

2025 COMMITTEE CHAIR MANUAL

69th Montana State Legislature



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TO: COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRS AND CO-CHAIRS

**FROM: President of the Senate
Speaker of the House**

WELCOME TO 2025 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

Congratulations on being selected to chair or vice-chair a committee or subcommittee for the 2025 legislative session. This distinction reflects your leadership, dedication, and the trust placed in you to guide important legislative work.

This manual is designed to serve as a resource to support you in this role. Whether you choose to read it in full now or reference specific sections as questions arise, we hope it is informative and helpful to you.

If, during or after your session as chair, you identify ways to improve this document or have suggestions for additional content, we encourage you to share your feedback with the Secretary of the Senate or the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives. Your input will help enhance this resource for future leaders.

Thank you for your service and commitment to the legislative process!

MATT REGIER
President of the Senate

BRANDON LER
Speaker of the House

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR

- Bills scheduled for hearing must be noticed and Follows guidelines for public hearings.
- All bills assigned to a committee must receive a hearing, unless the bill is withdrawn by the sponsor. The sponsor withdrawal notice is available in the Chief Clerk or Secretary of the Senate's office.
- If a bill needs a fiscal note, ask the Secretary of the Senate or the Chief Clerk to request one.
- If a bill has a fiscal note, the bill can be voted on but not reported out of committee without a fiscal note. The committee need not wait for revised fiscal notes.
- Strive to guarantee that all members of the public have an opportunity to testify or, if time is limited, to identify themselves, their organization and who they represent, and whether they are an opponent or a proponent of a bill.
- Schedule bills in a timely manner to meet transmittal deadlines for the chamber.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

At your first organizational meeting, the members will decide and agree upon committee rules, including which motions will allow proxy votes.

THE VICE CHAIR

In the House, Majority Vice Chairs are selected by the House and Senate. Senate Vice Chairs are appointed by seniority or by the presiding officer. If a Minority Vice Chair is named, that member may handle proxies of the minority members and may serve as Chair when both the Chair and the Majority Vice Chair are absent.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Knowing the rules, protocols (for example, asking questions through the Chair and knowing what to do in an emergency), and proper questioning of witnesses (for example, treating them with respect)
- Providing amendments in advance to the committee staff for proper drafting and editing
- Showing up for committee meetings and paying attention to the work of the committee, particularly to bills being heard by the committee and to witnesses who are testifying on a bill.
- Letting the Chair or the Minority Vice Chair know, prior to a bill hearing, if a committee member is unable to attend a committee meeting and providing a written proxy for bills and amendments to the appropriate Vice Chair prior to the bill hearing.

LEGISLATIVE STAFFERS

- Draft committee bills.
- Draft amendments upon request of committee members before executive action.
- Advise committee on rules when asked.
- Advise committee or subcommittee pertaining to bills under deliberation.
- Review bills assigned to committee for possible conflict with other bills.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY/CLERK

- Provide general administrative and logistical support to assist the Chair and committee: manage the microphones, turning them on opening gavel and off immediately after closing gavel; monitor official audio stream throughout the meeting; produce audio recording log for each meeting; and time stamp website markers for the public.
- Help the Chair schedule bills for hearing.
- Prepare forms that need to be printed before each meeting.
- Provide bill hearing notices to notify bill sponsors, committee members and staffers.
- Provide support during meetings, take and prepare minutes/ audio recording log.
- Prepare standing committee report request immediately after each meeting.
- Link votes.
- Call roll for attendance and for executive action.
- Upload exhibits, minutes, audio recording log and additional documents to the website.

ORGANIZING THE COMMITTEE

Pre-Organizational Meeting

The Chair should meet with the committee secretary/clerk and the Legislative Services or Fiscal Division staffer assigned to discuss the following, prior to the first day of the session to:

- Exchange phone numbers and office locations.
- Discuss and outline committee work, meeting times.
- Review the Chair's expectations of staff.
- Determine roll call vote order for the session.
- Make committee seating assignment charts, per Chair instruction.

