



June 17, 2020

To all Honourable Members of the
Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

Honourable Members:

On March 23, 2020, the Legislative Assembly resolved: "That, by agreement of the Speaker and the House Leaders of each recognized caucus, the location of sittings and means of conducting sittings of this House may be altered if required due to an emergency situation or public health measures, and that such agreement constitute the authorization of the House to proceed in the manner agreed to."

Further to that resolution, and in recognition of public health measures that continue to be in place in British Columbia due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we, the undersigned, agree as follows:

1. On behalf of all Members, we are committed to taking the steps necessary to balance the responsibilities of the Legislative Assembly for legislating and deliberating, continuing scrutiny of the executive, and representing the interests of British Columbians, with adherence to the orders and guidance issued by the Provincial Health Officer.
2. In pursuit of that aim and as an exercise of the Legislative Assembly's exclusive right to regulate its own internal affairs as they relate to its legislative and deliberative functions, including control over the conduct of its proceedings, we agree to the use of videoconferencing technology to enable all Members to be present in the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly through remote participation, counting toward quorum, while other Members continue to be present physically in the Legislative Chamber, thereby enabling hybrid proceedings of the House.
3. Upon the resumption of Legislative Assembly sittings on June 22, 2020, the Government House Leader will propose for the Legislative Assembly's consideration
 - a. the Sessional Order attached hereto as Appendix "A" (which may be subject to modification), which outlines the rules and procedures that are designed to enable, as much as possible, equal treatment between Members participating through videoconferencing technology and Members participating in person in the Legislative Chamber, and
 - b. the Sessional Order attached hereto as Appendix "B" (which may be subject to modification), which primarily outlines adaptations that are designed to enable

standalone meetings of the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, to take place exclusively by videoconferencing technology.

4. Zoom is approved as the videoconferencing technology platform for the purposes of supporting hybrid proceedings of the House and remote meetings of the Committee of Supply. This decision was made in accordance with recommendations and advice received from the Legislative Assembly's Hansard Broadcasting and Information Technology staff.
5. We have instructed and authorized the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to undertake all necessary preparations to support hybrid proceedings of the House and remote meetings of the Committee of Supply.

In confirmation of which we have attached our signatures hereto.

Honourable Darryl Plecas, MLA
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Honourable Mike Farnworth, MLA
Government House Leader

Mary Polak, MLA
Official Opposition House Leader

Sonia Furstenu, MLA
Third Party House Leader

Appendix "A"

Sessional Order – Special Procedures Respecting the Regulation of the Conduct of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly in Exceptional Circumstances (COVID-19 Pandemic)

By leave, I move –

SITTING SCHEDULE

1. That, notwithstanding Standing Order 2(2)(a) and unless otherwise ordered, the House sit the weeks of June 22, July 6, 13, 20, 27, and August 10, 2020.
2. That, notwithstanding Standing Order 2(1), the time for the ordinary meeting of the House the weeks of June 22 and July 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2020 shall, unless otherwise ordered, be as follows:

Monday: Two distinct sittings:
10 a.m. to 12 noon
1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday: Two distinct sittings:
10 a.m. to 12 noon
1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

3. That, notwithstanding Standing Order 2(1), the time for the ordinary meeting of the House the week of August 10, 2020 shall, unless otherwise ordered, be as follows:

Monday: Two distinct sittings:
10 a.m. to 12 noon
1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday: Two distinct sittings:
10 a.m. to 12 noon
1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Thursday: Two distinct sittings:
10 a.m. to 12 noon
1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Friday: Two distinct sittings:
10 a.m. to 12 noon
1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

4. That, notwithstanding Standing Order 3, if, at the hour of 6:30 p.m. on a Monday and Tuesday, or 5:30 p.m. on a Wednesday the weeks of June 22 and July 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2020, the business of the day is not concluded and no other hour has been agreed on for the next sitting, the Speaker shall leave the Chair:

On Monday until 10 a.m. Tuesday
On Tuesday until 1:30 p.m. Wednesday
On Wednesday until 10 a.m. Monday

5. That, notwithstanding Standing Order 3, if, at the hour of 6:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday the week of August 10, 2020, the business of the day is not concluded and no other hour has been agreed on for the next sitting, the Speaker shall leave the Chair:

On Monday until 10 a.m. Tuesday
On Tuesday until 1:30 p.m. Wednesday
On Wednesday until 10 a.m. Thursday
On Thursday until 10 a.m. Friday
On Friday until 10 a.m. Monday

6. That any Standing Order reference to Thursday proceedings be suspended for sittings of the House the weeks of June 22 and July 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2020.

QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE

7. That Members who are participating in the House's proceedings by the approved videoconferencing technology be counted as present for the purposes of the quorum of ten Members, as set out in section 42 of the *Constitution Act* (R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 66) and Standing Order 6, and for the purposes of determining a majority of votes as set out in section 43 of the *Constitution Act*.
8. That Members who are participating in the House's proceedings by the approved videoconferencing technology must have the audio and video functions enabled with their face clearly visible in order to be counted towards quorum, to participate in debate, and to vote.

