noted as a commitment. A commitment does not automatically trigger a requirement for a follow-up letter to be sent to the Member. Some commitments might require follow-up (i.e. the Minister says they will table a document in the House or visit a constituency) and some may not. The point is, it is entirely up to the Minister's Office and the Department to determine what action, if any, is required. In other words, a commitment indicated in the daily questions report is simply our way of saying "make sure you read this, some follow-up might be required". Note that Legislation and House Planning does not track the status of commitments made by Ministers and this column of the daily report is not changed when a commitment is completed.

See "Oral Questions" page 24. For commitments made in Committee of the Whole, see "Committee of the Whole" page 45.

### ***Session Business Report***

This report lists all the various items that were proceeded with in the House that day (an unofficial votes and proceedings). The report is set out in the same order as Orders of the Day and lists what was dealt with under that item, as well as the disposition for motions and committee motions.

### ***Outstanding Returns Report***

This report is sent to Minister's staff at the end of each sitting. It contains all the questions that require a formal return to be prepared for the Minister to give in the House. A formal Return to Oral Question is only required when the Minister specifically takes the question as "Notice", in which case "Notice" appears in the "Return(s)" field of the report. For questions not taken as "Notice", any additional information can be provided to the Member by letter. (See "Questions Report" page 9 and "Oral Questions" page 24).

Written questions are required to be responded to within 21-calendar days from the date the question was asked. In the "Return(s)" field of the report you will find "Due" followed by a date. This is the date that a formal return is required for the House. If the complete answer cannot be provided within 21-calendar days a provisional return must be prepared stating that more time is required, the reason for the delay and a date when the answer will be provided. **If the Legislative Assembly is not sitting, the formal return is due on the first day of the next sitting.** (See "Written Questions" page 30).

Please ensure that any correspondence that is related to oral questions posed in the House is copied to both the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Coordinator, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. The subject line needs to include the Oral Question number and the title of the

question. All follow-up letters are required to be tabled on the next sitting day of the House after the letter is provided to the Member of the Legislative Assembly.

### ***Outstanding Comprehensive Responses Report***

This report is sent to Minister's staff at the end of each sitting. It contains a list of all the outstanding comprehensive responses to motions and any reports from Standing or Special Committees. (See "Responses to Motions" page 36 and "Responses to Standing and Special Committee Reports" page 39)

In accordance with the Rules, responses are due within 120 days from the date the motion was passed or in the case of Committee Reports from the date the committee motion was passed in Committee of the Whole. The "Response Due" is the date that a formal response is required for presentation to the House. **If the Legislative Assembly is not sitting, the formal response is due on the first day of the next sitting.**

Any comprehensive responses are required to have Cabinet approval prior to the Minister responsible tabling the response in the House. The response should be brought to Cabinet as a decision item as per the usual process.

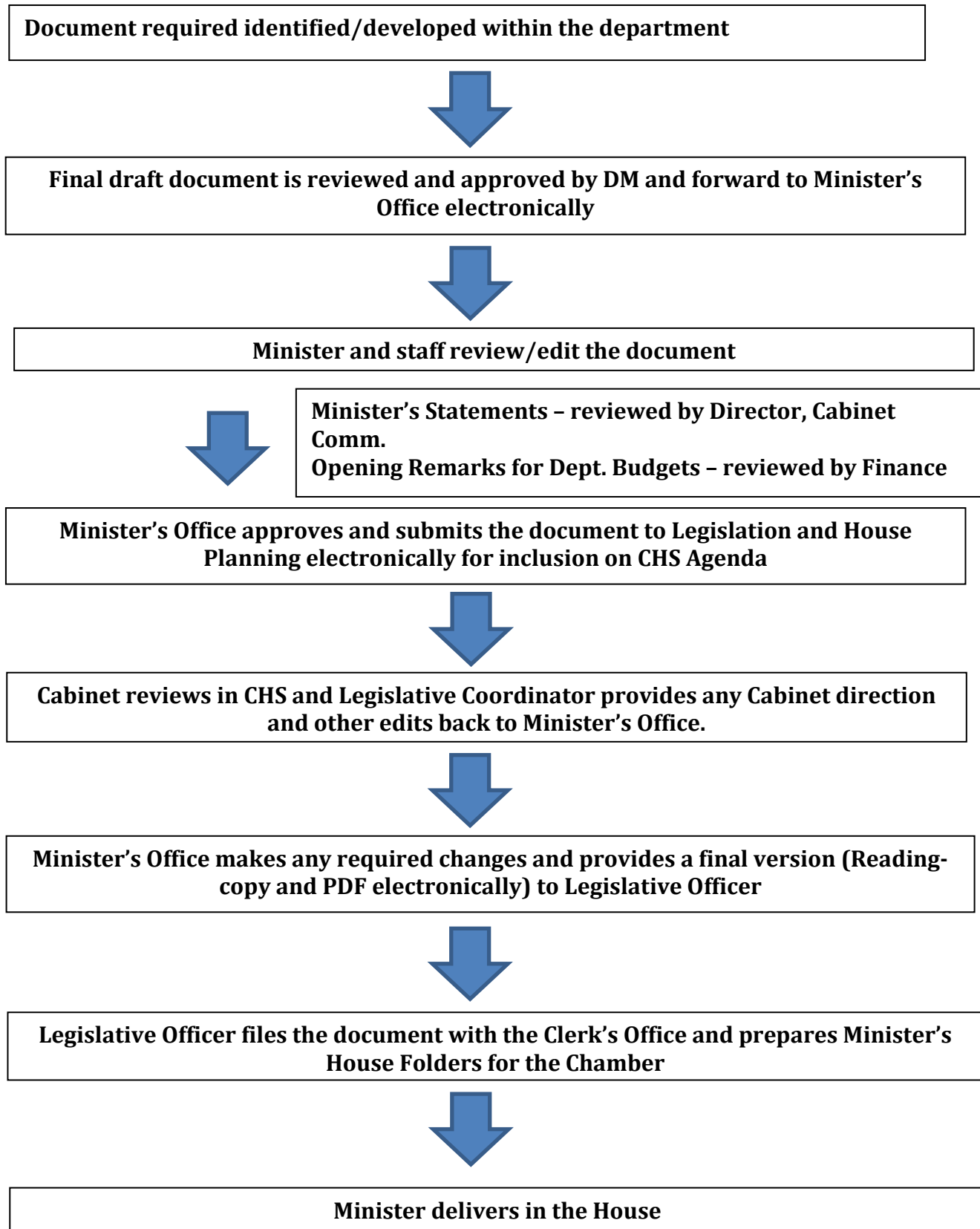
### ***Paper Flow Process***

There is a specified process for the flow of Ministerial documents destined for the House to ensure that all review and approvals are completed. For the sake of simplicity in this general description, the term "document" is used in the general sense (can mean a ministers statement, return, tabled doc., etc.). Additional information can be found under each specific document section in this manual.

In general, this is the paper flow process:

1. Document is developed in the department
2. Document approved by DM and forwarded to Minister's Office
3. Minister and staff review and possibly edit the document
  - Extra step for Minister's Statements to be reviewed by the Director, Cabinet Communications (page 18)
  - Extra step for Opening Remarks for Budgets to be reviewed by Finance (page 46)
4. Minister's Office approve and submit to Legislation and House Planning for Cabinet House Strategy meeting
5. Document provided to Legislative Coordinator electronically by Minister's Office
6. Document reviewed in Cabinet House Strategy and results/direction provided back to Minister's Office by the Legislative Coordinator
7. Minister's Office prepares final document and provide copies and e-version to the Legislative Officer (exception of Tabled Documents, everything should be received when submitted for CHS)
8. Legislative Officer provides document as required and prepares Minister's House folder
9. Minister delivers the document in the House

# Paper-Flow Process



### ***Thou Shall Not.....***

Most documents for the House require some sort of processing (i.e. copies to interpreters, Hansard, Clerk, etc.). In the best interests of the Ministers, the following rules must be followed:

- 1. Do not have Departments submit Sessional documents directly to Legislation and House Planning Division - all items should be routed through the Minister's Office.**
- 2. Do not send returns to questions, Minister's Statements, items for tabling etc. directly to a Minister in the House.**

These are important reminders because some documents require Cabinet review and approval. Also some documents require filing with the Clerk, should your Minister give a different version than the one provided to the Clerk, the Speaker will call the Minister to order. Every document to some extent is distributed (i.e. Hansard, Clerk's Office, etc. prior to the House commencing). If items are passed directly to the Minister, these distributions cannot be done and it will publically affect the smooth running of the House proceedings.

### ***WHEN IN DOUBT...***

*Call Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032 or Legislative Coordinator at Ext. 11030*



# ***ORDERS OF THE DAY***

The Orders of the Day (Orders) is a daily schedule governing the business of the House. The Rules of the Legislative Assembly specify what items appear on the Orders on any given day. Like an agenda for a meeting, the Orders help make the most efficient use of the time available. (See example page 16)

For the most part, the Orders do not list the specific items of business under each heading. For example, on any given sitting day a number of Members will usually give a Member's Statement, but these are not listed on the Orders under Members' Statements. The same is true for Minister's Statements and most other items on the Orders. Specific items of business that are listed on the Orders include: Motions, 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Readings of Bills, and Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. However, it should be noted that even if a specific matter is listed on the Orders, the House is not obligated to deal with this matter on a given day. For example, after the required two sitting days has passed after "Notice of Motion for 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of Bills", the bill would be placed on the Orders under "1<sup>st</sup> Reading of Bills". However, the Minister is not obligated to proceed with 1<sup>st</sup> Reading on that day or any day.

The difference between what is on the Orders and what is actually dealt with is most evident in Committee of the Whole. When the Speaker puts the House into Committee of the Whole, they will note all of the business that is listed on the Orders for consideration. When Committee of the Whole convenes, Members then decide which items on that list that they wish to deal with. This may end up being only one or two items of several that are listed on the Orders.

Below is a short description of each item on the Orders.

- Prayer – One of the Members will say a prayer at the beginning of each sitting day.
- Commissioner's Address – Like the "Throne Speech" in the Parliament of Canada, the Commissioner's Address is a message that is delivered on the opening day of each session (i.e. not at each sitting) of the Legislative Assembly. The Commissioner recommends passage of appropriation bills (financial spending Bills), including supplementary appropriations, and officially declares the session open during this address to the Legislative Assembly.
- Budget Address – The Minister of Finance gives notice to the Speaker, via a Minister's Statement, of their intention to deliver the Budget Address on a certain day. "Budget Address" is placed on the Orders of the Day. The Budget Address provides an overview of the government's finances and highlights initiatives for the upcoming fiscal year and is usually delivered at the last sitting before the end of the fiscal year.
- Minister's Statements – See "Minister's Statements" page 18.
- Member's Statements – Any Member, including Ministers, have two and half minutes to make a statement on any one topic. Ministers cannot make a statement related to their responsibility as a Minister.
- Returns to Oral Questions – See "Oral Questions" page 24.
- Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery – Members have 30 seconds to introduce people present in the gallery.
- Acknowledgements – Members have 30 seconds to make a statement recognizing a significant milestone or accomplishment of a constituent. Acknowledgments must be approved by the Speaker in advance.
- Oral Questions – See "Oral Questions" page 24.
- Written Questions – See "Written Questions" page 30.