And to review:

- The roles and responsibilities of staff to the Chair and to the committee as a whole
- Whether department informational presentations (agencies that normally present bills before the committee give brief introduction to the agency's duties) are expected and who will coordinate them.
- How best to keep the committee informed of work done by the House Appropriations Committee or the Senate Finance and Claims Committee on areas relevant to the committee.
- The most recent session calendar to prevent running out of time to hear and act on bills before transmittal deadlines.
- Emergency procedures
- Committee members and informational witnesses speak through the Chair.

Organizational Committee Meeting

Prior to the first committee meeting/hearing, the committee meets to organize procedures and to agree/vote on their rules, including which motion votes will accept proxy votes.

Scheduling agency or committee bills

Legislative rules require that agency bills and bills requested by interim committees be introduced before session convenes. Pre-introduced bills are ready to be heard early in the session; however, committees may schedule these bills whenever they wish. (You may want to discuss this schedule with the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate.) Agency bills that do not contain substantive issues are referred to as "housekeeping bills". Rather than assume changes are insignificant, the Chair may ask staff to contact the agency to prepare a summary of the changes in the bill.



Chair Zoom Guide

Overview:

Each room is provided with a **Chair Laptop** that will be set up in front of the Chairs seat. The chair laptop will be signed into the Zoom meeting and serves as a personal monitor for the Chair.

NOTE: This laptop is NOT critical to the streaming or recording of committee hearings, nor does it control the Zoom meeting.

A **Remote Meeting Coordinator (RMC)** is assigned to each Committee Zoom meeting to help facilitate remote legislator participation and remote public testimony. Zoom participants are grouped as follows:

Attendee (Public)	Panelist (Committee Members)	Host/Co-Host (RMC/Capitol Room)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can't speak without permission• Can't show video	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can mute/unmute at will• Can show video at will	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can promote people to Panelist• Can allow/disable attendees to unmute• Can rename

A **Remote Testimony List** is compiled and provided for each committee hearing containing members of the public who have signed up to provide testimony. Any attendees who are not on the list may only address the committee at the Chairs discretion.

The **Public Comment** portion of the committee hearing is divided by location: **In-room** and **Online**. When the Chair calls for online public comment, the RMC will individually allow attendees to speak typically in the order they raised their hands online.

If **Technical Assistance** is required due to any equipment malfunction in the room or with Zoom, let the committee secretary or staff know so they can call for assistance and/or communicate the issue.

THE COMMITTEE MEETING

1. Once a quorum is present (one more than half of the committee members), the Chair calls the “X-Y-Z Committee” to order. Use the gavel to call the meeting to order. Striking the gavel is the signal to begin audio recording.
2. A quorum is necessary for initially convening the meeting; however, a quorum may be met by using the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate (ex officio, nonvoting members of all standing committees) who may be present for purposes of a quorum. Hearing bills without a quorum is discouraged because absent committee members are missing important information.
3. The Chair instructs the Secretary/Clerk to announce the roll, including which committee members are present, absent, or excused.
4. The Chair instructs the audience to turn off phones, informs them of the need to sign (legibly) the witness sheet, tells them that any written material submitted must contain their name and who they represent – but no further information unless they want that made public. Remind participants to speak into the mic.
5. The Chair explains any time management procedures, so committee members and the audience know if there are any time constraints on any bill.
 - Prior to the bill hearing, the Chair asks bill sponsors to estimate the time needed for the introduction to a bill and the approximate amount of time witnesses will need to present testimony. Discuss with each sponsor the proposed order in which bills will be heard.
6. Chair reviews agenda for the meeting: bills to be heard and the order in which they will be heard, bills to be acted on in executive action, and any other information.
7. Chair will open hearing on first bill. Give number of the bill and the name of the sponsor. Check with staffer about pronunciation of names if you have a question. After the sponsor opens, remind witnesses to sign in and spell their name.
8. Welcome the bill sponsor to the committee and ask them to make an opening statement.
 - In the House a hearing on a bill may not proceed unless the sponsor or co-sponsor is present. In the Senate a hearing may not proceed unless the sponsor is present or unless the sponsor has waived the requirement for his or her presence; this waiver must be in writing to be used as an exhibit. In both houses a sponsor may request (in writing at least 48 hours before the bill’s hearing) that the bill be withdrawn from consideration. Forms are available in the Chief Clerk or Secretary’s office.

