



TYPICAL SITTING DAY

Introduction

Daily Business

Daily Proceedings

- Prayers
- National Anthem
- Statements by Members
- Oral Questions (Question Period)

Routine Proceedings

- Tabling of Documents
- Introduction of Government Bills
- Statements by Ministers
- Presenting Reports from Interparliamentary Delegations
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INTRODUCTION

The daily business of the House of Commons is taken up according to a sequence set out in the Standing Orders (rules of the House). The House convenes on Mondays at 11:00 a.m., on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 10:00 a.m., and on Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. The Chamber usually adjourns by 7:00 p.m., except on Friday when it rises at 2:30 p.m.

DAILY BUSINESS

All items of business that can be dealt with on a given day are listed on the daily *Order Paper*, the official agenda of the House. The daily activities of the House are generally grouped into five categories:

- Daily Proceedings;
- Routine Proceedings;
- Government Orders;
- Private Members' Business; and
- Adjournment Proceedings.

DETAILED ARTICLES

Daily Order of Business

Order Paper—Order of Business [Parliamentary Publications]

DAILY PROCEEDINGS

The Daily Proceedings include three events:

- Prayers (followed by the National Anthem on Wednesdays);
- Statements by Members; and
- Oral Questions.

Prayers

At the beginning of each sitting of the House, following the ceremonial Speaker's parade, the Speaker takes the Chair. After it has been confirmed that a quorum of 20 Members is present, the Speaker reads the prayer. The House pauses for a moment of silent reflection when the prayer is finished.

National Anthem

On Wednesdays, Members sing the national anthem at the opening of the sitting. After the prayer has been read, but before the doors are opened to admit the public, the Speaker recognizes a Member to lead the House in singing the national anthem. On all other days, the Speaker orders the doors opened immediately following the prayer and silent reflection, and the proceedings of the House begin.

DETAILED ARTICLES

Speaker's Parade

Prayers

Quorum

Statements by Members

At 2:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, the Speaker calls "Statements by Members". During this 15-minute period, any Member who is not a Minister is permitted to address the House for up to one minute on virtually any matter of local, provincial, national or international concern.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Statements by Members

Oral Questions (Question Period)

Following "Statements by Members", at no later than 2:15 p.m. (11:15 a.m. on Friday), Question Period takes place for a maximum of 45 minutes. At this time, Members may question the Government on all matters within its jurisdiction.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Question Period [Questions]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Routine Proceedings also referred to as "the daily routine of business," consists of several categories of business that provide Members with an opportunity to bring a variety of matters to the attention of the House. The amount of time required to complete Routine Proceedings varies from day to day depending on the number of items to be dealt with.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Routine Proceedings

The separate headings or rubrics that make up Routine Proceedings are:

Tabling of Documents

A Minister, or his or her Parliamentary Secretary, may table any report or paper on any topic within the administrative competence of the Government. The Government is also required to table a variety of documents either by statute, by order of the House, or by Standing Order. The Speaker may also table certain documents just prior to the announcement of the Tabling of Documents rubric. The Speaker tables reports from Officers of Parliament such as the Auditor General, the Information and Privacy Commissioners as well as reports on his/her interparliamentary exchange trips and reports relating to the administration of the House of Commons.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Tabling of Documents

Introduction of Government Bills

Government legislation is first presented to the House under this rubric.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Introduction and First Reading of Bills [Legislative Process]

Statements by Ministers

Under this heading, Ministers may make announcements or statements on government policy or matters of national interest. Following a ministerial statement, a spokesperson from each recognized opposition party is permitted to respond.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Statements by Ministers

Presenting Reports from Interparliamentary Delegations

Canada's international and interparliamentary relations are carried out in part through formal parliamentary associations that operate on multilateral and bilateral levels to promote Canada's interests abroad. Interparliamentary delegations are required to present to the House reports on any trip taken in fulfillment of their duties, either in Canada or abroad, within 20 sitting days of their return to Ottawa.

DETAILED ARTICLES

Presenting Reports from Interparliamentary Delegations

Parliamentary Associations

Interparliamentary Groups

Presenting Reports from Committees

Information, requests and recommendations from standing, special or legislative committees and standing or special joint committees are transmitted to the House by way of reports under "Presenting Reports from Committees". A report may be presented by the committee chair, or in his or her absence, by a member of the committee. If the committee has adopted a motion to request a response from the Government to its report, that request is communicated orally at the time that it is presented. When a committee has appended supplementary or dissenting opinions or recommendations to its report, a committee member representing the Official Opposition may provide a brief explanation of these views.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Presentation of a Committee Report in the House of Commons [Committees]

Introduction of Private Members' Bills

Public bills sponsored by any Member who is not a Minister are introduced under this heading.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Private Members' Bills—Notice, Introduction and First Reading [Private Members' Business]

First Reading of Senate Public Bills

When a Senate public bill has been passed by the Senate, a message is sent to inform the House. The bill is placed on the *Order Paper* under the heading “First Reading of Senate Public Bills”. When the Member or Minister sponsoring the bill in the House signals his or her desire to proceed when the heading is called, the motion for first reading is deemed carried without debate, amendment or question put.