- Returns to Written Questions – See “Written Questions” page 30.
- Replies to the Commissioner’s Address – Any Member, including Ministers, may make one reply to the Commissioner’s Address per session. They can speak on any matter and there is no time limit. By existing convention, Ministers do not speak to government policy during a Reply to the Commissioner’s Address.
- Replies to the Budget Address – Any Member, including Ministers, may make one reply to the Budget Address. This item is on the Orders for seven days after delivery of the Budget Address by the Minister of Finance. Under existing convention, Ministers do not usually give a Reply to the Budget Address.
- Petitions – Members may present Petitions to the House on behalf of the public. The Minister or the Speaker has 60 days to provide a response to that Petition. Also see “Petitions” page 53.
- Reports of Standing and Special Committees – The Chair or a Member of the Committee will present a written report to the House on some matter. Normally the entire report is read into the record but for lengthy reports, the committee may, with unanimous consent, deem the report read and printed in Hansard. These Reports are generally referred to Committee of the Whole for further consideration.
- Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills – The Chair or Member of the Committee gives a report on the review of bills. This is merely the act of reporting a bill or bills back to the House, with or without amendments. The Rules require that all bills reported to the House be received and ordered into Committee of the Whole for consideration. The Rules specify that, unless otherwise ordered by the Legislative Assembly, a bill will not be considered until two sitting days have passed from the day it was reported.
- Tabling of Documents – Members may table a document that may be of interest to the public. Ministers often table documents that are required by law or under the Rules of the Legislative Assembly. See “Tabling of Documents” page 34.
- Notices of Motion – Any Member wishing to move a motion during formal session is required to give two sitting days notice. The mover would state the intended day of moving the motion and read the resolution part of the motion.
- Motions – A motion is a proposal for the Legislative Assembly to either do something or to take a position on a matter. Motions are also used to make recommendations to the Government. The mover of the motion opens the debate. Each Member is allowed to speak to the motion for a maximum of 20 minutes and the mover of the motion has the right of last reply, which would close the debate. The Speaker would then call for a vote. See “Committee of the Whole” page 45 regarding committee motions.
- Notices of Motion for the First Reading of Bills – A Minister wishing to introduce a bill is required to give two sitting days notice before the bill can be read for the first time. A Member, who is not a Minister, can introduce a Private Members’ Public Bill, but such bills cannot appropriate public funds or impose a tax.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of Bills – After two sitting days notice, the sponsor of the bill will give 1<sup>st</sup> Reading. A reading of a bill is a motion that is voted by Members like any other motion (e.g. “I move that Bill.....be read for the 1<sup>st</sup> time). However, there is no debate allowed at 1<sup>st</sup> Reading. A bill is not public until it has received 1<sup>st</sup> Reading.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of Bills – the next sitting day after 1<sup>st</sup> Reading, the sponsor of the bill may give 2<sup>nd</sup> reading to that bill. This is also moved as a motion and Members are allowed to debate the principle of the bill, but not the details. Once a bill has received 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading it is referred to a committee for review, which usually involves public consultation. The Committee has up to 120 days to review the bill and report it back to the House. In some instances (and with unanimous consent), Standing Committee review may be waived, in which case the bill would be referred directly to Committee of the Whole.

- Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters – A less formal part of the day when Members deliberate on items referred to it by the House. The business of Committee of the Whole normally consists of bills, Department budgets and Standing Committee reports. However, other matters such as Minister's Statements or Tabled Documents can be debated if they are moved into Committee of the Whole. Members have a ten-minute time limit on speaking, but may speak more than once. Motions made in Committee of the Whole (Committee Motions) do not require notice, a seconder and Members may speak more than once during debate, at the discretion of the Chair. See "Committee of the Whole" page 45.
- Report of Committee of the Whole – The Chair of the Committee of the Whole gives a report to the Speaker when the House goes back to formal sitting. In that report the Chair of Committee of the Whole would note, for example, if the review of a bill was completed and is now ready for 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading or if any matter has been concluded. The Chair would also note the number of motions that were adopted during Committee of the Whole portion that day.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading of Bills – the next sitting day after a bill has been reported from Committee of the Whole, the sponsor of the bill may give 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading. This is also moved as a motion and debate is allowed. When a bill has been given 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading, it is considered ready for Assent by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.
- Orders of the Day – The Clerk reads the Orders of the Day for the next sitting day. This would apply to every sitting day except the day designated for prorogation.
- Prorogation – Sessions are commenced (started) and prorogued (ended) by the Commissioner. In both cases, the Commissioner will enter the House and address the Legislative Assembly. A session in the NWT can last for several separate sittings of the House, but it could be as short as one sitting. The question of whether to prorogue a session or simply adjourn it to a later date is determined in part by the amount of business before the House and it is a decision made by Caucus. In the prorogation address, the Commissioner will announce the commencement date of the next Session.

### **Business Not on the Orders**

The two items below are proceedings that take place in the House but are not listed on the Orders.

- Assent to Bills – This is the final stage of the Legislative Assembly's role in the enactment process. The Commissioner comes into the House (usually on the last day of a sitting before an extended adjournment) and gives "Assent" to all bills that have received 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading. If a bill does not have a coming into force provision, it is law upon Assent.
- Adjournment – At the end of each sitting day, the Speaker will adjourn the House until the next sitting day. In most cases this is simply the next day but in the case of extended adjournment, this could be weeks or even months into the future. All business before the House carries over from one sitting day to the next, even during a period of extended adjournment.

### **Other Information on the Orders**

Some additional information is listed on the Orders, mainly for convenience. These include a listing of bills before Standing Committees, a listing of outstanding Written Questions with due dates, Oral Questions taken as Notice and a progress chart for the consideration of Department budgets during a budget session.

*Any questions?*

*Just call Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032 or Legislative Coordinator at Ext. 11030*



**(EXAMPLE)**

19<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

DAY 2

2<sup>ND</sup>  
SESSION

YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2020

1:30 PM

- 
1. Prayer
  2. Minister's Statements
  3. Members' Statements
  4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
  5. Returns to Oral Questions
  6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
  7. Oral Questions
  8. Written Questions
  9. Returns to Written Questions
  10. Replies to Commissioner's Address
  11. Replies to Budget Address (Day 6 of 7)
  12. Petitions
  13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
  14. Tabling of Documents
  15. Notices of Motion
  16. Motions
  17. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
  18. First Reading of Bills
    - Bill 19      *Supplementary Appropriation Act, No.3, 2018-2019*
  19. Second Reading of Bills
    - Bill 20      *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act No. 2*



## 20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 18                      *Appropriation Act, 2019-2020*
- CR 5-19(2)                *Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight – Report on the 2019-2020 Pre-Budget Review Process*
- CR 6-19(2)                *Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development – Report on the 2019-2020 Pre-Budget Review Process*

## 21. Report of Committee of the Whole

## 22. Third Reading of Bills

## 23. Orders of the Day

### Bills Before Standing Committee

### Committee

Bill 12	<i>An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act</i>	Social Development
Bill 15	<i>Court Security Act</i>	Social Development
Bill 16	<i>Tobacco Control Act</i>	Social Development
Bill 17	<i>An Act to Amend the Public Colleges Act</i>	Social Development

### Bills Ready for Assent

Bill 13	<i>An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act</i>
Bill 14	<i>Public Airports Act</i>

<u>Status of Returns to Written Questions</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Ministry</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
WQ 20-19(2) Housing Programs in Sahtu Region	Yakeleya	NWTHC	Feb. 24, 2020
WQ 21-19(2) Suicide Help Line	Villeneuve	H & SS	Feb. 24, 2020

### Departmental Order for Bill 18: *Appropriation Act, 2019-2020*

* NWT Housing Corporation	Environment and Natural Resources
✓ Municipal and Community Affairs	Executive and Indigenous Affairs
→ Health and Social Services	Lands
Finance	Legislative Assembly
Education, Culture and Employment	
Infrastructure	
Industry, Tourism and Investment	
Justice	

→ = under consideration

\* = deferred

✓ = concluded

# ***MINISTER'S STATEMENTS***

## **Rules of the Legislative Assembly**

For Minister's Statements, the Rules of the Legislative Assembly state:

- Rule 5.3*
- (1) A Minister may make a factual announcement or statement of Government policy.*
  - (2) Each Minister's Statement shall be provided to the Clerk in advance of the House Sitting for distribution to all Members at the time the statement is delivered in the Assembly.*
  - (3) Any Member may, without notice, move a Minister's Statement into Committee of the Whole for discussion immediately following the conclusion of Ministers' Statements on the day that the statement was delivered in the Assembly.*
  - (4) The time allotted for Ministers' Statements shall not exceed 20 minutes.*

## **Minister's Statement Guidelines**

These guidelines should be considered whenever there is a need to prepare a Minister's Statement. The existing Cabinet direction for guidelines in developing Minister's Statements is as follows:

1. Generally, Minister's Statements should be relevant to government priorities and objectives and should contain information that the Assembly and/or the public needs to know on a fairly urgent basis. Cabinet as a group is allowed 20 minutes per day for Minister's Statements.
2. To be effective political and public relations tools, Minister's Statements must be brief, concise, and not be overused. The longer the statement, the less people tend to listen; the greater the number delivered the less effective each statement becomes.
3. Minister's Statements should:
  - be no more than 2-3 pages (except for the Sessional Statement and in extraordinary circumstances)
  - highlight significant achievements on, or provide crucial information directly related to, main government priorities
  - announce major new policies, programs and services or significant changes to existing policies, programs and services
  - provide a clarification or correction on sensitive or controversial issues (e.g. to anticipate questions in the House and provide information in a pro-active way; to provide clear and factual information in response to statements made by regular Members or the media, etc.)

*Note: press releases / press conferences should also be considered in conjunction with statements on these topics.*

4. Discretion should be used when considering Minister's Statements for the following:
  - theme weeks or theme days
  - reporting on the results of intergovernmental meetings*Note: consider press releases / press conferences instead.*

5. Ministers' Statements should not be developed for the following:
  - tabling annual reports or other routine or non-controversial documents
  - updates on on-going programs and services*Note: consider press releases / press conferences instead.*

### **Process for Development and Delivery**

1. Any potential Minister's Statements for an upcoming session should be identified in the Minister's response to the Government House Leader's session preparation call letter; bear in mind time constraints when planning potential statements for the upcoming session. The Legislative Coordinator prepares a Minister's Statements Delivery Schedule in consultation with Minister's Offices for preferred delivery dates and/or in accordance with any Cabinet direction. This delivery schedule is circulated to Minister's Offices and included in each day's CHS package and is continually updated during session.
2. Statements are drafted by department staff, approved at the department level and forwarded electronically by the Department to the Minister's Office.
  - Other Executive staff or Cabinet advisors may be involved in the drafting of the statement, usually when Cabinet has directed its development.
3. Statements are received by Minister's offices, are usually reviewed by the MSA and/or EAC and then provided to the Director, Cabinet Communications for review. Keep in mind when developing the statement that the Minister is speaking to Members through the Speaker.
4. Director, Cabinet Communications, or designate, sends the statement with suggested edits back to the Minister's office for final approval (within 24 hours).
5. The statement is provided to the Minister for review/approval for submission to Cabinet House Strategy.
  - Ministers often make changes to the statement before submitting it to Legislation and House Planning Division. If substantive changes are desired by the Minister, discussion with the Department is normally a part of the process. Sometimes statements are simply returned to the Department with directions for rewriting.
6. The Minister-approved statement is provided to the Legislative Coordinator electronically by the Minister's staff for review in Cabinet House Strategy.
  - Cabinet review of the statement is usually dictated by the Minister's Statement Delivery Schedule or a desired delivery date as communicated by the Minister's office. Except in exceptional circumstances, statements are reviewed three days prior to their scheduled delivery. Sensitive or controversial statements are often reviewed a week before planned delivery.
7. Cabinet reviews the statement and provides direction on any changes or additions to be made to the statement.
  - It is expected that suggestions for substantive changes would be raised at the table by Ministers or Cabinet advisors.
  - The Legislative Coordinator is primarily responsible for noting these changes. Minor editorial changes (i.e. spelling/grammar) need not be raised at the table, but should be provided to the Legislative Coordinator who would consolidate all comments and provide to Minister's Office after the CHS meeting. The Legislative Officer provides comments on spelling, grammar and format within 24 hours back to the Minister's office after it has been submitted for CHS review.

- Changes to statements as agreed upon at the Cabinet table are considered to be Cabinet direction to the Minister.
  - In some instances, Cabinet may direct specific advisors or other staff to work together to draft changes to a statement. In this instance the Legislative Coordinator's role in documenting changes is minimized; the Legislative Coordinator would advise the Minister's office of the direction issued and advise that the MSA get in touch with those staff persons tasked with the re-write.
8. The Legislative Coordinator communicates the edits back to Minister's offices.
- This may be to the MSA or the EAC, dependent on the preference of the Minister's office. Changes are never sent directly back to the Department.
  - As required, the Legislative Coordinator may seek further clarification on changes from advisors after the Cabinet House Strategy meeting and before communicating direction back to the Minister's office.
  - If the statement has gone through Cabinet House Strategy without any changes, the Legislative Coordinator would advise that final versions could be prepared and submitted to the Legislative Officer.
9. Minister's offices arrange for the statement to be edited and put into the standard format.
- In many instances, the statements are edited on site by Minister's staff. However, some offices choose to send the directions for editing back to the Department and the work is undertaken there and a revised statement sent back. In other cases, edits would require additional information from the Department, which the MSA would obtain either by phone or email.
  - The method for editing statements is not prescribed, and Minister's offices use whatever means seem most appropriate or efficient. (Often the content of the statement and nature of the directed changes would dictate the best method.)
  - In some instances, Cabinet direction would include a requirement for the statement to be brought back to Cabinet House Strategy for a final review.
10. Minister's offices prepare and submit House-ready versions of the statement to the Legislative Officer.
- This would include **a reading copy and an e-version in Word format.**
  - At the same time, Minister's staff provide a final copy of the statement to the Department, in electronic form.
  - For version control, Minister's staff are advised not to provide a final copy of the statement to their Minister for the House; the Legislative Officer will ensure the final version will be on the Minister's desk in the Chamber.