9. The bill sponsor introduces the bill and may invite a constituent, lobbyist or the person who brought the issue to the sponsor's attention to be the first person to testify.
10. Call for proponents.
11. Call for opponents.
12. Call for informational witnesses.
 - In the interest of helping out-of-town witnesses, Chair may call for out-of-towners first. Remember: There might be witnesses on Zoom.
13. Call for Questions by committee members.
 - During this question-and-answer period, members do not debate the merits of the bill. Questions are always asked and answered through the Chair.
14. Invite the sponsor to make a closing statement.
15. Announce: "This closes the hearing on (Bill Number)" and thank the participants.

(REPEAT HEARING PROCEDURE FOR OTHER BILLS.)

16. Before adjourning, announce any subcommittee meetings, the schedule for the next meeting day's hearings and any executive action. Remind members to provide staff with any amendments they want for upcoming bills.
17. Use gavel to close the meetings. This concludes the audio recording. Check with the Secretary/Clerk to ensure mics are turned off.

EXECUTIVE ACTION

The Process:

- A committee member offers a motion to begin debate. This motion is nearly always a do pass motion; rarely will it be do not pass. The motion to table is nondebateable.
- Debate occurs.
- Motion to amend may be offered at any time after the original motion unless the original motion is to table. Debate then centers on the amendment.
- Vote on any amendments first, then on the bill. This may require another motion to “do pass as amended.”
- Debate ends when a member offers a motion to call for the previous question or moves to table the bill.
- Voting can be done by voice vote, a show of hands, or a roll call. If a position motion fails, a second motion is needed to table the bill.

Key Considerations:

- Executive action sessions are open to the public. Testimony is usually not taken from witnesses during executive action. However, if there are no objections from the committee or at the discretion of the Chair, a member may be permitted to ask questions of witnesses during executive action as long as the witness had originally testified. This practice does not allow rebuttal or additional testimony from other points of view; but if it is allowed, a fair opportunity must be given to both sides of a question.
- Executive action is normally not taken at the time that a bill is heard. Executive action might be taken the same day if the bill is noncontroversial; if it is readily understood by all members of the committee; if the sponsor has no objection to action; and if all substantive amendments have gone through the editing process.
- After the hearing on a bill, the Chair may, as a courtesy to the public, state when executive action is contemplated. The Chair may consider scheduling executive action at the beginning of a future hearing to provide advance notice and ensure the proper parties are in attendance.
- Stating when executive action is scheduled allows legislators to plan to attend or to arrange for a proxy and allows early notification for drafting of amendments.
- Scheduling executive action regularly or at the beginning of a meeting may be an easier way to manage executive action. If executive action is held after bill hearings, a morning committee may run out of discussion time while an afternoon committee may run too late to allow adequate discussion. Executive action at the beginning of a meeting also may be a better way to handle space management in a crowded meeting room and to serve constituents waiting for action on a bill.

Reasons to delay executive action:

- Missing fiscal note on a bill for which a fiscal note has been requested.
- Action pending in the other house on a bill with the same purpose.
- A hearing on a bill with a similar or contrary purpose and a concern by the sponsor or committee members that the bills be debated at the same time.
- A complicated set of amendments remains to be drafted and edited.

