



Order and Decorum in the Chamber

**Rules of Respect and Courtesy for
Members**

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Members of the Legislative Assembly:

As Speaker, I look forward to lively and respectful debates in the Chamber. Under the Standing Orders, I have a responsibility to preserve order and decorum during those exchanges. The Speaker's role is guided by the rules and precedents of the House, but also aided by the cooperation and goodwill of each elected Member of the Legislative Assembly.

This booklet is designed to ensure that all MLAs are aware of both the codified and unwritten rules for behaviour in the Chamber. You will find enclosed a summary of some of the most common proceedings and guidance for following the appropriate practices.

I encourage you to seek further procedural advice by reading the *Annotated Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly* and by consulting with the Clerks at the Table on any questions you may have. My door is also open should you wish to discuss matters of order and decorum in greater detail.

The work that we do in the Chamber is for the Yukon. We ask questions and we answer questions on behalf of Yukoners. At the same time, we are human and emotions are part of that. I respect those emotions and wish to always allow space for transparency and vulnerability. I aim to let things simmer with passion and political intensity at times, but never boil over.

I trust that all MLAs will show the Legislative Assembly the respect that this institution deserves and conduct themselves with dignity befitting the responsibility placed upon us by Yukoners.

Salamat po. Merci. Mâhsi' cho. Gunaichîsh. Kwânâschis. Thank you.



Honourable Yvonne Clarke, Speaker
Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Entering and Navigating the Chamber

When entering or leaving the Chamber, members are to bow to the Speaker's Chair (even if it is not occupied). Members must not go directly from the floor of the Assembly to the public gallery. If it is necessary to communicate with someone in the public gallery, a Page may be asked to deliver a note. Members shall take care not to pass between a member who is speaking and the Speaker, or between the Speaker's Chair and the Mace.

Speaker's Procession

Members should be in the Chamber before the Speaker's procession enters at the start of a sitting day. If a member arrives during the prayer, they should wait inside the door of the House until the prayer is concluded. Members present for the prayer should remain still and silent until the prayer is finished. After the prayer all members take their seats. When the Assembly adjourns, members should remain at their desks until the Speaker has left the Chamber.

Speaking in the Chamber

Members must rise when they wish to speak (if able) and must be recognized by the Speaker or Chair before speaking (other than to address the Speaker or Chair to get their attention). Members must always speak through the Chair and may not address their remarks directly to other members or to the public gallery. When the Speaker is in the Chair, the Speaker will only recognize a member to speak or vote if the member is in their designated place. In Committee of the Whole, a member may be recognized if at another member's desk.

To keep debate less personal, members address all their remarks through the Chair and refer to each other by title (Premier, Minister, Leader of the Official Opposition, Leader of the Third Party, etc.) or the electoral district they represent. Members must not refer to another member as "you".

Listening to Debates

During private conversations, members should keep their voices low and not distract the member with the floor or otherwise disrupt the business of the Assembly. When a member is speaking, no member shall interrupt, except to raise a point of order or a question of privilege. When the Speaker is addressing the House, no member shall walk out of or across the Chamber, or make any noise or disturbance.

Introductions

There is no rule limiting the number of visitors who may be introduced on a sitting day or the length of the introduction, though it is recommended to keep introductions brief. Introductions are reserved for visitors present in the galleries. Prior to introducing a visitor outside the Daily Routine, members must send a note to the presiding officer who will determine the least disruptive point of the proceedings for the introduction to take place. Members should avoid introducing visitors during Question Period.

Divisions

When a division is called, the Speaker will ring the division bells for at least two minutes, but no longer than five minutes. Members are to be in their assigned place in the Chamber before the bells stop ringing. The Speaker will not recognize a member to vote if the member is not in his or her assigned place. Once the bells have stopped ringing, the Clerk will poll the members by asking them, in turn, to indicate whether they 'agree' or 'disagree' with the question before the House. If a member does not wish to vote during a recorded division, for whatever reason, they should leave the Chamber during the ringing of the division bells. As no member shall enter or leave the Assembly during the final statement of the question, nor leave the Assembly until the division has been fully taken and the result announced, and all members present must vote and cannot abstain.

Question Period

Private members may put questions to cabinet ministers and committee chairs during the Oral Question Period. Guidelines for Oral Question Period are provided as an addendum to the Standing Orders. Members have up to 60 seconds to pose a question, ministers have up to 90 seconds to respond. Questions must seek information and cannot be based on a hypothesis or seek an opinion. Each member asking a question is allowed two supplementary questions. Brief pre-ambles for the question and one-sentence pre-ambles for the supplementary questions are allowed. Ministers may refuse to answer without stating a reason, and insistence on an answer is out of order. Questions cannot ask about matters which are in their nature secret. This includes the proceedings of Cabinet and the proceedings of a committee before they publish a report.

Unparliamentary Language

The rules of the Assembly prohibit the use of disrespectful or offensive language. What is acceptable depends largely on the mood of the House and the circumstances. However, personal attacks, insults, obscene language or words that question a member's integrity, honesty or character are not in order.