11. The Legislative Officer provides a copy of the statement with the Clerk's Office in accordance with the Rules of the Legislative Assembly.
  - An e-version in Word format is provided to the Clerk's Office one hour before the House sits.
  - With the same email, the Legislative Officer provides an e-version of the statement to the Director, Cabinet Communications office for posting on the web site at the appropriate time.
12. The Legislative Officer places the reading copy of the statement in the Minister's House Folder and places the folder on the Minister's desk in the Chamber.
13. The Legislative Officer provides a PDF copy of the statement to the Clerk's for Hansard just before the House begins.
14. The Minister delivers the statement under the item "Minister's Statements" on the Orders.
15. The Legislative Assembly and Director, Cabinet Communications' office post a copy of the statement on their respective web sites.

### **Format**

The statements are to be 1.5 spacing and in the recommended 12 point Cambria font. Please use page numbers for statements over one page. Use 8½ x 11 white paper. See example page 23.

Most Ministers prefer a larger font reading copy to read from in the House. This reading copy, prepared by the Minister's office, of the approved statement needs to be provided to the Legislative Officer to place in their Daily House Business Folder at the same time as they submit the final statement for the House.

The following naming convention should be used for submitting a Minister's Statement electronically to Legislation and House Planning Division. Reading versions should be clearly indicated by including "Reading" at the beginning before the date.

Date of Delivery MS\_Title of Statement – If unscheduled use the date of submission

Example: 2019-05-27 MS\_Winter Fur Prices

### **Do not:**

- Type in a number or the date on the statement. The statement is numbered and dated by the Clerk's office after it is given in the House by the Minister.

### **Common Mistakes**

- (1) **Making reference to any appropriations (i.e. budgets, funding, etc.) not yet approved by the House.**
- (2) **Submitting the Minister's Statement too late for review by Cabinet (3 days prior to scheduled delivery).**
- (3) **Using the wrong format.**
- (4) **Having a date on the bottom of the page or included in the footer.**

- (5) Using the phrase such as “I am pleased to table a document....” (The correct wording is “Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table...” or “I have provided to Members....”).
- (6) Using phrases such as “...attached please find...” or “...the list below...”. A Minister’s Statement is a speech and such comments do not make sense when read out loud.
- (7) Using an acronym or slash [/] in the title of the statement or forgetting to underline the title.
- (8) Using “Minister’s Statement” in the title or on top of the page.
- (9) Forgetting to capitalize “Members” when referring to Members of the Legislative Assembly.
- (10) Forgetting to e-mail the approved final statement to the Legislative Officer.
- (11) Beginning the statement with “Thank you”.

*Any questions?*

*Just call Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032 or Legislative Coordinator at Ext. 11030*

**(EXAMPLE)**

**THE HONOURABLE (Name of Minister)**  
**MINISTER OF (Department)**

**NO. \_\_\_\_\_**  
**DATE \_\_\_\_\_**

**Appointment of a New Commissioner**

Mr. (or Madam) Speaker, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada has announced the appointment of a new Commissioner for the NWT, etc.

Thank you, Mr. (or Madam) Speaker.

*[Formatting Notes: White 8.5 x 11 paper, Cambria 12 point, single-space heading, double space to title and 1.5 spacing in body of statement, page numbers if over one page in length]*

# ORAL QUESTIONS

## **Rules of the Legislative Assembly**

For Oral Questions, the Rules of the Legislative Assembly state:

### **Rule 7.2**

*(1) An oral question shall be concisely and clearly put, and may include a short preamble. An oral question shall refer only to a matter which may reasonably be assumed to be within the present knowledge of the Minister to whom it is directed.*

*(2) The Minister may:*

*(a) answer the question in concise and clear fashion;*

*(b) state that they take the question as notice and answer it orally on a subsequent day under the item "Returns to Oral Questions"; or*

*(c) decline to answer.*

*(3) When a question is taken as notice, the Speaker shall add it to the Orders of the Day under the item "Returns to Oral Questions". The Speaker may rule out of order, any questions similar in nature to a question which has been taken upon as notice on that same day.*

*(4) When a Minister answers an oral question, a Member may ask only three supplementary questions. These supplementary questions must be directly related to the same subject.*

*(5) The time allotted for oral questions shall not exceed sixty minutes.*

*(6) A Minister who makes a commitment to provide additional information to a Member during Oral Questions shall table that information in the Assembly at the earliest opportunity.*

## **General Information**

- Legislation and House Planning Division provides a daily summary of question period, via e-mail, to those who are on the distribution list. Any changes to this distribution can be made by contacting the Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032.
- Legislation and House Planning tracks all outstanding Returns to questions. The Legislative Coordinator provides daily statistics during session to Ministers regarding Oral and Written Questions. Legislation and House Planning indicates, but does not track the commitments made by Ministers during question period (See "Commitments" page 9). Legislation and House Planning ensures that the follow-up letters are tabled in accordance with Rule 7.2 (6).
- Information on questions and the preparation of the Return (if you are unsure as to the question number or titles etc.) should be directed to the Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032.
- The Minister is required to read the Return so keep in mind when developing the Return that the Minister is speaking to Members through the Speaker.

## **Process for Development and Delivery – Formal Return to Oral Question**

1. The Minister takes the question as "Notice" during Oral Question Period and it will be noted in the daily report as a check mark in the "Notice" field and no date in the "Returns" field. Returns to Oral Questions do not have a set time limit, but it is common practice for Returns to be given as soon as possible. Returns are prepared by department staff, approved at the department level and sent to the Minister's office, in electronic format.
  - Only oral questions with a check-mark under "Notice" field of the daily report require a formal Return to Oral Question. Otherwise, any additional information to be provided in follow-up to an exchange in Oral Questions should be provided by way of a letter. See "Responses to Members by Letter" page 26.

2. Returns are received by Minister's offices, usually reviewed by the MSA and/or EAC and then provided to the Minister for review/approval.
  - Ministers may make changes to the Return before submitting it to Legislation and House Planning. If substantive changes are desired by the Minister, discussion with the Department is normally a part of the process. Sometimes responses are simply returned to the Department with directions for rewriting.
3. The Minister's approved Return is provided to the Legislative Coordinator electronically by the Minister's staff for inclusion on the Cabinet House Strategy agenda. All Returns to Oral Questions are reviewed in CHS prior to delivery in the House.
4. Should Cabinet direct any changes or additions to be made to the Return, the Legislative Coordinator communicates the edits back to Minister's offices. The Legislative Officer provides comments on spelling, grammar and format within 24 hours back to the Minister's office after it has been submitted for CHS review.
  - This may be to the MSA or the EAC, dependent on the preference of the Minister's office. Changes are never sent directly back to the Department.
5. Minister's offices arrange for the Return to be edited and put into the standard format.
  - In many instances, these are edited on site by Minister's staff. However, some offices choose to send the directions for editing back to the Department and the work is undertaken there and a revised statement sent back. In other cases, edits would require additional information from the Department, which the MSA would obtain either by phone or email.
6. Minister's offices prepare and submit House-ready versions of the Return to the Legislative Officer.
  - This would include **a larger font reading copy and a PDF copy**.
  - At the same time, Minister's staff also provide a final copy of the Return to the Department, in electronic form.
  - For version control, Minister's staff are advised not to provide a final copy of the Return to their Minister for in the House; the Legislative Officer will arrange to put their reading version in the Minister's House Folder.
7. The Legislative Officer provides the Return to the Clerk's Office in accordance with the Rules of the Legislative Assembly.
8. The Legislative Officer places the reading copy of the Return in the Minister's House Folder and places the folder on the Minister's desk in the Chamber.
9. The Minister delivers the Return in the House under the item "Returns to Oral Questions" on the Orders. The Minister is required to read a Return to Oral Question.

## **Format**

Returns to Oral Questions are required to be completed on the “Return to Oral Question” form. Minister’s Offices have the PDF and Word templates. See example page 28. Returns should be kept to one page, if possible. Use standard white 8 ½ x 11 paper for any additional pages and ensure that the question number is in the top right-hand corner on all pages of the Return and all pages of the Return are numbered.

If additional information, such as charts, tables, etc., is needed for a complete response to the Member, the Minister should formally table them in the House. The document to be tabled should be referred to in the Return. Do not use phrases such as “I am pleased to table a document....” Or “Attached please find....” The correct wording is “Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table...” See “Tabling of Documents” page 34.

The following naming convention should be used for submitting Returns and follow-up letters electronically to Legislation and House Planning Division. Reading versions should be clearly indicated by including “Reading” at the beginning before the date.

Returns:

Date of Delivery - ROQ Number\_Title of Question

Example: 2019-05-26 ROQ 433-19(2)\_Anti-Poverty Strategy

Follow-up Letters:

Date of Letter - OQ Number\_Title of Question

Example: 2019-05-26 OQ 433-19(2)\_Anti-Poverty Strategy

*Note: If a Member has asked several similar questions on the same issue, these can all be incorporated in one Return as long as all question numbers are included on the top of the Return and all the dates each question was asked is included in the first sentence of the Return. If more than one Member has asked questions on the same issue, a separate return must be prepared for each individual Member (Speaker’s Ruling March 27, 2000).*

## **Responses to Members by Letter - Commitments**

### ***When Session Adjourns (Extended Adjournment)***

During the course of answering a question the Minister may commit to providing additional information or, in the case of notice, the Minister’s Office may provide information through a follow-up letter to the Member containing the requested information. This letter must be copied to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Coordinator, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs and includes title and Oral Question number in the subject line. The Rules require that these letters be tabled in the Legislative Assembly at the earliest convenience. This is done by way of the copy which has been provided to the Legislative Coordinator who will arrange for tabling at the earliest opportunity. Please do not use the acronym “OQ” in your subject line, spell out Oral Question.

Questions “Taken as Notice”, require that a formal Return be prepared and delivered when the session reconvenes. The actual Return should not be attached to courtesy follow-up letters. If it is likely that the information will change (i.e. don’t send a letter) as the information provided would be inconsistent with the formal return given in the House at a later date.

### ***When Session Prorogues***

Although any outstanding Returns to Oral Questions are deemed to “die” when a session prorogues, as a courtesy and in the interest of good relations, the Minister’s office may respond by way of a letter to the Member. The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Coordinator, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs must be copied on this letter. The Legislative Coordinator would arrange for tabling at the earliest opportunity in the next session.

### **Common Mistakes**

- (1) Making reference to appropriations (i.e. budgets, funding, etc.) not yet approved by the House.**
- (2) Appending materials or using tables, charts etc. which should be tabled in the House. (*The Return is a speech, meant to be read out loud.* Phrases such as “...attached please find...” or “...the table below...” do not make sense in a speech. Any attachments or lists should be prepared as a document for tabling and the Return should refer to the document. The correct wording is “Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table...”)**
- (3) Using the wrong format or missing letterhead on PDF.**
- (4) Forgetting to include the question number and title or using a different title instead of the title of the question used in Hansard.**
- (5) Referring to Members by their name and not constituency.**
- (6) Forgetting the question number on top of the additional pages.**
- (7) Including “OQ” before the question number at the top of the page.**
- (8) Responses by letter not being copied to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Coordinator.**
- (9) Attaching the Return to a courtesy follow-up letter to the Member.**
- (10) Forgetting to capitalize “Members” when referring to Members of the Legislative Assembly.**
- (11) Missing the question number and/or using an acronym (OQ) in the subject line when providing information by way of letter.**
- (12) Beginning the return with “Thank you”.**
- (13) Not getting the Return in on time for review by Cabinet (3 days prior to delivery).**

*Any questions?*

*Just call Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032 or Legislative Coordinator at Ext. 11030*

(Example)

THE HONOURABLE JULIE GREEN  
MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission Recommendations**

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by the Member for Monfwi on October 20, 2020 regarding Truth and Reconciliation Commission Recommendations.

I acknowledge the Member's reference to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action. Recommendation No. 21 calls on the federal government to make funding a healing center in the NWT and Nunavut a priority. We are interested in the work that is going to take place in Nunavut to create a healing center. The department is constantly reviewing best practices in addictions treatment and if evidence points towards the need for a northern addictions treatment facility, we will present that evidence to Members and invite discussion. But as things stand today, this government has no mandate commitment, plan or budget to create a northern treatment center.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

***[Formatting Notes: Return to Oral Question Letterhead with additional pages on white 8.5 x 11 paper, Cambria 12 point, single-space heading, double space to title and 1.5 spacing in body of statement, page numbers if over one page in length]***





(EXAMPLE)

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON  
MLA, HAY RIVER SOUTH

**Oral Question 56-19(2) Wireless Internet Access at Stanton Territorial Hospital**

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on December 17, 2019 regarding wireless internet access at Stanton Territorial Hospital.

