

**PROCEDURES  
FOR THE  
HOUSE  
OF  
ASSEMBLY**

**Tabling procedures, Parliamentary questions  
and Ministerial statements**

**March 2004**

## 1.0 TABLING PROCEDURES

1.1 Provisions are made for tabling legislation<sup>1</sup>, reports, and financial statements in the *Order of Business (Rules of the House of Assembly)*<sup>2</sup> under the following sections:

Table 1

Tabled Item	Order of Business (House Order Paper) Section
Legislation	Introduction of Bills
Reports	Papers and Other Communications to the House
Financial Statements	Papers and Other Communications to the House

1.2 **The following procedures must be observed when tabling the above items:**

### **Leases, Reports and Financial Statements**

1.3 After a **statutory lease, report, and/or financial statement** has been completed, a copy is to be sent to the Cabinet Office, accompanied by a ***For Information Cabinet Memorandum*** advising Cabinet of the Minister's intention to table it in the legislature.

1.4 After a **non-statutory lease, report, and/or financial statement** has been completed, a copy is to be sent to the Cabinet Office, accompanied by a ***For Decision Cabinet Memorandum*** requesting authorization for it to be tabled in the Legislature.

1.5 Following Cabinet approval, the **responsible Ministry will notify the Clerk to the Legislature in writing** that the lease, report, and/or financial statement will be tabled on the approved date. All correspondence must also be copied to **the Cabinet Office**.

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<sup>1</sup> Legislation includes primary legislation (Public Bills, Private Members' Bills and Private Bills) and/or subordinate legislation/statutory instruments (i.e. Rules, Orders, Regulations, or Notices).

<sup>2</sup> Order of Business/House Order Papers — sets out the agenda for the House of Assembly.

## **Legislation**

1.6 After the **Attorney General's Chambers** has drafted the legislation, a copy must be sent to the Cabinet Office, accompanied by a ***For Decision Cabinet Memorandum*** requesting Cabinet approval and authorization to have the Bill tabled in the Legislature. The Memorandum must also indicate that the **Legislation Committee has vetted the legislation**.

1.7 Following Cabinet approval, **the Cabinet Office will notify the responsible Ministry that the legislation can be tabled**. The responsible Ministry will then **inform the Clerk to the Legislature** in writing and copied to the Cabinet Office that the legislation will be tabled on the approved date. Where subordinate legislation is involved, the note should indicate whether it is subject to the affirmative or negative resolution procedures. Additionally, the responsible Ministry must **notify the Attorney General's Chambers** that the legislation will be tabled and **request that the Attorney General's Chambers** prepare the required number of printed copies of the legislation (see table 2).

1.8 **The responsible Ministry will deliver the required number of copies** (see table 2) to the Clerk to the Legislature by **no later than 3:00 pm on the Thursday prior to the Friday that the legislation will be tabled** in the House of Assembly.

Table 2

<b>Tabled Item</b>	<b>Number of Copies Required</b>
Public Bills	80
Statutory Instruments	
Reports	50
Financial Statements	70
Supplementary Estimates	
Leases	70
Parliamentary Questions	10
Ministerial Statements	15

## 2.0 RESPONDING TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

2.1 Ministers may be asked questions relating to the public affairs for which they are responsible. Ministers' responses to Parliamentary Questions can either be oral or written depending on the requirements of the Member of Parliament posing the question. Provisions are made for oral responses in the *Order of Business* under Oral Replies to Questions. The following procedures should be observed whether responding to questions orally or in writing:

- a) The Clerk to the Legislature **prepares the questions along with a set of instructions** (outlining the response format), which are forwarded to the **responsible Ministry and to the Cabinet Office**.
- b) The responsible **Minster must share his/her responses with Cabinet** on the Tuesday prior to the Friday that he/she intends to respond in the House of Assembly.
- c) The responsible Ministry must submit **10 copies** of the response to the Clerk to the Legislature and **copied to the Cabinet Office by no later than 3:00pm on the Thursday prior to the intended day of the response**. This will allow the Clerk to the Legislature sufficient time to prepare the *Order of Business* paper for the Speaker of the House of Assembly.

2.2 It should be noted that whether a response is provided orally or written, it **must be submitted in writing** to the Clerk to the Legislature.

### 3.0 MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

3.1 A Ministerial Statement can only be made during the Statements by Ministers in the *Order of Business*. The following procedures should be observed when delivering a Ministerial Statement:

- a) The responsible Ministry must inform the Clerk to the Legislature **by no later than 3:00 pm on the Thursday before the Friday that the statement is to be made** in the House of Assembly. This will allow the Clerk to the Legislature sufficient time to prepare the *Order of Business* paper for the Speaker of the House of Assembly.
- b) The responsible Ministry must ensure that **15 copies** of the Ministerial Statement are delivered to the Clerk to the Legislature while **1 copy is to be sent to the Cabinet Office by no later than 3:00 pm on the Thursday before the Friday that the Statement is to be made** in the House of Assembly.
- c) The heading of the Ministerial Statement **must include the following**:
  - Name and title of the Minister
  - Date (upon which it is to be made in the House of Assembly)
  - A brief description/title of the subject matter of the document
- d) It should be noted that a **Ministerial Statement must**:
  - State facts
  - Describe policy and/or matters of public affairs
  - Announce a national or international event or crisis
  - Not be lengthy (5 pages maximum)
  - Not contain any personal attacks

## 4.0 FURTHER GUIDANCE

4.1 Additional advice and guidance for key stages in Government's public policy development process can be found in the following documents which are also available on the Cabinet Office website at within the Government Portal:

- i. Detailed guidance on developing policy is contained in "*Making Good Policy Happen in Bermuda – Creating public policy from idea development to implementation*" issued by the Cabinet Office in April 2004.
- ii. Detailed guidance on preparing Cabinet memoranda can be found in "*The Preparation of Cabinet Memoranda*" issued by the Cabinet Office in March 2002.
- iii. Detailed guidance on the process for creating law can be found in "*The Legislative Process on Bermuda – Creating Law from policy development to commencement*" prepared by the Cabinet Office in April 2004.