DETAILED ARTICLE

First Reading of Senate Public Bills

Motions

When the Speaker calls “Motions” during Routine Proceedings, any Minister or Member may rise and move a motion provided that it has been placed on the *Notice Paper* at least 48 hours in advance. Otherwise, a Minister or Member must seek unanimous consent to move the motion. Examples of motions moved under this rubric include those to manage the business and calendar of the House or its committees, including concurrence in committee reports and to modify House rules.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Motions (Routine Proceedings)

Presenting Petitions

This daily period is provided for the presentation by Members of Parliament of petitions from the Canadian public wishing to bring their concerns to the attention of Parliament. This period is limited to 15 minutes. Before being presented, a petition must be examined and certified correct as to form and content by the Clerk of Petitions. Although Members may make a brief statement about the petitions, no debate is permitted during the presentation of petitions.

DETAILED ARTICLES

Petitions

Presenting Petitions

Form and Content of Petitions—Guidelines

Government Responses to Petitions

Recommended Forms of Petitions

Questions on the *Order Paper*

Members may have placed on notice, at any one time, up to four written questions to the Government “relating to public affairs”. A Member may ask for a response to a specific question within 45 calendar days and may also ask that an oral answer be provided to up to three of his or her questions. When “Questions on the *Order Paper*” is called, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader announces which questions the Government intends to answer that day.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Placing Written Questions on the *Order Paper* [Questions]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Items of business proposed by Ministers which the House has ordered for consideration are classed as Government Orders. These items fall under the following headings:

- Business of Supply;
- Ways and Means Proceedings;
- Government Bills (Commons);
- Government Bills (Senate); and
- Government Business.

Government Orders occupies most of the sitting day and the choice of what items will be debated under this heading is made exclusively by the Government.

Although the Government does not select the subject matter of the motion debated on an allotted or opposition day under the Business of Supply, it designates the day on which the item will be taken up. The motion is considered under Government Orders.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Government Orders

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Each day, one hour of House time is set aside for Private Members' Business during which bills and motions sponsored by private Members are considered. Only one bill or motion may be debated per day during this hour. Private Members' Business commences at 11:00 a.m. on Mondays, 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and 1:30 p.m. on Friday.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Private Members' Business [General Article]

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS (LATE SHOW)

Adjournment proceedings, also referred to as the "late show", are held from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, after which the House adjourns. This debate, which runs for a maximum of 30 minutes, allows for brief exchanges between Members and Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries on predetermined topics.

The Speaker must indicate to the House, at no later than 5:00 p.m., which matter or matters are to be raised that day.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Adjournment Proceedings (Late Show) [Questions]

OTHER WEEKLY BUSINESS

A variety of other business items come before the House during the sitting week, although not on a daily basis:

- **Weekly Business Statement (Thursday Statement)**

Each Thursday, after Question Period, the House Leader of the Official Opposition rises to ask the Government House Leader about Government business to be considered by the House in the succeeding days or week. The Government House Leader then outlines what business the Government intends to bring forward. This practice is commonly known as the "Business Statement" or the "Thursday Statement". The statement is for information purposes only and is not binding on the Government.

- **The Review of Delegated Legislation**

The Review of Delegated Legislation involves the consideration of reports concerning federal regulations from the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations. Consideration of these reports is limited to a one-hour period at 1:00 p.m. on a Wednesday.

• Notices of Motion for the Production of Papers

Notices of Motion for the Production of Papers are submitted by Members in order to request documents that the Government is not obliged to present to Parliament. These motions are decided without debate when taken up on Wednesdays after Routine Proceedings. If a Minister or the Member requesting the document decides that debate on such a motion is necessary, the notice of motion is transferred for debate to Private Members' Business.

DETAILED ARTICLES

Review of Delegated Legislation

Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers [Private Members' Business]

SPECIAL DEBATES

A variety of special debates that occur less regularly, are also provided for by the *Standing Orders of the House of Commons*. They include:

- Debate on the Standing Orders and Procedure—a one-day debate on the rules and procedures of the House held within the first 90 sitting days of each Parliament;
- Emergency Debates—debates on pressing matters held outside the ordinary sitting hours of the House;
- Estimates Debates in Committee of the Whole—special debates held in Committee of the Whole (the House sitting as a committee) during May on the Estimates of two selected departments or agencies;
- Statutory Debates—special debates to review specific statutory provisions. The requirements for these debates are included in the statutes themselves;
- Suspension of Certain Standing Orders—a debate held when the House is asked to suspend certain Standing Orders in relation to any business that the Government considers urgent; and
- Take Note Debates—debates held when the House wishes to “take note” of an issue, allowing Members to state their views without the requirement that a decision be reached.

DETAILED ARTICLES

Debate on the Standing Orders and Procedure

Emergency Debates

Estimates Debates in Committee of the Whole

Statutory Debates

Suspension of Certain Standing Orders—Special Debate

Take-note Debates

Committees of the Whole [Committees]

ADDRESSES BY DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

From time to time, the House of Commons Chamber is the site for a joint address to Parliament by a distinguished visitor (usually a head of state or head of government). For these addresses, the practice has normally been for the House of Commons to adopt a motion for a joint address. The motion usually provides for the address and related speeches to be appended to *Hansard*, and includes the date and time of the adjournment of the House to hear the address, as well as permission for the media to broadcast the event.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Addresses by Distinguished Visitors

MORE INFORMATION—TYPICAL SITTING DAY

[*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*](#), Second Edition, 2009

Chapter 9, Sittings of the House

Chapter 10, The Daily Program

[*Standing Orders of the House of Commons*](#)

Chapter III, Sittings of the House of Commons

Chapter IV, Daily Program

Find this and other articles on House of Commons procedure by visiting the *Compendium of Procedure* Web site at www.parl.gc.ca/compendium-e.

For further information about the procedures of the House of Commons, please contact the Table Research Branch at (613) 996-3611 or by e-mail at trbdrb@parl.gc.ca.

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