Stanton Territorial Health Authority does not have the infrastructure in place to support WiFi internet access. Extensive infrastructure is required as a backbone for this type of internet service.

The infrastructure to support WiFi internet access will be considered as a part of the renovation of Stanton Territorial Hospital.

Thank you.

Julie Green  
Minister of Health and Social Services

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs

# **WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

## **Rules of the Legislative Assembly**

For Written Questions, the Rules of the Legislative Assembly state:

### **Written Questions:**

#### *Rule 7.3*

- (1) Under the item "Written Questions", a Member may ask written questions of Ministers. A question which would be likely to require a detailed or complex answer, or which would not reasonably be assumed to be within the present knowledge of the Minister, should be posed as a written question.
- (2) All written questions shall be filed with the Clerk, who shall endorse the date of filing and provide copies to all Members.
- (3) The Speaker shall ensure that a written question conforms to the Rules and practices of the House and may rule a written question out of order.
- (4) A written question may only contain the one initial question and four supplementary questions.
- (5) A Member may only have five written questions on the Order Paper at any one time.

### **Returns to Written Questions:**

#### *Rule 7.4*

- (1) A Minister shall provide a return to written question within 21 calendar days by filing a reply with the Clerk, who shall endorse the date of filing.
- (2) If the 21 calendar days lapses between Sittings, the Minister shall file a reply with the Clerk no later than the first day of the next Sitting.
- (3) If the Minister cannot provide an answer in the time allotted, they may file a provisional return with the Clerk indicating:
  - (a) that the return to the written question is not ready,
  - (b) the reason for the delay, and
  - (c) the date upon which the information will be provided.
- (4) Under the item "Returns to Written Questions", the Clerk shall inform the Assembly of the returns or provisional returns received, deliver copies to all Members, and have the returns printed in Hansard.
- (5) Under the item "Returns to Written Questions", a Minister may read a return which has been filed in accordance with Rule 7.4(1).

## **General Information**

- Legislation and House Planning Division provides a daily summary of question period, via e-mail, to those who are on the distribution list. Additions or deletions to this list may be made by contacting the Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032.
- Legislation and House Planning Division tracks all outstanding Returns to questions. The Legislative Coordinator provides daily statistics during session to Ministers regarding Oral and Written Questions.
- Information on questions and the preparation of the return (if you are unsure as to the question number or titles etc.) should be directed to the Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032.
- Should there be a discrepancy between the hard copy of a written question provided by the Clerk's Office and Hansard, it is important to note that edited Hansard (not the blues) is always the authority.

### **Process for Development and Delivery**

1. A formal return is always required for a written question, unless the session has prorogued. Returns to Written Questions have a set time limit of 21-calendar days. If the House is not sitting the due date of the Return is the first day the House reconvenes. Returns are prepared by department staff, approved at the department level and sent to the Minister's office, in electronic format. Keep in mind when developing the Return that the Minister is speaking to Members through the Speaker.
2. Returns are received by Minister's offices, usually reviewed by the MSA and/or EAC and then provided to the Minister for review/approval.
  - Ministers may make changes to the Return before submitting it to Legislation and House Planning Division. If substantive changes are desired by the Minister, discussion with the Department is normally a part of the process. Sometimes responses are simply returned to the Department with directions for rewriting.
3. The Minister's approved Return is provided to the Legislative Coordinator electronically by the Minister's staff for inclusion on the Cabinet House Strategy agenda. All Returns to Written Questions are reviewed in CHS prior to delivery in the House.
4. Should Cabinet direct any changes or additions to be made to the Return, the Legislative Coordinator communicates the edits back to Minister's offices. The Legislative Officer provides comments on spelling, grammar and format within 24 hours back to the Minister's office after it has been submitted for CHS review.
  - This may be to the MSA or the EAC, dependent on the preference of the Minister's office. Changes are never sent directly back to the Department by the Legislative Coordinator.
5. Minister's offices arrange for the Return to be edited and put into the standard format.
  - In many instances, these are edited on site by Minister's staff. However, some offices choose to send the directions for editing back to the Department and the work is undertaken there and a revised statement sent back. In other cases, edits may require additional information from the Department, which the MSA would obtain either by phone or email.
6. Minister's offices prepare and submit House-ready versions of the Return to the Legislative Officer.
  - This would include **PDF copy and a larger font reading copy, if required.**
  - At the same time, Minister's staff provide a final copy of the Return to the Department, usually in electronic form.
  - For version control, Minister's staff are advised not to provide a final copy of the Return to their Minister in the House; the Legislative Officer will arrange to put a copy in the Minister's House Folder.
7. The Legislative Officer provides the Return to the Clerk's Office in accordance with the Rules of the Legislative Assembly.

8. The Legislative Officer places the reading copy of the Return in the Minister's House Folder and places the folder on the Minister's desk in the Chamber.
9. The Minister has the option to read the Return or have the Clerk present the Return under the item "Returns to Written Questions" and it will appear in Hansard as if it had been read.

### **Format**

Returns to Written Questions are required to be completed on the "Return to Written Question" form. Minister's offices have templates in PDF and Word formats. See example page 33. Returns should be kept to one page, if possible. Use white 8 ½ x 11 paper for any additional pages and ensure that the question number is in the top right-hand corner on all pages of the Return and pages are numbered.

If additional information is needed (i.e. charts, tables, etc.) for a complete response to the Member, the Minister should formally table them in the House. The document to be tabled should be referred to in the Return. Do not use phrases such as "I am pleased to table a document...." or "Attached please find...." The correct wording is "Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table..." See "Tabling of Documents" page 34.

The following naming convention should be used for submitting Returns electronically to Legislation and House Planning Division. Reading versions should be clearly indicated by including "Reading" at the beginning before the date.

Returns: Date of Delivery - RWQ Number\_Title of Question  
Example: 2019-05-26 RWQ 5-19(2)\_Hydraulic Fracturing

### **Common Mistakes**

- 1) **Making reference to appropriations (i.e. budgets, funding, etc.) not yet approved by the House.**
- 2) **Appending materials or using tables, charts etc. which should be tabled in the House. (The Return is a speech, meant to be read out loud. Phrases such as "...attached please find..." or "...the table below..." do not make sense in a speech. Any attachments or lists should be prepared as a document for tabling and the Return should refer to the document. The correct wording is "Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table..." )**
- 3) **Using the wrong format or missing letterhead on the PDF.**
- 4) **Forgetting to include the question number and title or using a different title instead of the title of the question used in Hansard.**
- 5) **Referring to Members by their first name and capitalization of "Members".**
- 6) **Including "WQ" before the question number at the top of the page and missing the question number on the additional pages.**
- 7) **Doing a follow-up letter to a Member in response to a Written Question.**
- 8) **Not getting the Return in on time for review by Cabinet (i.e. 3 days prior to delivery).**

*Any questions?*

*Just call Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032 or Legislative Coordinator at Ext. 11030*

THE HONOURABLE PAULIE CHINNA  
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
HOUSING CORPORATION

**Vacancy Rates in Housing Programs**

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question asked by the Member for Kam Lake on March 31, 2021 regarding vacancy rates in housing programs.

The Member enquired about the number of vacant units by program and community as of March 31, 2021. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table this information.

The Member also enquired about how long each vacant unit has been vacant. The NWT Housing Corporation does track this information, but the IT system is unable to generate a single report that covers this metric for all vacant Housing Corporation units. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is always striving to improve its IT system and this may present an opportunity for future development in the relevant software.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

***[Formatting Notes: Return to Written Question Letterhead with additional pages on white 8.5 x 11 paper, Cambria 12 point, single-space heading, double space to title and 1.5 spacing in body of statement, page numbers if over one page in length]***

# ***TABLING OF DOCUMENTS***

## **Rules of the Legislative Assembly**

For Tabling of Documents, the Rules of the Legislative Assembly state:

- Rule 4.5**      *(1) Under the item “Tabling of Documents”, a Member may provide to the House a written or printed paper providing information in any Official Language which may be of sufficient public import or interest and is not widely available in the public domain or which is required to be tabled in the House by any act or order of the Assembly.*  
*(2) A Member may make a brief factual statement to identify the document.*  
*(3) The Speaker shall ensure that the tabled document conforms to the rules and practices of the House and may rule a tabled document out of order.*

## **Process for Development and Delivery**

Current Cabinet direction requires Responses to Motions (page 36) and Responses to Standing Committee Reports (page 39) to be formally approved by Cabinet by using the usual Cabinet process (i.e. a Decision Paper), prior to tabling. Session protocols and conventions require Ministers to bring other documents relating to major or new initiatives, controversial, multi-departmental issues or documents that make a commitment on behalf of the Department or GNWT to Cabinet for approval prior to tabling. Annual Reports and other similar documents do not normally require formal Cabinet approval prior to tabling. If the regular Cabinet submission process cannot be met, the Minister’s Office must provide the Legislative Coordinator with an e-version for Cabinet approval in CHS.

1. Any documents for tabling in an upcoming session should be identified in the Minister’s response to the Government House Leader’s session preparation call letter. Ensure that document titles do not contain acronyms, spell everything out in the title on the cover and that the title does not contain slashes “/”, for ease of electronic records processing.
2. Tabling a document in the House makes the document publicly available and the copies provided should be exactly what the Minister’s Office and Department want the public to have. The document and PDF version, is received by Minister’s office, usually reviewed by the MSA and/or EAC and then provided to the Minister for review/approval for tabling.
3. The Minister’s Office provides the document and copies to the Legislative Officer (**see “Copies” page 35**) and a PDF version e-mailed **at least three days prior to the tabling date**. The Legislative Officer should be advised, when the document is provided, if there is a preferred date for tabling.
  - A document is not considered to be ready for tabling until all copies and the PDF have been received by Legislation and House Planning
4. Legislative Officer prepares the standard tabling statement for the Minister, which simply states the title of the document and if required by Statute, the applicable section.
  - Tabling statements are not meant to be a replacement for Minister’s Statements. The Rules do allow for a brief statement, no more than two or three sentences to be made to identify the document. If more detail is required, a separate Minister’s Statement should be prepared. The statement should make reference to the fact that the document will be tabled at the appropriate time (i.e. “Later today I will table....”)

5. The Legislative Officer places the tabling statement in the Minister's House Folder and places the folder on the Minister's desk in the Chamber.
6. The Minister tables the document under the item "Tabling of Documents" on the Orders.
  - A document, once tabled, becomes a public document and cannot be changed. Should something need to be corrected or added to a document that has been tabled, it will need to be tabled again.
7. The Legislative Officer provides a PDF copy of the document to the Clerk's Office.
8. The Legislative Assembly will post a numbered and dated copy of the document on their web site.

### **Copies**

The document and copies provided should be exactly what the Minister's Office and Department want to be available to the public.

**4 copies and a PDF** are required for any document to be tabled *Note: that the PDF is required to be provided as a single file for posting onto the website, with any blank pages removed.* If your TD is translated, all languages are required to be combined into a single file PDF for tabling. There is no formal requirement in the Rules that a document must be translated into any official language in order to be tabled in the House.

The following naming convention should be used for submitting documents for tabling electronically to Legislation and House Planning Division:

Date of Delivery - TD\_Title of Document – If unscheduled use the date of submission

Example: 2019-05-26 TD\_Anti-Poverty Strategy

The Legislative Assembly posts all tabled documents on their website, which includes the tabled document number and date that it was tabled on.

### **Common Mistakes**

- (1) **Making reference to any appropriations (i.e. budgets, funding, etc.) not yet approved by the House.**
- (2) **A tabling statement is not a Minister's Statement. If you want to include more detail than a few sentences to identify the document, write a separate Minister's Statement.**
- (1) **Sufficient copies or single PDF file not provided to the Legislative Officer.**
- (2) **Document title contains an acronym or slashes "/".**

*Any questions?*

*Just call Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032 or Legislative Coordinator at Ext. 11030*

# ***RESPONSES TO MOTIONS***

## **Rules of the Legislative Assembly**

For Motions, the Rules of the Legislative Assembly state:

### ***Rule 6.2***

*(1) A motion is used to propose that the Assembly:*

- (a) do something;*
- (b) order something to be done; or*
- (c) express an opinion on a matter.*

*(2) An adopted motion becomes either an order or resolution of the Assembly. It becomes an order when the Assembly requires its Committees, its Members or its officers to do something. It becomes a resolution when it declares the opinion of the Assembly or affirms a fact or a principle.*

*(3) A motion adopted by the House, and requesting a response from the Government will require the Government to table such a response within 120 days, or at the earliest opportunity subsequent to the passage of 120 days.*

## **General Information**

- Cabinet must approve all Responses to Motions before they are tabled in the House. Responses should be brought to Cabinet as a decision item as per the usual Cabinet process.
- Not every Motion will require a comprehensive response; it is only when the resolution portion of the motion invokes Rule 6.2(3) (i.e. last paragraph in the motion requests a response within 120 days)
- The requirement for the Government to provide a Comprehensive Response to a Motion does not “die” upon prorogation of a session, only at dissolution of the Legislative Assembly.
- If the House is not sitting when the 120 days has passed, the Response will need to be tabled on the first day that the House reconvenes.