HB 2 SUBCOMMITTEES

- Chairs of Subcommittees A-E need to be aware that they will not actually be holding bill hearings, so the process is slightly different. Individual bills will not be opened and closed, nor will official amendments to bills be drafted as will be seen in other committees. Instead, these subcommittees, as representatives of House Appropriations and Senate Finance & Claims committees, develop budget recommendations for House Appropriations to consider during their initial hearing on HB 2.
- The first action by each subcommittee will come because of recommendations forwarded from the Chairs of House Appropriations and Senate Finance & Claims. Generally, the first “global motion” adopted by each subcommittee is to adopt the recommended base, from which all other budget modifications will be made.
- Subcommittee Chairs will open hearings on agency or division budgets each day, followed by presentations by LFD staff and agency personnel along with OBPP. Public comment is held on a publicly noticed schedule, which will need to be coordinated with your LFD staff to make sure that schedule is updated and online. Public comment on proposed recommendations for HB 2 in Subcommittees A-E is generally not organized as proponents/opponents/informational witnesses. Much of the time, public comment in these hearings consists of individuals or groups advocating for funding for a particular population, policy, or purpose. Chairs should do their best to adhere to posted public comment times. For example, if public comment is posted as being at 11:00 AM, it would be best to stick to that time – even if the subcommittee wraps up their work for the morning at 9:45 AM.
- Executive action may be held after each agency hearing, but many subcommittees wait and do all executive action toward the end of their time together, generally the 2nd or 3rd week of February. Votes are taken on Decision Packages (DPs) that add or subtract from the base budget, for specific purposes, with specific funding numbers specified. While these are not traditional bill amendments, it still needs to be very clear what the subcommittee intention is with each vote held. LFD staff will work with you to develop the numbers and put those into a format the subcommittee prefers.
- Opening executive action (EA) on agency budgets does not require a “do pass” opening motion, as the global motion already established a budget starting point. Instead, the chair can open EA and proceed directly to allowing motions for individual DPs to be considered.
- If there is any question about action taken or legislative intent of a vote, your staff may ask that you clarify or take further action to alleviate any question about what your intent is for components of the recommended budget in HB 2.

MOTIONS

The first motion addresses the bill itself, regardless of amendments.

- The appropriate initial motions on a bill are:
 - do pass (or do concur if the bill is from the other house)
 - table
- If the motion is “do pass” or “do concur,” before a vote, a committee member may make a substitute motion to amend the bill.
- A substitute motion may be made for any pending motion, except the motion to table.
 - Only one substitute motion to the original motion may be offered at a time.
 - Adequate discussion should be allowed before each motion’s vote.
 - A substitute motion is voted on before the initial motion.
 - If the substitute motion fails, the initial motion is considered.
 - If the substitute motion and the initial motion are opposing motions, the Chair may announce that, without objection, the vote on the substitute motion will be reversed and recorded as the vote on the initial motion.
 - When voting on complicated amendments, the amendment on each part may be divided by taking separate votes. A motion to divide the question is not debatable and is the right of a committee member to request.
- Once all amendments have been voted on, the motion is to:
 - “Do pass as amended”; or
 - “Be concurred in as amended”; or
 - “Table.”
- Other motions that may be used in committee:
 - To take from the table: a motion to resume consideration of a bill previously set aside
 - To postpone action: consideration of the bill is delayed to a certain date.
 - To reconsider action: a motion to bring up a bill previously voted on but that has not yet been reported out of committee. The motion to reconsider action is usually made for the purpose of attempting to change a prior committee vote or to allow reconsideration of adopted or defeated bills or amendments.
- A motion to table is not debatable and calls for an immediate vote. A Chair may encourage withdrawing a motion to table if the Chair thinks discussion on the bill is appropriate.
- A motion to table prevents a bill from going to the floor. The bill remains in committee and is not reported to the floor. This motion is often used to finally dispose of a bill without requiring consideration by the Committee of the Whole.

AMENDMENTS

Once a bill is in possession of the committee, any member may seek to amend a bill. Amendments must be within the scope of the title of the bill.

The Process:

- A member asks the committee staffer to prepare a proposed amendment.
 - Early drafting allows proper conformity with the Constitution, existing statutes, and other provisions of the bill.
 - Extensive or complicated amendments may require additional research.
- Committee members may propose amendments not yet written to a bill during executive action. These are called “conceptual amendments.” Conceptual amendments can weigh the process down; but if they are simple (as in changing a date or a number), that helps. Even conceptual amendments must be edited, because speedy changes are not always accurate.
- A witness may suggest an amendment during testimony. However, the amendment is not prepared unless a committee member requests it.
- Even though a legislator’s amendment has been drafted, the legislator is not obligated to move an amendment in committee.
- If extensive amendments are offered or if several bills on a subject are before the committee, the Chair may appoint a subcommittee to work on the bill or bills.
- After all proposed amendments are moved and acted upon, action is taken on the bill as amended. All amendments are included in the committee report.

