

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
Summary of Rule Changes – November 2024

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba adopted a number of changes to its *Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceedings* in May 2024 to take effect at the commencement of the Second Session of the 43rd Legislature. Most of these changes involve codifying the provisions of the Sessional Order which first enabled virtual sittings in October 2020. However, items 1, 5-8, 19-20, 22, 27-28, 31-33 and 37 are not strictly related to changes required because of the new virtual environment.

This document provides concise explanations of these changes. To see a complete description of these Rule changes, please refer to the [Hansard transcript of the meeting of the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House from May 29th, 2024](#).

1) Procedure generally
Sub-rule 1(1)

What has changed?

This provision tweaks how the House and Committees are to be referenced, making it consistent with the wording used in the Rule proposals within this package.

2) New definitions for “Moderator” and “virtually”
Sub-rule 1(3)

What has changed?

Definitions contained within 1(3) are used to clarify terminology used throughout the Rule Book and replaces the need to do an explanation numerous times throughout the Rules. Two new definitions have been added to define “Moderator” and “virtually”. These terms are used throughout the Rules and are therefore defined here for reference and clarity.

3) Proceedings of the House or Committees
Sub-rule 1(4)

What has changed?

This is the key provision enabling Members to participate virtually in proceedings of the House and its Committees.

4) Requirements for virtual participation
Sub-rule 1(5)

What has changed?

This provision clarifies the audio and video requirements for virtual participation by adding the requirement for virtual Members to turn on their video and also directs them to have their microphones muted when they are not speaking.

5) Sitting periods – Headings added for Clarification
Sub-Rule 2(1)

What has changed?

This provision added the sub-headings “Completion of Specified Bills” and “Completion of Designated Bills, the Business of Supply and BITSA” to clarify the contents of this sub-rule that has multiple paragraphs and provisions.

6) Indigenous Veterans Day and Orange Shirt Day
Sub-rules 2(1)-(3)

What has changed?

Indigenous Veteran’s Day and Orange Shirt Day are added to the Sessional Calendar in new sub-rule 2(3) entitled “Days of Observance”.

If either or both of these days occur during a sitting week, causing the House to lose a sitting day(s), this Rule will require an additional sitting day(s) to be added at the beginning of the Fall Sittings to ensure there are sufficient days to allow for completion of all stages for the Designated Bills.

7) Emergency Provisions
New Sub-rule 2(9)

What has changed?

The COVID-19 pandemic reflected the need for the Assembly to have a means to respond to exceptional circumstances. This provision allows for the Speaker and Leaders of Recognized Parties to adapt to emergency situations and determine a proper course of operation when the House is not sitting.

8) Specified Government Bills – Clarification
New Sub-rule 2(10)

What has changed?

This provision clarifies how a Bill can become Specified. It codifies to the Rules the recent practice whereby the Government House Leader specifically identifies the Bills which will be considered Specified. It provides specific timelines for the tabling at both Second Reading and Concurrence and Third Reading.

In addition, extra clarity has been added to state that no Private Members’ Bills can be classified as Specified or Designated, as the previous Rule only mentioned Opposition Bills.

9) Quorum
Sub-rule 5(1)

What has changed?

This provision enables the virtual participation of MLAs during quorum counts.

10) Quorum Bell
Sub-rule 5(3)

What has changed?

This provision contains revised wording to include the virtual participation of MLAs during quorum counts.

11) Election of Speaker exempt from virtual proceedings
New sub-rule 8(2)

What has changed?

Due to the highly sensitive and confidential nature of electing a Speaker, only Members physically present in the Chamber may be eligible to vote.

This provision has been added to allow the House Leaders to instruct the Clerk to develop procedures to enable virtual participation during the secret ballot process in the event that it is not physically possible for all Members to be present in the Chamber due to an emergency or another situation.

12) Divisions - Termination
Sub-rule 14(1)

What has changed?

This provision enables the virtual participation of MLAs during divisions by removing the word Chamber.

13) Divisions – Entering and Leaving
Sub-rule 14(2)

What has changed?

This provision clarifies the virtual participation of MLAs during divisions by removing the reference to the Chamber.

14) Divisions - Pairing
Sub-rule 14(9)

What has changed?

This provision removes the requirement for a Member to stand during divisions, to account for those participating virtually.

15) Recording of Ayes and Nays
Sub-rule 14(11)

What has changed?

This provision changes the word “Yeas” to “Ayes” to avoid any misunderstanding in reporting a vote.

16) Naming of a Member
Sub-rule 18(1)

What has changed?

This provision allows the Speaker to order the Moderator to remove a Member from the virtual proceedings of the House.

17) Suspension from service of House for Session
Sub-rule 18(4)

What has changed?

This provision adds wording to include virtual participation for House suspensions.

18) Decorum on Adjournment
Sub-rule 19(1)

What has changed?

This provision adds wording to reflect that virtual Members do not need to rise in their place each session.