## **Process for Development and Delivery**

1. Any Responses to Motions for tabling in an upcoming session should be identified in the Minister’s response to the Government House Leader’s session preparation call letter.
2. Decision Paper and Responses are drafted by department staff, approved at the department level and sent to the Minister’s office electronically. The cover letter for the submission to Cabinet should also be included when submitting to the Minister’s office.
3. Decision Paper and Responses are received by Minister’s’ office, usually reviewed by the MSA and/or EAC and then provided to the Minister for approval and submission to Cabinet.
4. Once approved by Cabinet for tabling, the MSA and/or EAC will provide the required copies for tabling to the Legislative Officer. See “Tabling of Documents” page 34 and “Copies” page 35.
5. The Legislative Officer prepares the standard tabling statement for the Minister, which simply states the title of the Response.



6. The Legislative Officer places the tabling statement in the Minister's House Folder and places the folder on the Minister's desk in the Chamber.
7. The Minister tables the Response under the item "Tabling of Documents".
8. The Legislative Assembly will post a numbered and dated copy of the document on their web site.

### **Format**

The Response to Motion should be on Executive Letterhead (Black) and regular 8 ½ x 11 white paper for any additional pages, single-spaced with the recommended 12 point Cambria. The Response should be entitled "Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion (Motion Number and Title of the Motion)". See example page 38. Only the resolution portion of the motion as presented in the Legislative Assembly needs to be included at the beginning of the government response, there is no requirement to repeat the "Whereas" clauses, and followed by the comprehensive response.

The following naming convention should be used for submitting Responses to Motions electronically to Legislation and House Planning Division:

Date of tabling TD\_Response to Motion # and Title of Motion – If unscheduled use the date of submission

Example: 2019-05-26 TD\_Response to Motion 8-18(2) Review of Anti-Poverty Strategy

### **Common Mistakes**

- 1) Not including the Motion Number in the title.**
- 2) Not using the proper or complete title of the Motion**
- 3) Including the "Whereas" clauses in the response.**

*Any questions?*

*Just call Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032 or Legislative Coordinator at Ext. 11030*



**(EXAMPLE)**

**Government of the Northwest Territories Response to  
Motion 8-19(2): Review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act**

**Motion**

***THEREFORE I MOVE, that the Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories undertake a comprehensive review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, including an examination of access to information and privacy legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions and all past recommendations of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and bring forward a bill during the first two years of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly;***

***AND FURTHER, that the Government of the Northwest Territories include mention of the need for a comprehensive review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act in any transition document or report to the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly;***

***AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.***

**GNWT Response**

In 1996, the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories (NWT) passed the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPP Act)*. It was created to promote access to information that the government creates and receives, and to protect individual privacy rights related to that information. This legislation sets out legal conditions to make public bodies more accountable to the public, and protect the personal information of the public held in the custody or control of the public bodies that fall under the Act. The Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT's) commitment to providing open, accessible and accountable government to the people of the NWT is evidenced by the numerous amendments to the ATIPP legislation, policies, guidelines and training that have taken place since the *Act* came into force. The GNWT acknowledges the interest of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly to move forward on a comprehensive review of the *ATIPP Act* and supports the need for effective review mechanisms. The current review mechanism to address access and privacy issues identified by the Information and Privacy Commissioner is through the Legislative Assembly by means of the Standing Committee's review of the Commissioner's annual reports. This review mechanism has been in place since the late 1990s. etc.

***[Formatting Notes: Black Executive Letterhead with additional pages on white 8.5 x 11 paper, Cambria 12 point, single-space title and underline last line only, double space to title and 1.5 spacing in body of statement, page numbers if over one page in length]***

# ***RESPONSES TO STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS***

## **Rules of the Legislative Assembly**

For Responses to Standing and Special Committee Reports, the Rules of the Legislative Assembly state:

### ***Rule 9.4***

*(1) Every report of a Standing or Special Committee shall be in writing and signed by the Chair. The Chair or Deputy Chair shall present the report under the item "Reports of Standing and Special Committees" on the Order Paper. During the presentation of the report, the Chair or Deputy Chair may share the reading of the report with one or more Committee Members.*

*(2) The Member presenting the report shall move that the Assembly receive the report.*

*(3) A report from a Standing or Special Committee may, without notice, be:*

*(a) adopted by the Assembly;*

*(b) referred to Committee of the Whole; or*

*(c) referred back to the Committee which presented it.*

*(4) Committee of the Whole shall consider a report from a Standing or Special Committee until two Sitting days have passed from the presentation of the report.*

*(5) A motion adopted by Committee of the Whole, requesting a response from the Government to the Committee report and any related motions, will require the Government to table a comprehensive response within 120 days, or at the earliest opportunity subsequent to the passage of 120 days.*

## **General Information**

- Cabinet must approve all Responses to Committee Reports before they are tabled in the House. Responses should be brought to Cabinet as a decision item as per the usual Cabinet process.
- Not every Standing and Special Committee Report will require a comprehensive response. Only when the Committee invokes Rule 9.4(5) requesting such a response. Usually this request would be in the form of a recommendation contained within the Report and/or simply moved as a Committee Motion in Committee of the Whole. See "Committee of the Whole" page 45.
- The requirement for the government to provide a Comprehensive Response to a Standing or Special Committee Report does not "die" upon prorogation of a session, only at dissolution of the Legislative Assembly.
- If the House is not sitting when the 120 days has passed, the Response will need to be tabled on the first day that the House reconvenes.
- Responses do not need to include the actual recommendation that calls for a response within 120 days, this is simply a procedural motion and not required to be included in the formal government response.

## **Process for Development and Delivery**

1. Any Responses to Standing and Special Committee reports for tabling in an upcoming session should be identified in the Minister's response to the Government House Leader's session preparation call letter.
2. Decision Paper and Responses are drafted by department staff, approved at the department level and sent electronically to the Minister's office. The cover letter for the submission to Cabinet should also be included when sending to the Minister's office.

3. Decision Paper and Responses are received by Minister's office, usually reviewed by the MSA and/or EAC and then provided to the Minister for approval and submission to Cabinet.
4. Once approved by Cabinet for tabling, the MSA and/or EAC will provide the required copies for tabling to the Legislative Officer. See "Tabling of Documents" page 34 and "**Copies**" page 35.
5. The Legislative Officer prepares the standard tabling statement for the Minister, which simply states the title of the document.
6. The Legislative Officer places the tabling statement in the Minister's House Folder and places the folder on the Minister's desk in the Chamber.
7. The Minister tables the Response under the item "Tabling of Documents" on the Orders.
8. The Legislative Assembly will post a numbered and dated copy of the document on their web site.

### **Format**

The Response to Committee Report should be on Executive Letterhead (Black) and regular 8 ½ x 11 white paper for any additional pages, single-spaced with the recommended 12 point Cambria. The Response should be entitled "Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report (Report Number and Title of the Committee Report)". The name of the Standing Committee is not required to be included in the title. See example page 41.

The following naming convention should be used for submitting Responses to Committee Reports electronically to Legislation and House Planning Division:

Date of Tabling TD\_Response to Committee Report Number and Title of Report – If unscheduled use the date of submission

Example: 2019-05-26 TD\_Response to Committee Report 7-19(2): Report on Review of Bill 16: An Act to Amend the Dog Act

### **Common Mistakes**

- (1) Not including the Committee Report Number in the title.**
- (2) Not using the proper or complete title of the Committee Report.**
- (3) Including the Standing Committee name in the title.**
- (4) Response including the recommendation for a response within 120 days.**

*Any questions?*

*Just call Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032 or Legislative Coordinator at Ext. 11030*



**(EXAMPLE)**

**Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee  
Report 7-19(1): Report on the Review of Bill 16: An Act to Amend the Dog Act**

Background

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure (SCEDI) presented their Committee Report “Report on Bill 16: An Act to Amend the Dog Act” on March 1, 2011. This report contains three recommendations for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) which address access to veterinary services, assistance to community governments, and public education.

On March 3, 2011, CR 7-19(1) was considered in Committee of the Whole. Two additional recommendations, not contained in the report, were also carried. This include a recommendation that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to the report within 120 days, and to immediately begin development of a comprehensive animal protection legislation for introduction early in the life of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Department of MACA initiate discussions with stakeholders and veterinary colleagues to explore options for expanding access to veterinary services, and in particular spay and neuter programs, throughout the Northwest Territories, and where necessary, facilitate the implementation of such options.

*GNWT Response*

Amongst other activities, MACA’s primary focus is community governments and providing community governments with the funding and legislative framework within which they operate. MACA does not have the authority or the mandate to look after the health of dogs or other animals and as a result, is unable to act on the Committee’s recommendation.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Department of MACA consult with community governments prior to the coming into force of the Act to ensure that they have adequate resources, including staff training, to implement the Act.

*GNWT Response*

Information packages, including a “Question and Answer” sheet, were sent to all community governments in April 2011. MACA will continue to work with, and support community governments to implement territorial legislation as required.

***[Formatting Notes: Black Executive Letterhead with additional pages on white 8.5 x 11 paper, Cambria 12 point, single-space title and underline last line only and 1.5 spacing in body of statement, page numbers if over one page in length]***

## ***PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY - BILLS***

Although the Rules are silent on this matter, the “Consensus Government in the Northwest Territories – Guiding Principles and Process Conventions” sets out our unique process for the development of legislation and involvement of Standing Committees prior to the introduction of a bill in the House. For additional information regarding the process for development of bills please refer to A Users Guide to Legislation in the Northwest Territories.

### **General Information**

The Plain Language Summary document is a tool to better inform the public of what the Bill does in simple to understand language. The Plain Language Summary will be circulated by the Standing Committee during their public hearings on the bill. The Plain Language Summary should not be a clause-by-clause explanation, but to highlight the key points of the principle of the bill. A Plain Language Summary should address the following points:

- Background information
- Purpose of the new or amended Act
- What will the new or amended Act do?
- How is the new or amended Act different from the current Act? What is changing?
- How was the new or amended Act developed? Process used? Who was consulted?
- Is the new or amended legislation interconnected with other legislation?
- Where to go for additional information? Who to contact in the department with questions?

### **Process for Development and Delivery**

1. Any legislation to be introduced in an upcoming session should be identified in the Minister’s response to the Government House Leader’s session preparation call letter. Ensure that document titles do not contain acronyms, spell everything out in the title on the cover and that the title does not contain slashes “/”, for ease of electronic records processing. A Plain Language Summary is to be submitted along with the draft bill for Cabinet consideration and will be tabled after the bill receives 1<sup>st</sup> Reading in the House.
2. Tabling a document in the House makes the document publicly available and the copies provided should be exactly what the Minister’s Office and Department want the public to have. The document and PDF version, is received by Minister’s office, usually reviewed by the MSA and/or EAC and then provided to the Minister for review/approval for tabling.
3. The Minister’s Office provides the document and copies to the Legislative Officer (**see “Copies” page 35**) and a PDF version e-mailed once the draft bill has been approved by Cabinet.
4. Legislative Officer prepares the standard tabling statement for the Minister, which simply states the title of the document.
5. The day after the bill received 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, the Legislative Officer places the tabling statement in the Minister’s House Folder and places the folder on the Minister’s desk in the Chamber.
6. The Minister tables the document under the item “Tabling of Documents” on the Orders.
7. The Legislative Officer provides a PDF copy of the document to the Clerk’s Office.
8. The Legislative Assembly will post a numbered and dated copy of the document on their web site.

### **Format**

The Plain Language Summary should be on Executive Letterhead (Black) and regular 8 ½ x 11 white paper for any additional pages, single-spaced with the recommended 12 point Cambria. Make sure to use page numbers if more than one page in length. The Response should be entitled "Plain Language Summary for Bill (Number and Title of the Bill)". See example page 44.