FISCAL NOTES

A bill requiring a fiscal note may be voted on but may not be reported out of committee until the fiscal note is available and has been reviewed.

- The statute allows up to 6 days for the preparation of a fiscal note by the Budget Office (up to 10 days if the bill requires an estimate of a fiscal impact on a local government or school district).
- If a fiscal note is not deemed necessary at introduction but the committee determines that one is needed or if the committee amends a bill which then requires a fiscal note, the Chair should ask the Chief Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate to seek approval for the fiscal note to be ordered.
- In order to obtain a revised fiscal note because of amendments, the bill must be reported out of committee and the amended bill to be sent to the Budget Office.

VOTING

All votes on amendments and bills are recorded and made public.

- If agreed upon by the Chair and the Committee, an excused member may be allowed to vote by leaving a written proxy. Absentee voting procedures using the standard proxy form required by both Senate and House rules should be established in the committee meeting procedures.
- The vote may be taken by a voice vote or by a roll call. The secretary/clerk is required to record the vote. **Note:** Those not voting with the majority in a voice vote must be asked to identify themselves or named by the chair.
- Any member may request a roll call vote, which is to be done in the order directed by the Chair.
- The Chair should immediately announce the vote (regardless of the voting method).
- If a bill has been referred by a subcommittee, the subcommittee report is received during executive action in the form of recommended amendments. Action on the amendments proposed in the subcommittee report is the same as for all other amendments acted on by the committee.
- If the bill originated in the other house, arrangements should be made by the sponsor of the bill for a member to carry the bill in the Committee of the Whole. When the sponsor has not arranged for a member to carry the bill, the chair may designate a member to carry the bill.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

A Standing Committee Report (SCR) is prepared for each bill that is recommended to the Committee of the Whole.

- If amendments are made to the bill, the committee staffer will prepare the amendments (which may require combining multiple sets of approved amendments) for inclusion in the committee report. The committee secretary/clerk must receive the information from the committee staffer and the amendments coordinator of the appropriate house to prepare the committee report.
- The report must be signed by the Committee Chair. Before signing the report, the Chair should read the report to ensure that it accurately reflects the action of the committee. If the Chair is unsure whether all amendments are properly included in the report, the Chair should check with the committee secretary/clerk or staffer before signing off.
- If a report needs to be changed for any reason (e.g., the committee wants to reconsider a vote or a report has been erroneously prepared and signed), it can only be done if the legislation is still in possession of the committee. (Rules provide that a committee may reconsider an action on a bill until the report is read over the rostrum and reported out of committee.) Once legislation is no longer in possession of the committee, in order to have the committee report changed, the bill must be rereferred by the Committee of the Whole to the committee. Other alternatives to changing the report including rereferring the bill to another committee or an amendment proposed in the Committee of the Whole.

RECORDED COMMITTEE MINUTES

All standing committees are audio recorded and archived. All committee meetings are live streamed. By law, audio is the official record of the Legislature.

- Before calling the meeting to order, the Chair should let the secretary/clerk know that the meeting is ready to begin.
- The secretary/clerk turns the mics on, and the live broadcast begins. The secretary/clerk will inform the Chair that it is recording.
- After getting the signal that the recording is active, the Chair may start by using a firm gavel rap and clearly stating into the microphone that the meeting is starting.
- It is important that the Chair recognize each committee member by name when a member wants to address the committee.
- The Chair should ensure that committee members and witnesses speak into the microphone and can be heard through the speakers. During the meeting the Chair should remind committee members that microphones will pick up individual conversations.
- Members of the audience need to be at the podium microphone to respond to questions. The Chair may request that witnesses spell their name for the record.
- The Chair should clearly state into the microphone when each new bill hearing is beginning and when it has concluded. The audio recordings have links to each bill hearing.
- If the sound system fails or another technical problem develops, the secretary/clerk will notify the Chair through the staffer. The Chair may have the committee stand at ease or recess until the problem is solved.
- The secretary/clerk creates the audio recording that will be posted as minutes, including links to exhibits, signed proxy votes, and a list of witness/visitor logs, etc.

