



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

## Guidance for Members Participating in Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly Remotely

Pursuant to the Standing Order amendment adopted on March 13, 2024, hybrid proceedings of the Legislative Assembly are authorized on a permanent basis in order to afford all Members with the means to fulfill their parliamentary functions and safeguard the rights, privileges, and immunities of individual Members regardless of their physical location, in exceptional circumstances.

The following guidance is issued by the Speaker pursuant to Standing Order 8(3)(b) and applies to all proceedings of the House, including Committee of the Whole and Committee of Supply proceedings in Sections A, B and C, as well as parliamentary committee proceedings.

### CONDUCT AND DECORUM

To the degree possible, the same rules of conduct apply whether a Member is participating remotely in House or Committee proceedings. Members must be mindful of their responsibilities to demonstrate respect and proper decorum upholding the dignity of the institution.

It is expected that Members will:

- Connect from a suitable indoor, private location; connecting from a public area or from a vehicle is not appropriate.
  - An exception may only be granted if the Speaker or Chair is advised in advance that a Member must join parliamentary proceedings remotely from a medical or care facility.
- Ensure that their focus, behaviour, and actions reflect those of being physically located in the Chamber, and therefore not engage in multi-tasking or private activities or conversations.
- Attend to infants in their care; however, Members should ensure that any disruptions to parliamentary proceedings are minimized.
- Ensure that their conduct with respect to appropriate dress, electronic devices, beverages and props follows the guidance found in the Standing Orders and the Speaker's booklet titled, "*Order and Decorum in the Chamber: Rules of Respect and Courtesy for Members.*"
- Not consume food during House, Committee of the Whole, or Committee of Supply proceedings.
- Be physically located within Canada.
- Be mindful that visitors in the public galleries can observe Members both physically in the Chamber and those connected remotely and regulate their actions accordingly.

- Ensure that good connectivity and lighting have been established, with audio and video functions enabled. A PC or laptop is recommended with reliable internet connection. A Member’s face must be clearly visible in order to be counted toward quorum, and both audio and video must be working to participate in debate and to vote.

The Standing Orders empower the Speaker or Chair to take any actions necessary to uphold the rules of decorum, and to intervene, up to and including disallowing participation.

If a Member is not meeting the stated requirements, the Speaker or Chair retains full discretion not to recognize a Member and to instruct the Clerk not to call on a Member during a division.

## **PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Quorum**

Members must have the audio and video functions enabled with their face clearly visible in order to be counted towards quorum.

### **Signaling the Chair**

Members may seek the attention of the Speaker or Chair, such as to raise a point of order or reserve their right to raise a question of privilege, by sending a Zoom chat message privately to “Clerk Table” or “Clerk Table 2” or to the Committee Clerk, or by raising their hand in Zoom. Members should explicitly indicate what order of business they are raising, and the request will be relayed to the Speaker or Chair as quickly as possible. The chat function is reserved for communications with the Table only – akin to communicating to the Table when participating physically in the Chamber by note or by speaking to a Clerk.

### **Voting**

As soon as a voice vote is put by the Speaker or the Chair (i.e., when the question is decided by an audible “aye” or “nay”), Members voting remotely may participate by unmuting their microphone and stating their vote.

Should a Member wish to indicate a vote pass “on division” following the voice vote, the Member should unmute their microphone and state “on division.” If the request is not heard, a Zoom chat message should be immediately sent privately to the “Clerk Table” or “Clerk Table 2”, or to the Committee Clerk, as may be applicable, in order to relay to the Speaker or Chair.

Members participating remotely in standing divisions will be counted using the roll call process. Members should unmute their microphone and listen for the Clerk to call their name. Upon being called by the Clerk, Members should clearly state “I vote aye” or “I vote nay.” Audio must be clearly heard by the Clerk for the Member’s vote to be counted. No Member participating remotely shall connect to or disconnect from the Zoom meeting after the final statement of the question until the division has been fully taken, and cameras must remain on during the division process.

### **Requests for Zoom Links**

Members are to coordinate their remote participation with their Caucus Whip whose office can provide the Zoom links. It is understood that remote participation will be approved by the Caucus Whips where reasonable circumstances apply, such as travel for parliamentary or official Government business or

unforeseen health or personal circumstances. Independent Members will be provided with Zoom links by the Office of the Clerk. For parliamentary committee proceedings, Members may coordinate their remote participation with the Chair or Deputy Chair, or Clerk to the Committee (as applicable).

## **TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **Designated Computer Equipment**

Legislative Assembly-issued equipment is preferable with hardwired or high quality and tested Wi-Fi connection.

### **Location and Background**

A quiet, private location with good lighting should be selected. The backdrop must be neutral, free of political or partisan images or slogans. Zoom artificial or blurred virtual backgrounds must not be applied. An exception may only be granted if the Speaker or Chair is advised in advance that a Member must join parliamentary proceedings remotely from a medical or care facility.

### **Microphone Operation**

Members will be required to unmute their own microphone before speaking or voting in a formal division. Microphone operation is not performed by Hansard staff.

## **QUESTIONS**

Hansard Broadcasting and Information Technology Department staff can assist with questions about audio, video or device selection and evaluation of audio or video quality. Please call 778-401-6380 or 1-866-305-3804 (outside Victoria).

Should Members have questions regarding these expectations, or any Standing Order governing remote proceedings, please contact the [OfficeoftheClerk@leg.bc.ca](mailto:OfficeoftheClerk@leg.bc.ca) or 250-387-3785.