The following naming convention should be used for submitting a Plain Language Summary electronically to Legislation and House Planning Division:

Date of Tabling TD\_Plain Language Summary for Bill Number and Title of Bill – If unscheduled use the date of submission

Example: 2019-05-26 TD\_Plain Language Summary of Bill 2: Forest Act

### **Common Mistakes**

- (1) Not including the Plain Language Summary with draft bill for Cabinet approval.**

*Any questions?*

*Just call Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032 or Legislative Coordinator at Ext. 11030*



### **Plain Language Summary for Bill 2: Forest Act**

The Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Environment and Natural Resources is developing a new Forest Act to amend and combine existing Forest Management Act and the Forest Protection Act. The new legislation which was created in collaboration with Indigenous Governments and organizations, regulatory boards, stakeholders and the public.

Prior to 1988, the federal government was the manager of forestry, and the GNWT borrowed from the federal legislation when they assumed responsibility. A new Act is needed to bring legislation in line with authorities received through devolution, to help give the GNWT a legislative base to better balance the environment with economic and social needs.

The Forest Act is based in three key principles:

- The complexity, diversity and resilience of our natural forests need to be maintained through sustainable management, for the benefit of northerners today and in the future;
- There are many values derived from our forests, some of which are under regulation and others that are addressed through management; and
- Wildfire is a natural part of forest ecology.

The new Act will:

- Support the ecological integrity of the forest ecosystem for the benefit of NWT residents and the environment;
- Address current and future pressures on forest resources and employ and ecosystem-based approach to forest management;
- Present an approach to wildfire management that reflects up-to-date practices;
- Redefine, clarify and modernize terminology; and,
- Reflect the values of NWT residents.

The new Act contains the following changes:

- Includes management of non-timber forest products and forest activities, like biomass
- Gives regulation-making authority to impose regional or local fire bans
- Requires completion of Forest Ecosystem Management Plans
- Requires industry to produce fire prevention plans
- Recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and treaty rights, including those of land claim and self-government agreement

The new Act was developed through a partnership approach with a Technical Working Group of Indigenous governments and organizations and the Stakeholders Advisory Group consisting of non-government organizations, regulatory boards and industry representatives. There was also an external public review period.

For additional information or questions contact:

Environment and Natural Resources

Forest Management Division

Call: (867) 872-7700

Email: [forestmanagement@gov.nt.ca](mailto:forestmanagement@gov.nt.ca)



## ***COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE***

Committee of the Whole, commonly referred to as CoW, is a less formal portion of the Orders of the Day where Members review the detail of bills (including Estimates and Supplementary Estimates) and other matters referred by the House such as Committee Reports, Minister's Statements or Tabled Documents. Referral of business items to Committee of the Whole is done by way of motion during formal session. Bills are placed on the Committee of the Whole agenda two sitting days after being reported back to the House by a Standing Committee. In some instances bills are referred directly to Committee of the Whole after 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading but this can only be done with unanimous consent.

Committee of the Whole is presided over by a Chair of Committee of the Whole (Deputy Speaker), not the Speaker. Members have a ten-minute time limit on speaking, but may speak more than once at the discretion of the Chair. Motions made in Committee of the Whole (committee motions) are less formal and do not require notice or a seconder.

When a bill is going to be considered. The Chair will first ask the Minister for opening remarks to introduce the bill, then to the Chair of the Standing Committee that considered the bill for any comments. The Chair will then ask the Minister if they wish to bring in witnesses, important to note that the witness table only has seating for three people (the Minister + two witnesses). **If the Minister requires more than two witnesses, Sargent-At-Arms must be notified to ensure adequate seating and microphones are available.** Witnesses may be swapped out during discussions if needed. The discussion would begin with general comments on the bill followed by a clause-by-clause review of the bill. Once they have concluded consideration it would be reported back to the House as ready for 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading.

When Main Estimates documents (the operational budget) is under consideration. The Chair will first ask the Minister for opening remarks to introduce their department. The Chair will then ask the Minister if they wish to bring in witnesses. Generally there are no general comments and discussion on detail of the departments estimates starts.

When Capital Estimates documents (the infrastructure budget) is under consideration. The Chair will only ask the Minister of Finance for opening remarks to introduce the estimates. Each Minister is not expected to deliver opening remarks to introduce their capital budgets. The Chair will then ask the respective Minister (of department under consideration) if they wish to bring in witnesses. Generally there are no general comments and discussion on detail of the departments estimates starts. This is the same process used for Supplementary Estimates, generally only the Minister of Finance and their witnesses sit at the witness table when the document is under consideration.

For additional information regarding the process for consideration of bills and estimates documents (Budget) in Committee of the Whole please refer to A Users Guide to Legislation in the Northwest Territories.

## **Commitments**

During the course of discussions in Committee of the Whole, the Minister may make a commitment of some kind, such as providing more information or further detail for Members. It is very important to note that there are no Rules governing ministerial commitments made in Committee of the Whole and Legislation and House Planning Division does not track the commitments made by Ministers in CoW.

In the absence of specific Rules on ministerial commitments in Committee of the Whole, an informal protocol has been established based on advice from the Clerk's Office. When responding to these commitments, a letter and any attachments should be addressed to all MLAs and copied to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Coordinator, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. (See example page 52) Although the Rules do not specify a time limit for a response as a general rule it is expected that any commitments made in Committee of the Whole will be responded to within five days by the Minister.

During review of the Main Estimates or Supplementary Estimates the Minister may make several commitments to provide information or do something. It is expected that all commitments made by the Minister is responded to in one single letter and not a separate letter for each commitment.

For commitments made during Oral Question period, see "Commitments" page 9.

## **Committee Motions**

Committee Motions are motions debated and voted on in Committee of the Whole. These motions are directly related to a specific item under consideration and will not require a formal response. For example, during consideration of a Committee Report, the committee recommendations contained within the report are usually moved as committee motions during Members' consideration. These motions may include a requirement for a comprehensive response. The response required would be for the actual Committee Report, not a response to committee motion. See "Responses to Standing and Special Committee Reports" page 39.

## **Opening Remarks**

There is nothing specific in the Rules of the Legislative Assembly regarding Opening Remarks, although Rule 9.1(5) states "*No Member shall speak for more than ten minutes at any one time in Committee of the Whole.*" and there are some conventions in place. For instance, the Chairman will call upon Ministers to make Opening Remarks when presenting a bill or a department budget in Committee of the Whole. See "Session Protocols and Conventions" page 3.

## **Process for Development and Delivery**

### **Opening Remarks for Department Budgets**

Opening Remarks for Department budgets should be submitted as soon as possible in the first two weeks of a budget session (February-March), department review order is generally unknown leading up to the sitting. Early submission allows Cabinet to review and be able to focus on other important House business as the sitting progresses.

1. Opening Remarks are drafted by department staff and approved at the department level and forwarded electronically to the Minister's Office.

2. Opening Remarks are received by Minister's offices, usually reviewed by the MSA and/or EAC and forward to Department of Finance for review.
3. Department of Finance sends the Opening Remarks with suggested edits back to the MSA and/or EAC and provided to the Minister for final review/approval for submission to Legislation and House Planning.
  - Ministers may make changes to the Opening Remarks before submitting it to Legislation and House Planning Division. If substantive changes are desired by the Minister, discussion with the Department is normally a part of the process. Sometimes statements are simply returned to the Department with directions for rewriting.
4. The Minister-approved Opening Remarks are provided to the Legislative Coordinator electronically by the Minister's staff for review in Cabinet House Strategy.
  - As a norm, Opening Remarks are added to the CHS agenda and reviewed as soon as possible after they are received by the Legislative Coordinator.
5. Cabinet reviews the Opening Remarks and provides direction on any changes or additions to be made to the Opening Remarks.
  - It is expected that suggestions for substantive changes would be raised at the table by Ministers or Cabinet advisors.
  - The Legislative Coordinator is primarily responsible for noting these changes. Minor editorial changes (i.e. spelling/grammar) need not be raised at the table, but should be provided to the Legislative Coordinator who would consolidate all comments on to a single copy of the Opening Remarks. The Legislative Officer provides comments on spelling, grammar and format within 24 hours back to the Minister's office after it has been submitted for CHS review.
  - Cabinet may direct that Opening Remarks to Department budgets be re-written in consultation with Finance.
6. The Legislative Coordinator communicates the edits back to Minister's offices.
  - This may be to the MSA or the EAC, dependent on the preference of the Minister's office. Changes are never sent directly back to the Department by the Legislative Coordinator.
  - As required, the Legislative Coordinator may seek further clarification on changes from advisors after the Cabinet House Strategy meeting and before communicating direction back to the Minister's office.
  - If the Opening Remarks have gone through Cabinet House Strategy without any changes, the Legislative Coordinator would advise that final versions can be prepared and submitted to the Legislative Officer.
7. Minister's offices arrange for the Opening Remarks to be edited and put into the standard format.
  - In many instances, the Opening Remarks are edited on site by Minister's staff. However, some offices choose to send the directions for editing back to the Department and the work is undertaken there and revised Opening Remarks sent back. In other cases, edits would require additional information from the Department, which the MSA would obtain either by phone or email.

- The method for editing Opening Remarks is not prescribed and Minister's offices use whatever means seem most appropriate and/or efficient. (Often the content of the Opening Remarks and nature of the directed changes would dictate the best method.)
  - In some instances, there will be a requirement for the Opening Remarks to be brought back to Cabinet House Strategy for a final review.
8. Minister's offices prepare and submit House-ready versions of the Opening Remarks to the Legislative Officer.
    - This would include **a larger font reading copy and PDF.**
    - At the same time, Minister's staff also provide a final copy of the Opening Remarks to the Department, in electronic form.
    - For version control, Minister's staff are advised not to provide a final copy of the Opening Remarks to their Minister for in the House; the Legislative Officer will ensure the final version will be on the Minister's desk in the Chamber.
  9. The Legislative Officer places the reading copy of the Opening Remarks in the Minister's House Folder and places the folder on the Minister's desk in the Chamber.
  10. The Legislative Officer provides a PDF to the Clerk's Office for Hansard just before the House begins.
  11. The Minister delivers the Opening Remarks during Committee of the Whole.

### Opening Remarks for Bills

If the bill is politically sensitive or controversial, Opening Remarks should be brought to Cabinet House Strategy using the same process as Opening Remarks for Department budgets.

1. Opening Remarks are drafted by department staff and approved at the department level and forwarded electronically to the Minister's Office.
2. Opening Remarks are received by Minister's offices, usually reviewed by the MSA and/or EAC and then provided to the Minister for review/approval.
3. Minister's offices will ensure that the Opening Remarks are in the standard format.
4. Minister's offices prepare and submit House-ready versions of the Opening Remarks to the Legislative Officer.
  - This would include **a larger font reading copy and PDF.**
  - At the same time, Minister's staff also provide a final copy of the Opening Remarks to the Department, if required, in electronic form.
  - For version control, Minister's staff are advised not to provide a final copy of the Opening Remarks to their Minister for in the House; the Legislative Officer will ensure the final version will be on the Minister's desk in the Chamber.

5. The Legislative Officer places the reading copy of the Opening Remarks in the Minister's House Folder and places the folder on the Minister's desk in the Chamber.
6. The Legislative Officer provides a PDF to the Clerk's Office for Hansard just before the House begins.
7. The Minister delivers the Opening Remarks during Committee of the Whole.

### **Copies**

#### **Opening Remarks for Department Budgets:**

- **E-version** to Legislation and House Planning for review in Cabinet House Strategy.
- Following review, **reading copy and PDF** of the approved and/or revised final remarks to the Legislative Officer.

The following naming convention should be used for submitting Opening Remarks electronically to Legislation and House Planning Division. Reading versions should be clearly indicated by including "Reading" at the beginning before the date.

Date of submission OR\_Department Name Main Estimates, 2019-2020

Example: 2019-05-26 OR\_Executive and Indigenous Affairs Main Estimates, 2019-2020

#### **Opening Remarks for Bills:**

- **Reading copy and PDF** to the Legislative Officer. (For politically sensitive or controversial bills, see "Opening Remarks for Department budgets" page 46)

The following naming convention should be used for submitting Opening Remarks electronically to Legislation and House Planning Division. Reading versions should be clearly indicated by including "Reading" at the beginning before the date.

Date of Submission OR\_Bill Number – Title of Bill

Example: 2019-05-26 OR\_Bill 37- Financial Administration Act

### **Format**

The Opening Remarks should be 1.5 spacing with the recommended 12 point Cambria. The document should be entitled "Opening Remarks for Bill (Number and Name of the Bill)" or "Opening Remarks for Department of (Name of Department) Main Estimates". See example page 51.