19) Use of electronic devices
Sub-rule 19(4)

What has changed?

This provision adds wording to update the use of electronic devices to require Members to keep them out of view the entire sitting day, including Committee meetings, as the Assembly now broadcasts gavel to gavel.

20) Ministerial Statements – Including names in Hansard
New Sub-rule 27(4)

What has changed?

This provision allows for Ministers making a Ministerial Statement, or Members responding thereto, to add the names of guests to be included in Hansard, without seeking leave, akin to the process in Members' Statements.

Members will need to state that they are providing the list of up to 50 names to be included in Hansard as part of their speech and provide the list to Hansard prior to 5:00 p.m. on the day the Statement is read in the House.

21) Order in addressing the Chair
Rule 40

What has changed?

Traditionally, Members in the Chamber would rise in their place to be recognized to speak and participate in debate. Members participating virtually do not need to stand at all during proceedings and this revised wording accounts for this change.

22) Old Rule 44 “Precedence when two Members rise to Speak” – repealed

What has changed?

The antiquated Rule that has existed since 1877 “Precedence when two Members rise to Speak” which allowed for a motion that a Member “be now heard” or “do now speak” has been repealed.

23) General Rule of Rotation
New Sub-rule 44(4)

What has changed?

The new provision codifies the general rule of rotation that the Speaker must not recognize another Member from the same party to speak until an opportunity to speak has been provided to a Member from another party or an Independent Member. It also removes the requirement for a Member to be standing in their place to be recognized in the event that they are participating virtually.

24) Closure of Debate
Sub-rules 51(1)(2)

What has changed?

This provision changes wording to remove the requirement for a Minister to be standing in their place to be recognized when participating virtually.

25) Procedure on a Point of Order
Sub-rule 52(1)

What has changed?

This provision adds wording to account for a Member participating virtually at the time the Point of Order was raised.

26) Conduct during the putting of a question
Sub-rule 54(1)

What has changed?

This provision updates wording to reflect that virtual Members should be muted when the question is being put.

27) Maintenance of order
Sub-rule 56(1)

What has changed?

This provision updates wording to reflect current practices when a Member is speaking and subsequently interrupted to make the Rule more intelligible.

28) Motions moved and seconded
Sub-rule 69(1)

What has changed?

This provision updates wording to reflect the long-standing Manitoba practice that Members must be in their seat to move a motion or be a seconder.

29) Rules observed in a Committee of the Whole House
Sub-rule 75(2)

What has changed?

This provision updates wording as previously (a) only applied to Members physically present in the Chamber.

30) Recorded Vote in Committee of Supply
Sub-rule 77(10)
Old Sub-rule 78(12) "Count-out" vote – repealed

What has changed?

This provision reflects the change in the practice of recorded votes in the Committee of Supply so that the method is the same as that used for recorded votes counted in the House. This provision reflects that change and updates the outdated terminology, removing "Formal Vote" and "Count-out Vote".

31) Recorded Vote in Committee of Supply - Division
Sub-rule 77(11)

What has changed?

This provision updates the wording to reflect that Supply votes can only happen in the Chamber.

32) Committee of Supply sitting on Fridays
Sub-rule 77(12)

What has changed?

This provision brings this sub-rule in line with the other changes and updates the wording by removing "formal vote", as this term is outdated and no longer used.

33) Committee Membership lists
Sub-rule 84(2)

What has changed?

This provision adds the requirement for the Whip to provide Committee Membership lists to the Committee Clerk at least one hour prior to the start of a meeting. This requirement allows time for the Clerk to ensure that all documents are updated in time to be shared with virtual Members and presenters before the meeting begins.

34) Presentation of Committee Reports
Sub-rule 88(1)

What has changed?

The provision removes the term “standing in their place” to account for virtual Members, and codifies the practice allowing the Vice-Chairperson or (if required) any Committee Member to present a Committee Report if the Chairperson is unavailable. It also allows for the potential of the Clerk being virtual if situations require it.

35) Presentations to Bills
New sub-rule 91(2)

What has changed?

This provision allows for the virtual presentation to Bills by the public but also only allows up to two virtual presentations from persons residing outside of the province.

36) Hearing presentations on Bills
Sub-rule 91(3)

What has changed?

This provision details the steps for calling public presenters including the rules of rotation that govern a five minute time limit in which questions and answers may not exceed 45 seconds. This provision now allows anyone from the Bill sponsor’s Caucus to ask a question as part of the rotation.

37) Payment allowances for witnesses
Old Sub-rules 93 to 95 – repealed

What has changed?

This provision deletes three Rules which provided for payment per diem to committee witnesses that have not been used in decades. They are no longer required as public presenters may now appear virtually at no cost to themselves or the Assembly.

38) Streamlining the Budget process
APPENDIX D

What has changed?

Steps 8 in the current process has been changed to reflect possible virtual Members present.