COMMITTEE BILLS

Members of a legislative committee may, by majority vote may request the drafting of a “committee bill.” When a committee bill is requested, it is given an LC number.

- A committee bill may be on any subject within the jurisdiction of the committee.
- In both the Senate and the House, three-quarters of the members of the committee must vote to request the drafting of a committee bill (except in the Senate Finance and Claims Committee, where a majority vote is required). There are special request deadlines in the joint rules specifying the deadline by which a committee bill must be requested by a committee (usually the 36th legislative day).
- In both House and Senate committees, once the committee bill is drafted, the Chair of the committee must sign the bill, or designate another member to sign it, and introduce the bill.
- Once the bill is in possession of the committee, the bill can be scheduled for a hearing.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

If the second house amends a bill that is not accepted by the first house, the first house may request a conference committee and appoint a committee to discuss an amendment on which the two houses can agree. The first house informs the second house of the committee and asks them to appoint a like committee. Once the committee is formed, committee meetings are set and announced, including to the public. These meetings must be conducted as an open meeting, and minutes of the meeting must be kept. Committees are encouraged to provide at least 24 hours' notice to members of the committee and the public, and meetings must include an opportunity for public comment of the proposed amendments and any potential amendments to the bill.

Leadership may appoint a conference committee (considering only the second house amendment) or a free conference committee (may consider the entire bill). After the committee has agreed on a plan of action, they report that result to their respective houses. The committees may recommend:

- Acceptance or rejection of each disputed amendment in its entirety.
- Further amendment of the disputed amendment.
- That the first house request a free conference committee and ask the second house to agree to that change. This committee is appointed in the same manner as the first conference committee and may discuss and propose amendments to a bill in its entirety (within the scope of the title of the introduced bill). The free conference committee also may not take executive action on an amendment to a bill implementing provisions of a general appropriations act that does not directly and substantively address the subject of the bill.
- A conference committee report must give clerical instructions for a corrected reference bill and for enrolling by referring to the reference bill version.

APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEES

House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Claims Committees deliberate HB 2, the General Appropriations Act (primary budget bill). Due to the complexity of HB 2, members of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Claims Committees form Joint Subcommittees to conduct hearings and make recommendations on HB 2 prior to the bill moving to the full House Appropriations Committee for hearings and action.

Chairs of the Joint Subcommittees are members of the House Appropriations Committee majority party. Generally, the Joint Subcommittees meet and deliberate during the first 45 legislative days. During this time nonpartisan legislative fiscal staff assist the members in understanding the details of the Governor's budget request and help prepare the legislative recommendations to the proposed budget.

JOINT MEETINGS OF THE APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCE AND CLAIMS COMMITTEES

The Chair of the Senate Finance and Claims Committee or the Chair of the House Appropriations Committee may be a voting member of the joint subcommittee if either house has fewer members on the joint subcommittee; if the Chair represents the house with fewer members on the committee; and if the Chair is present for the vote at the time that a question is called. A vote may not be held open to facilitate voting by a chair.

Joint committee meetings are held upon call of the Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, who chairs the joint committee. The Chair of the Senate Finance and Claims Committee or chair of the House Appropriations Committee may be a voting member of the joint subcommittee if either house has fewer members on the joint subcommittee; if the Chair represents the house with fewer members on the committee; and if the Chair is present for the vote at the time that a question is called. A vote may not be held open to facilitate voting by a chair.

HELPFUL TIPS

Request to divide a question

This motion is a request to divide a question is a privilege, not a motion. If a question involves two or more propositions so distinct that they can be separated and at least one substantive question remains after one substantive question is removed, the question may be divided. The request is nondebatable. The Chair may rule that a question is not dividable.

Motion to reconsider

This motion is to bring up a bill previously voted on but that has not yet been reported out of committee. The motion to reconsider action is usually made for the purpose of attempting to change a prior committee vote or to allow reconsideration of adopted or defeated amendments. Proxies may be used for a motion to reconsider.

Seconds to motions

A second to any motion offered in a committee is not required.

Fiscal note required

If a fiscal note is required, a committee cannot report the bill out of the committee without it. For amended fiscal notes see JR 40-100.