### **Common Mistakes**

#### **Responding to Commitments**

- (1) **Responding to commitments and addressing the letter only to the Member who asked the question and not all MLAs.**
- (2) **Not providing a copy to the Clerk and/or Legislative Coordinator.**

#### **Opening Remarks**

- (1) **Using a Minister's Statement format.**
- (2) **Using "Minister's Statement" as a title.**

- (3) Introducing witnesses in the opening remarks (Unlike Standing Committee meetings, witnesses are not brought into the Chamber until after the Minister and Standing Committee have delivered their Remarks).**
- (4) Using the phrase “Mr. Speaker” or “Mr. Chairman” in the Remarks.**
- (5) beginning the statement with “Thank you”.**
- (6) Having a date on the page or included in the footer.**

*Any questions?*

*Just call Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032 or Legislative Coordinator at Ext. 11030*

**(EXAMPLE)**

**THE HONOURABLE (Name of Minister)**  
**MINISTER OF (Department)**

**Opening Remarks for Bill 1:**  
**An Act to Amend the Education Act**

I am here to introduce Bill 1: An Act to Amend the Education Act. This Bill addresses etc.  
etc.

***OR***

**THE HONOURABLE (Name of Minister)**  
**MINISTER OF (Department)**

**Opening Remarks for the**  
**Department of Justice 2019-2020 Main Estimates**

I am here to present the Department of Justice's Main Estimates for the fiscal year 2019-  
2020. The Department is proposing etc. etc.

***[Formatting Notes: White 8.5 x 11 paper, Cambria 12 point, single-space heading, double space to title and 1.5 spacing in body of statement, page numbers if over one page in length]***



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Follow-up to Commitments Made on the Review of Environment and Natural Resources' 2019-2020 Main Estimates**

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The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) appreciated the opportunity to discuss the 2019-2020 Main Estimates on March 6, 2019. As per the commitments made during the Committee's review, ENR offers the attached responses.

Should there be any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Shane Thompson  
Minister  
Environment and Natural Resources

Attachments

- c. Secretary to Financial Management Board  
Deputy Minister, Environment and Natural Resources  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
Legislative Coordinator



# PETITIONS

## **Rules of the Legislative Assembly**

For Petitions, the Rules of the Legislative Assembly state:

### **Rule 4.4**

- (1) A Member may present a petition to the Assembly during a Sitting by filing it with the Clerk, or in the manner set out in Rule 4.4 (3).*
- (2) The Clerk shall report to the House every Petition presented under Rule 4.4(1) under the item "Petitions".*
- (3) A Member may present a petition under the item "Petitions". The Member shall make a brief statement summarizing the contents of the petition, the number of handwritten signatures, the number of electronic signatures, and the number of signatories' resident in the Northwest Territories; and shall sign their name on that petition. A Member shall not exceed in five minutes in presenting a petition.*
- (4) The Speaker shall not allow debate on the presentation of a petition.*
- (5) No Member may present a petition unless the Clerk has reviewed it for form and content.*
- (6) The Clerk shall determine that every petition shall:*
  - (a) be addressed to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly;*
  - (b) contain a clear, proper and respectful request that the House take some action within its authority and not contain irrelevant statements;*
  - (c) be written, typewritten or printed on paper of usual size;*
  - (d) have its request appear at the top of every sheet, if it consists of more than one sheet of signatures; and*
  - (e) contain the names, community of residence and signatures written directly on the petition and not pasted or otherwise transferred to it.*
- (7) A Member presenting a petition shall be responsible for any impertinent or improper matter that it contains.*
- (8) Signatures on a petition must be handwritten, or they must be electronic signatures obtained from the Legislative Assembly e-petitions site.*
- (9) A Member, may, after notice, move that a petition be referred to a Standing or Special Committee which shall report its recommendations to the Assembly.*
- (10) The Clerk shall deliver copies of all petitions presented to either the Speaker or the Minister responsible.*
- (11) The Speaker or the Minister responsible shall provide a response to a petition within 60 calendar days of its presentation. The response shall be tabled at the earliest opportunity.*

## **Process for Development and Delivery**

1. Any responses to Petitions for an upcoming session should be identified in the Minister's response to the Government House Leader's session preparation call letter.
2. The Response is prepared by department staff, approved at the department level and sent to the Minister's office, in electronic format.
3. Responses are received by the Minister's office, usually reviewed by the MSA and/or EAC and then provided to the Minister for review/approval.
4. Once approved for tabling, the MSA and/or EAC will provide the required copies for tabling to the Legislative Officer. See "Tabling of Documents" page 34 and "**Copies**" page 35.

5. The Legislative Officer prepares the standard tabling statement for the Minister, which simply states the title of the document.
6. The Legislative Officer places the tabling statement and Response in the Minister's House Folder and places the folder on the Minister's desk in the Chamber.
7. The Minister tables the Response under the item "Tabling of Documents" on the Orders.
8. The Legislative Assembly will post a numbered and dated copy of the document on their web site.

### **Format**

Responses to Petitions are required to be completed on the "Response to Petitions" form. Minister's offices have templates in PDF and Word formats. See example page 55. Responses should be single-spaced and kept to one page, if possible. Use white 8 ½ x 11 paper for any additional pages and ensure that the petition number is in the top right-hand corner on all pages of the response and pages are numbered.

The following naming convention should be used for submitting a Response to Petition electronically to Legislation and House Planning Division:

Date of Submission 2019-05-26 Petition Number Title of Petition

Example: 2019-05-26 Petition 2-19(2)\_Junior Kindergarten

### **Common Mistakes**

- (1) Failing to use the proper form.**
- (2) Submitting the response too late for review by Cabinet (3 days prior to scheduled delivery).**
- (3) Using the wrong format.**
- (4) Having a date on the bottom of the page or included in the footer.**

*Any questions?*

*Just call Legislative Officer at Ext. 11032 or Legislative Coordinator at Ext. 11030*

Petition tabled by Ms. Frieda Martselos on February 25, 2021

Response by the Honourable Diane Archie, Minister of Infrastructure

### **Returning Fort Smith Regional Airport Runway to Former Specifications**

The Department of Infrastructure is committed to developing and maintaining public infrastructure that is both safe and sustainable, and that meets regulatory requirements and the needs of communities.

Transport Canada's TP312 *Aerodrome Standards and Recommended Practices* identifies the runway requirements for airports in Canada. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) uses this standard to plan, design, and construct our airport infrastructure to meet current and future needs, while positioning the Government to effectively and economically maintain its assets.

When the Fort Smith Airport runway was built in 1957, runways were commonly 60 metres (m) wide because it was expected that aircraft would be bigger in the future and would need wider runways. However, the evolution of aircraft technology has disproved this projection.

While seeking federal funding to upgrade the Fort Smith Airport's obsolete airfield lighting in 2018, it was identified that the runway's 60m width exceeded operational and regulatory requirements, and that the needs of the community, including the since-established flight school, could be safely met with a 30m-wide runway.... etc.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**[Formatting Notes: Response to Petition Letterhead with additional pages on white 8.5 x 11 paper, Cambria 12 point, single-space heading, double space to title and 1.5 spacing in body of statement, page numbers if over one page in length]**

# DEFINITIONS

**Abstain:** to refrain from voting either for or against a motion.

**Act (statute, law):** a bill that has passed three readings and committee review and received Assent.

**Adjournment:** the indefinite suspension of a debate or sitting day during a session or, at the discretion of the Speaker, the suspension of the House for a few minutes for any number of reasons. Such as when the House rises at the end of the day or when a formal motion is passed for the House to rise for a specific length of time.

**Amendment:** a proposed change made to a motion or a bill. It must be in the form of a proposal to add, delete or substitute certain or other words.

**Appropriation Bill:** a bill introduced by the Minister of Finance requesting the Legislative Assembly to approve the government's spending of public funds.

**Assent to Bills:** This is the final stage of the Legislative Assembly's role in the enactment of legislation process. The Commissioner gives "Assent" to all bills that have received 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading. If a bill does not have a coming into force provision, it is law upon Assent.

**Bill:** a proposed law introduced in the Legislative Assembly; either creating a new law, amending or repealing an existing one. To become law, a bill must pass three readings and committee review and be given Assent.

**Blues (unedited Hansard):** the unofficial transcript of proceedings of the House or any of its committees.

**Budget:** the government's estimated income and expenses for a fiscal year. The Northwest Territories fiscal year is April 1 to March 31.

**Budget Address:** a speech made in the House by the Minister of Finance introducing the government's fiscal plans for the coming year.

**Business Plans:** annual plans prepared by departments and reviewed usually every fall by standing committees with the Minister responsible.

**Cabinet (Executive Council, the government):** the executive branch of government, led by the Premier, and selected from among all 19 elected members of the Legislative Assembly. Cabinet sponsors new laws and programs and is accountable to the Legislative Assembly for government actions.

**Cabinet Minister:** a member of Cabinet, usually the head of a government department.

**Cabinet Solidarity:** the principle that decisions of the Cabinet must be supported by all of its members.

**Caucus:** all the 19 elected members of the Legislative Assembly; a private (or in camera) meeting of this group.

**Chairperson of Committee of the Whole (Deputy Speaker):** the member elected by the House at the beginning of each Legislature to serve as Deputy Speaker and preside over Committee of the Whole.

**Chairperson's Ruling:** the decision of the Chairperson on the procedural acceptability of a matter before a committee. Rulings range from reminders to members not to speak out of turn to complex questions of parliamentary privilege and may serve as precedents for future proceedings.

**Chamber:** the room where the Legislative Assembly holds its sittings.

**Clause:** a part of a bill consisting of an individual sentence or statement. Once a bill becomes law, its clauses are referred to as sections.

**Clause-by-Clause Consideration:** the detailed review of the clauses of a bill at the Standing Committee or Committee of the Whole stage.

**Clerk of the Legislative Assembly:** the Clerk is the chief permanent officer of the Legislative Assembly, with the rank and status of a deputy minister.

**Coming Into Force Clause:** the clause of a bill stating the date upon which an Act will take effect. The clause may indicate that the Act or some part of it will come into force on a specific date or on a date fixed by order of the Commissioner. If no such clause exists, the Act comes into force upon Assent.

**Commissioner:** the territorial representative of the Monarch and the Head of State, a largely ceremonial position. The Commissioner is appointed by the Prime Minister for a five-year term and delivers the Commissioner's Address or Speech from the Throne, grants Assent and approves orders in council.

**Committee Stage:** the step in the legislative process where bills are referred to a Committee for review and clause-by-clause consideration or where other issues are referred to a Committee for review. The Committee Chairperson reports the proceedings to the House under the order of business Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills.

**Committee of the Whole:** a committee of all Members of the Legislative Assembly that meet to discuss bills and other issues in detail. It is the order of business that is considered informal Session, where the rules are more relaxed, witnesses may be present and is presided over by the Chairperson of Committee of the Whole or designate, who reports back to the Speaker.

**Commitment:** a pledge or acknowledgment by a Minister that he or she will do something. A commitment may be to provide additional information, visit a constituency, consider an idea, hold a meeting, revisit a policy, etc.

**Consent:** Similar to unanimous consent, but two Members would have to be opposed to or say “nay” for consent to be denied. Consent is used to allow a bill to pass through more than one stage in a single day.

**Constituency:** one of 19 voting districts into which the NWT is divided. The voters of each constituency elect one MLA to represent the interests of that area in the Legislative Assembly. Constituency boundary lines are examined every few years by a special body called the Electoral Boundaries Commission, which may set out changes.

**Department (Ministry):** a Cabinet Minister’s area of responsibility, or portfolio, and the people who work for the department. The Minister, who is the head of the department, is a member of the Executive Council.

**Deputy Minister:** the public servant, reporting directly to the Minister, who is the permanent administrative head of a government department and is responsible for its day-to-day management.

**Deputy Speaker (Chairperson of Committee of the Whole):** the member elected, by motion in the House at the beginning of each Legislature to replace the Speaker when necessary and serve as Chairperson of Committee of the Whole.

**Dissolution:** the means by which a Legislature comes to an end at the conclusion of its’ term and is followed by a general election.

**Emergency Debate:** a debate to discuss a matter of urgent public importance. The debate continues until all members who wish to speak have spoken or the normal adjournment time is reached.

**Executive Council (Cabinet, the government):** the executive branch of government, led by the Premier, and selected from among all elected members of the Legislative Assembly. Cabinet sponsors new laws and programs and is accountable to the Legislative Assembly for government actions.

**Extended Adjournment:** An extended adjournment is an adjournment of the House to a date in the future (i.e. beyond the next normal sitting day). This is authorized through the adoption of a formal motion.

**Filibuster:** prolonged debate by a minority to delay or prevent a government bill from passing, the hope being that the majority will either grant concessions or withdraw the bill. The government can end the filibuster by moving a closure motion.