Points of Order

A member may raise a point of order at any time during the proceedings to call the House's attention to any alleged breach of the Standing Orders or established procedure. The point of order should be brought to the Speaker's attention as soon as possible after the event occurs. When a point of order is raised, it falls to the Chair to deliver a decision that may affect how the proceedings proceed. As the Chair's ruling can affect how the business of the House unfolds, to raise an alleged breach after the Assembly has moved on to other matters is too late. The member who had the floor must sit down while the point of order is being stated but may be given a chance to respond to the point of order.

Questions of Privilege

Raising a question of privilege refers to an intervention by a member, during parliamentary proceedings, where the member believes that one of the member's privileges as a member, or one of the privileges of the Assembly as a whole, has been violated – either by another member or some other person or group. Violations of privilege rarely take place in the House and usually involve actions outside the House that obstruct a member in performing their duties as a member. The nature of parliamentary privilege and the process for raising questions of privilege are described in Standing Order 7.

Dress

The Legislative Assembly Chamber is a place of heightened formality. When the Speaker is in the Chair, business dress (including jackets and ties) or a cultural equivalent is required. Canadian Armed Forces uniforms for serving members are also permitted. Blue jeans and hats have been found unacceptable. When in Committee of the Whole, the dress code is relaxed slightly, permitting jackets and ties to be removed.

Props

Props of any kind are unacceptable in the Chamber, especially when they cause disorder. Visual displays used by members to illustrate their remarks or emphasize their positions are out of order for both members participating in person and members participating remotely. Members participating remotely in the proceedings of the Chamber must also make sure they use a neutral background.

Using Electronic Devices

The use of electronic devices is authorized to allow members to more fully perform their parliamentary duties while in the Legislative Assembly Chamber. Devices must be configured to silent mode and may not be used as a phone, recording device, camera, or pager.

Devices are not allowed to be used:

- when the Commissioner is present for official purposes;
- when the Speaker is offering prayers, ruling on a point of order, giving a statement, or putting a motion to the House;
- during question period;
- during points of order or questions of privilege; and
- during the taking of a division or a count in Committee.

Food and Beverages

To maintain the dignity of the Assembly, eating food and chewing gum in the Chamber is prohibited. Water service is provided by the pages only in the Assembly's glasses. Any non-alcoholic beverage may be consumed in the Chamber if it is in an official Yukon Legislative Assembly insulated travel mug.

Remote Participation

The Speaker cannot grant permission for video conference participation if the request is less than three hours before the start of the sitting day (usually 10 a.m.) or does not meet the other requirements found in Standing Order 79. House Leaders should inform the Clerk and Speaker of an MLA's desire to join by video conference as early as possible so that the appropriate technical arrangements can be made. The rules and procedures of the Assembly shall be observed when one or more members are participating remotely. A member participating remotely must be clearly visible to be recognized by the Speaker. Filters and digital backgrounds are not permitted. The Speaker may order a member to change their background if the Speaker believes it is distracting or not neutral.

If a member appearing remotely loses connection during the taking of a division, the Speaker may suspend proceedings for up to three minutes. If the connection is not restored, the Clerk provides the Speaker the results of the division and does not record a vote for that member. Remote participants may raise their actual hands on camera or use the "raise hand" feature in Zoom to indicate their vote when the Chair of Committee of the Whole orders the taking of a count.

If a member appearing remotely loses connection while they have the floor, the Speaker or Chair may suspend proceedings for up to three minutes. If the member regains connection within three minutes, the member may complete their speech. This time will not be deducted from the member's available speaking time.

References

Entering and Navigating the Chamber: Member's Handbook, pg. 32-33; S.O. 6(3) 6(7)

Speaker's Procession: Member's Handbook, pg. 32-33; S.O. 6(8)

Speaking in the Chamber: Member's Handbook, pg. 32-33; S.O. 17(1)

Listening to Debates: Member's Handbook, pg. 32, 34; S.O. 6(4) 6(5) 6(6)

Introductions: Member's Handbook, pg. 39; Annotated Standing Orders pg. 18 S.O. 11(2)

Divisions: Annotated Standing Orders, pg. 49-51; S.O. 25

Question Period: Member's Handbook, pg. 43; Annotated Standing Orders, Guidelines for Oral Question Period

Unparliamentary Language: Member's Handbook, pg. 32-33

Points of Order: Member's Handbook, pg. 31; Annotated Standing Orders pg. 44-45; S.O. 22

Questions of Privilege: Annotated Standing Orders, pg. 44-45; S.O. 7 22

Dress: Member's Handbook, pg. 32; *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 13.19

Using Electronic Devices: Annotated Standing Orders, Guidelines for the Use of Electronic Devices in the Chamber

Props: *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 13.26; S.O. 83(1)

Food and Beverages: Member's Handbook, pg. 32; Speaker's memo February 19, 2026

Remote Participation: Annotated Standing Orders, pg. 112-117; S.O. 79-87



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