Substitute bill

A committee may request a substitute bill that strikes every section in the bill and replaces them with new material if the new material is relevant to the title and subject of the original bill. The substitute bill is an amendment.

Rarely used motions

Other motions that are allowed but are rarely used because they will consume Committee of the Whole time and resources:

- “Do not pass” and “Do not pass as amended” (bill in the original house)
- “Be not concurred in” and “Be not concurred in as amended (bill from other house)

Where to find committee rules

- Joint Rules – Chapter 30
- House Rules – Chapter 3
- Senate Rules – Chapter 3

RELEVANT LAWS AND RULES

THE MONTANA CONSTITUTION

- **Article II, Section 8.** Right of participation. The public has the right to expect governmental agencies to afford such reasonable opportunity for citizen participation in the operation of the agencies prior to the final decision as may be provided by law.
- **Article II, Section 9.** Right to know. No person shall be deprived of the right to examine documents or to observe the deliberations of all public bodies or agencies of state government and its subdivision, except in cases in which the demand of individual privacy clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure.
- **Article V, Section 10.** Organization and procedure. (3) The sessions of the legislature and of the committee of the whole, all committee meetings, and all hearings shall be open to the public.

RULES

- Legislative rules on committees found in Joint Rules of the Montana Legislature Chapter 30 and committee rules of both the House of Representatives or the State Senate found in chapter 30 of both handbooks.
- “Mason’s Manual of Legislative Procedure” (not “Robert’s rules of Order”.)

EMERGENCY GUIDELINES

Setting up committee safety procedures

Discuss various exits from the hearing room with your committee and staff (maps posted above the light switch) and decide who will lead the way out and who will follow to shepherd the group and any public out of the building.

Assembling after an emergency evacuation

After evacuation everyone must report to the assembly area and check in with the Sergeant-at-Arms or the Chief Clerk of the House/Secretary of the Senate who will account for everyone who was in the building and report anyone missing.

Medical Emergency

In case of a medical emergency in the committee, call 911 immediately and notify a Sergeant staff who will summon the staff medical team. There are AED (automated External Defibrillator units), trauma kits and trained personnel within the Capitol who will assist until EMTs arrive and will guide responders to the correct room. If you observe someone with a possible medical issue, inform a Sergeant-at-Arms staff who will discreetly determine if further assistance is needed. Do not let someone leave or go to a bathroom or back to an office alone while experiencing a problem.

Fire alarm or evacuation

During a fire alarm or evacuation, the Chair and staff should assist Sergeant-at-Arms staff and orange-vested safety team members to clear the room, evacuate and then report to the assembly area for check-in.

Earthquake

During an earthquake, drop under a piece of furniture, cover your head and neck, and hold on until the movement stops. Then evacuate the building, assisting those with injuries. Watch for hazards and stay in open areas.

Security issues, hostile witnesses, overcrowding, sound system problems, other issues

If, during a meeting, there is a concern about someone in the room, medical issues, overcrowding, sound system problems and other issues, notify a House Sergeant (blue jacket, 444-4200, Room 470) or Senate Sergeant (444-4878, Room 375) or a MHP Trooper on the first floor (444-3060 or 911).

Suspicious Mail or Packages

If you receive or find a threatening letter or package, call a Sergeant-at-Arms or MPH trooper. It is important to track these items. Do not handle the item, do not expose additional people to it, and do not move it.

Bomb Threat

If a bomb threat is received by telephone, call 911 from a different phone. Dispatch will document the information, or you can use your "bomb threat checklist" about what should be done. Bomb threats require a different evacuation procedure and response.

Active shooter/lockdown procedures

If you hear shouts, gunshots, or are warned to lock down, exit the building if you can do so safely. Otherwise, immediately retreat into an office or room and secure or lock the door, turn out lights, stay quiet, and have everyone stay down low or behind furniture. During the event, if there are life-threatening injuries in your room, call 911 and report; otherwise, remain quiet and do not tie up the phone lines. Once you are locked down, do not reopen the door or exit the room until law enforcement or security officers evacuate you. Authorized evacuation personnel will have keys and identification. Follow the commands of law enforcement during any evacuation and keep your hands open and visible.