**First Reading (Introduction of Bills):** the first stage in the passage of a bill. Bills customarily pass first reading without debate.

**General Election:** an election usually held at regular intervals in which candidates are elected in all or most constituencies. The *Northwest Territories Act* requires a general election every four years.

**Government:** in the parliamentary sense the Cabinet or Executive Council, headed by the Premier. To remain in office, the government must have the support of a majority of members in the Legislative Assembly.

**Government Bills:** bills approved by Cabinet and introduced by a Cabinet Minister.

**Government House Leader:** the Cabinet Minister responsible for managing the government’s business in the House, including the negotiation of scheduling with the Standing Committee Chairs, especially the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning.

**Hansard:** the official, verbatim record of parliamentary debates and proceedings.

**House:** the Legislative Assembly while in Session, also used to refer to the Chamber.

**In Camera:** in private. When a committee meets in camera, the public is excluded and there is no Hansard for that portion of the meeting. The committee passes a motion to go in camera and passes a motion to return to an open meeting.

**Introduction of Bills (First Reading):** the order of business when MLAs introduce bills. Bills customarily pass first reading without debate.

**Law (Act, statute):** a bill that has passed three readings and committee review and received Assent.

**Law Clerk:** the Legislative Assembly Office’s legal advisors. They often sit at the table in the Legislative Assembly to advise on matters related to bills. They also assist in drafting private member’s bills as well as providing legal and procedural advice to MLAs, committees and other branches of the Legislative Assembly Office.

**Legislation:** laws enacted by the authority of a legislative body.

**Legislative Assembly:** a lawmaking body of elected representatives; also called the House.

**Legislature:** the lawmaking body in Canadian provinces and territories consisting of the Lieutenant Governor, or Commissioner, and the Legislative Assembly. Each general election results in a new legislature.

**Main Estimates:** the detailed spending proposals for each government department for the coming fiscal year.

**Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA):** a person elected to the Legislative Assembly to represent one of the 19 electoral districts.

**Members' Statements:** the order of business when 2.5 minute statements are made by any MLA on any matter, for example, special events in the constituency or matters of concern to their constituents. The statement can only be on one topic.

**Minister (Cabinet Minister):** a member of Cabinet, usually the head of a government department.

**Minister's Statements:** the order of business when statements are made by Cabinet Ministers acknowledging special events or announcing new policies, programs, or directions for their departments or for the government as a whole.

**Ministry (department):** a Cabinet Minister's area of responsibility, or portfolio, and the people who work for the department. The Minister, who is the head of the department, is a member of the Executive Council.

**MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly):** a person elected to the Legislative Assembly to represent one of the 19 electoral districts.

**Motion:** a proposal made to the House by a member that the House do something, order something, or express an opinion regarding some matter. Motions moved in formal Session of the House require a mover and a seconder.

**Notice of Motion:** the order of business announcing the intention to introduce a motion. Two sitting days notice is required prior to the item appearing on the Orders of the Day.

**Commissioner's Address (speech from the throne, throne speech):** the address delivered by the Commissioner, which opens each new session and may outline the government's initiatives and lawmaking plans for the session.

**Oral Question Period:** the order of business when members ask Cabinet Ministers questions about matters within their portfolio responsibility. Sixty minutes each day are allotted to this order of business. Members are allowed to ask one main question and three related supplementary questions.

**Order Paper or Orders of the Day:** a daily schedule of items for consideration in the House. It is like an agenda for a meeting, although all items on the order paper are not necessarily spoken to or covered on any given day.

**Petitions:** a means for a group of people to appeal to the Legislative Assembly for some kind of action. *A petition must address issues that the Legislative Assembly can do something about and may not ask for something that requires public money.* MLAs present to the Legislative Assembly petitions under the order of business "Petitions" on behalf of the groups who are requesting that certain actions be or not be taken. The Speaker or Minister responsible has 60 calendar days to respond to a petition from the day that it is presented.

**Point of Order:** when a member calls the Speaker's attention to an alleged breach of the Rules or to any perceived departure from the customary mode of proceeding in debate or in the conduct of the business of the Legislative Assembly.

**Portfolio:** the office or responsibilities of a Cabinet Minister. The Premier assigns portfolios.

**Principle of the Bill:** the purpose of a bill, which is debated at second reading.

**Private Members' Bills:** bills sponsored by any regular member. They give members a chance to propose policies and raise concerns in the public forum of the Legislative Assembly. These bills do not have Cabinet's formal approval and cannot require the government to spend public funds or impose a tax.

**Prorogation:** the formal end of a legislative session that terminates all pending or unfinished business. Any motion or bill still on the Legislative Assembly's agenda "dies on the Order Paper"; that is, it is no longer before the Legislative Assembly and must be reintroduced at the next session if members still wish it to be considered.

**Public Gallery:** the gallery where members of the public may view the Chamber and the daily proceedings.

**Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery:** the order of business where MLAs introduce groups of students, individuals, parliamentarians, diplomats and other guests who are present in the gallery.

**Recorded Vote:** a vote where the names of those voting for, against or abstaining are announced in the House and recorded in the official records of the House.

**Regular Member:** any MLA who is not a Member of Cabinet or the Speaker.

**Reply to the Commissioner's Address:** the order of business when MLAs may make a reply to the Commissioner's Address. The reply can be on any matter and there is no time limit.

**Reports of Standing and Special Committees:** the order of business when chairs of the various committees appointed by the Legislative Assembly may present their committees report.

**Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills:** the order of business when the chairs report a bill back to the House as ready or not ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole; usually no recommendations are made in the reports. If the Standing Committee wishes to make a more substantial report and recommendations they would provide a formal report under the item Reports of Standing and Special Committees.

**Report of Committee of the Whole:** the order of business when the Chair of Committee of the Whole gives a report to the Speaker when the House goes back to the formal sitting.

**Returns:** documents that are required to be laid before the Legislative Assembly, usually in response to oral questions, written questions or petitions.

**Rise and Report:** the procedure that takes place when the Committee of the Whole has concluded its business for the day and reports back to the Speaker. A motion must be made for the committee to rise and report progress because they do not have the power to adjourn a sitting of the Assembly or to adjourn consideration of a matter to a future sitting.

**Rules of the Legislative Assembly:** a document which sets out the manner in which the NWT Legislative Assembly will conduct its business and Members during proceedings of the House and Committee meetings.

**Ruling:** a decision of the Speaker or Chairperson of Committee of the Whole on the procedural acceptability of a matter before the House or before Committee of the Whole. Rulings range from reminders to members not to speak out of turn to complex questions of parliamentary privilege and may serve as precedents for future proceedings.

**Second Reading:** the stage when members debate the principle of a bill and either accept or reject it. Detailed consideration is not given to the clauses of the bill at this stage.

**Special Committee:** a committee appointed by the Legislative Assembly to consider matters referred to them by motion; for example, a committee to review the services provided to non-tax-based communities. The motion that establishes a special committee and appoints its members also sets its terms of reference and operating authority. When their assignment is completed or a specific term set by the House has expired, they cease to exist.

**Session:** a session consists of a number of sittings beginning with the opening of the House and ending at prorogation. The Commissioner formally opens and prorogues each session. There is no predetermined length for a Session. It can include spring and fall sittings. For example, the Fifth Session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislature began in November 2013 and ended in October 2015.

**Sittings:** the daily meetings of the Legislative Assembly. Sittings can also refer to the spring or fall periods when the Legislature is meeting.

**Speaker:** the MLA elected by all MLAs by secret ballot to maintain orderly debate in the Chamber and to ensure that members conduct their business according to parliamentary rules. The Speaker must serve all MLAs equally whether they are a regular member or Cabinet Minister, and all MLAs must accept their authority. The Speaker is also the head of the Legislative Assembly Office. Although Speakers are not members of Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly Office is not a government department, the Speaker's administrative duties are similar to those of a Cabinet Minister. The Speaker also chairs the Board of Management meetings.

**Speaker's Ruling:** a decision of the Speaker on the procedural acceptability of a matter before the House. Rulings range from reminders to members not to speak out of turn to complex questions of parliamentary privilege and may serve as precedents for future proceedings.

**Speech from the Throne (Commissioner's Address, Throne Speech):** the address delivered by the Commissioner, which opens each new session and may outline the government's initiatives and lawmaking plans for the session.

**Standing Committee:** are appointed under the Rules of the House for the life of the Legislature to consider matters referred to them. There are five standing committees: Priorities and Planning, Economic Development and Infrastructure, Government Operations, Social Programs, and Rules and Procedures.

**Statute (law, Act):** a bill that has passed three readings and committee review and received Assent.

**Sub Judice Convention:** a matter before the courts is sub-judice. In recognition of the separation of powers between the legislative and judicial branches of government, the Legislative Assembly, by convention, does not debate or comment on matters before the courts.

**Supplementary Appropriation:** an expenditure proposal introduced to provide funds to the government to meet new or increased costs.

**Supplementary Question:** a follow-up question asked under Oral Questions to obtain an explanation or clarification of an answer just provided by a Minister. Up to three supplementary questions are allowed.

**Table Officers:** employees of the Legislative Assembly Office, who provide procedural advice during sittings of the House, keep records of the proceedings and record the votes. They include the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Principal Clerks, Law Clerk, and Sergeant-at-Arms.

**Tabling of Documents:** the order of business when various documents may be tabled in the Legislative Assembly. These include all reports required by statute, responses to petitions or any other document that a member feels is of interest to the public.

**Third Reading:** the final stage of consideration of a bill, at the conclusion of which the bill as a whole is either finally passed or rejected. Members again have a chance to comment on, criticize, or ask questions about the bill before voting on it for the last time. Third reading debate is usually limited to brief comments supporting or opposing the bill.

**Throne Speech (Speech from the Throne, Commissioner's Address):** the address delivered by the Commissioner, which opens each new session and may outline the government's initiatives and lawmaking plans for the session.

**Unanimous Consent:** When all Members present give their agreement to set aside the Rules or usual practice of the House without notice. Actions taken by unanimous consent do not constitute a precedent. Any Rule of the Legislative Assembly can be waived with unanimous consent.

**Unedited Hansard (blues):** the unofficial transcript of proceedings of the House or any of its committees. Commonly referred to as the “Blues”.

**Unparliamentary Language:** words or expressions deemed contrary to the proprieties of the House. The Speaker (or Chairperson) may direct that Members withdraw words or phrases that are considered unparliamentary.

**Written Questions:** the order of business designed for questions from members that require lengthy or complex answers from Cabinet Ministers. If the question is accepted, the answer must be given in the Legislative Assembly within 21 calendar days.



## Sessional Document Checklist

Document Type/Naming Convention	Cabinet Review Required	Special Format Required	Submission Time 4 pm day before Delivery	Number of Copies Required	Notes
<b>Minister's Statements</b> Date of delivery MS_title of statement	Yes	Yes	3 days prior to delivery	E-version	For Cabinet Review - CHS
				Word version + Reading	Revised/Approved Final
<b>Returns to Oral Questions</b> Date of delivery ROQ#_title of question	Yes	Yes	No set time	E-version	For Cabinet Review - CHS
				PDF + Reading	Revised/Approved Final
<b>Returns to Written Questions</b> Date for delivery RWQ#_title of question	Yes	Yes	3 days prior to due date	E-version	For Cabinet Review - CHS
				PDF	Revised/Approved Final
<b>Follow-up Letters to Oral Questions</b> Date of letter OQ#_title of question	No	Yes	When signed by Minister	Copy of letter	Letter copied to Clerk, LA and Legislative Coordinator, EIA
<b>Tabled Documents</b> Date for tabling TD_title of document	No	No	3 days prior to tabling	4 + PDF	Revised/Approved Final
<b>Responses to Motions</b> Date for tabling TD_title of document	Yes - Cabinet Decision (ROD)	Yes	3 days prior to tabling	4 + PDF	Formal Cabinet Approval Required
<b>Responses to Committee Reports</b> Date for tabling TD_title of document	Yes - Cabinet Decision (ROD)	Yes	3 days prior to tabling	4 + PDF	Formal Cabinet Approval Required
<b>Plain Language Summary - Bills</b> Date for tabling TD_title of document	Yes	Yes	Submit with Draft Bill	E-version	For Cabinet Review - CHS
<b>Opening Remarks for Budgets</b> Date of Submission OR_Department Name Main Estimates	Yes	Yes	As soon as ready for Cabinet review	E-version	For Cabinet Review - CHS
				PDF, Reading	Revised/Approved Final
<b>Opening Remarks for Bills</b> Date of Submission OR_Bill Number- Title of Bill	No	Yes	once reported back from Standing Committee	PDF, Reading	