VOTING AND DIVISIONS

9. That, notwithstanding Standing Order 16:
 - (1) When the Speaker puts the question, no further debate on the question shall be permitted.
 - (2) When a division is requested, it shall be deferred until 15 minutes prior to the ordinary time fixed for adjournment of the sitting during which the division is requested. If there are less than 30 minutes remaining prior to the ordinary time fixed for adjournment of the sitting during which the division is requested, then it shall stand deferred until 15 minutes prior to the ordinary time fixed for adjournment of the following sitting.
 - (3) Notwithstanding Standing Order 25 and subsection (2) of this order, if a division is requested on a Monday morning or Tuesday morning sitting, it shall stand deferred until the afternoon sitting of the same day.
 - (4) If a division is requested in a Committee of the Whole, the clause of the bill under consideration shall be postponed, and the division shall be deferred in accordance with subsection (2) of this order.
 - (5) If a division is requested in the Committee of Supply, Section B, the division shall be deferred in accordance with subsection (2) of this order.
 - (6) If a deferred division is scheduled to take place during a sitting, the Speaker shall ring the bells and recess the proceedings 30 minutes prior to the ordinary time fixed

for adjournment of the sitting. At 20 minutes prior to the ordinary time fixed for adjournment of the sitting, the Speaker shall call the House back to order. No longer than 5 minutes thereafter, the Speaker shall again state the question.

- (7) If a division is deferred in a Committee of the Whole or the Committee of Supply, Section B, the House shall resolve itself into the appropriate Committee prior to the ringing of the bells and recess set out in subsection (6) of this order.
- (8) No Member shall enter or leave the Legislative Chamber or connect to or disconnect from the approved videoconferencing technology after the final statement of the question until the division has been fully taken, and every Member present shall vote.
- (9) When two or more deferred divisions are to be taken during a sitting, the divisions shall be taken in succession in the order they were deferred.
- (10) During a sitting at which a deferred division is to take place, no motion to adjourn the House shall be in order until after that vote and the conclusion of any consequential business that must be disposed of. If successive divisions are scheduled, the House shall sit beyond the ordinary time of adjournment until the conclusion of all divisions and until other business consequential to the division has been disposed of.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

10. That any Standing Order requiring that a document be “handed in” or “laid upon the Table” or transmitted by other similar physical means be interpreted to include the transmission of a document by approved electronic means.
11. That the transmission of a document by the Office of the Clerk to all Members by electronic means constitute for all purposes the distribution and delivery of that document, regardless of whether a Member has received the document.
12. That, notwithstanding Standing Order 25B(2) and the usual practices of the House, at least two hours prior to the scheduled start of a sitting of the House, the Whips shall provide to the Office of the Speaker a list and, if applicable, the sequence, of Members wishing to make an introduction or to participate in an item under Routine Business, which shall be held in confidence. Independent Members shall inform the Office of the Speaker directly with the same notice period.
13. That, notwithstanding the usual practices of the House, any Member who intends to move a motion in amendment to a bill at committee stage, of which notice is not typically required, shall, if possible, provide at least one hour of notice to the Office of the Clerk prior to introducing that motion in the House, which shall be held in confidence, to ensure the electronic distribution of that motion to all Members forthwith after it is moved.

SPEAKER’S DISCRETION

14. That, for greater certainty, the Speaker be empowered to exercise discretion on the applicability of Standing Order 17A as it may relate to the facilitation of participation of Members in proceedings of the House.

15. That, for greater certainty and further to Standing Order 19 and Standing Order 20, the Speaker be empowered to intervene on any matter of decorum on the Speaker's own initiative or on a point of order raised by a Member, including by muting a Member's microphone and excluding Members from the sitting in cases of serious misconduct.
16. That the Speaker be empowered to exercise discretion in the interpretation of the provisions of any Standing Order requiring Members to stand or speak in their assigned place as this requirement may relate to Members participating via the approved videoconferencing technology and to Members participating in person in the Legislative Chamber.
17. That the Speaker be empowered to exercise discretion, in consultation with the House Leaders or the Whips, in the interpretation of any provision of the Standing Orders or Sessional Order that may require leniency or alteration in order to allow all Members to be able to fully exercise their duties and rights in the proceedings of this House conducted in a hybrid manner.

OTHER

18. That, should any provision contained in this order be inconsistent with the Standing Orders, the provision in this order prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.
19. That this order expire on August 31, 2020.

Appendix "B"

Sessional Order – Special Procedures Respecting the Regulation of the Conduct of Proceedings of the Committee of Supply in Exceptional Circumstances (COVID-19 Pandemic)

By leave, I move –

1. That the Committee of Supply for this Session be authorized to sit in three sections, designated Section A, Section B, and Section C, to be subject to the rules that follow.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY, SECTION A AND SECTION C

Authorizations

2. That the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, sit the weeks of June 22 and July 6, 13, 20 and 27, unless otherwise ordered.
3. That the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, be authorized to conduct its proceedings by way of Zoom videoconferencing technology.
4. That Members who are participating in the proceedings of the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, by the approved videoconferencing technology must have the audio and video functions enabled with their face clearly visible in order to be counted towards quorum, to participate in debate, and to vote.
5. That, for greater certainty, the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, be empowered to sit during a period in which the House is adjourned.
6. That the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, be empowered to examine the *Estimates – Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2021* referred to the Committee of Supply by order of the House of February 18, 2020.

Schedule of Estimates

7. That, at every Tuesday morning sitting of the House of a scheduled sitting week during which the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, are to meet, the Government House Leader shall table in the House the order of the of Estimates to be examined the following Thursday and Friday by the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, which shall be distributed to all Members by the Office of the Clerk. This schedule may only be altered by agreement of the House Leaders of each recognized caucus, and notice of any such agreement shall be provided to the Office of the Clerk and communicated to all Members as expeditiously as possible.

Meeting Schedule

8. That the time for the ordinary meeting of the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, shall, unless otherwise ordered by the House or determined by the Committee, be as follows:

Thursday: Two distinct meetings:
9:30 a.m. to 12 noon
1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Friday: Two distinct meetings:
9:30 a.m. to 12 noon
1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Composition

9. That the Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole, or their designate preside in the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C.
10. That the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, each consist of 17 Members, not including the Chair, being eight Members of the Government Caucus, eight Members of the Official Opposition Caucus, and one Member of the Third Party Caucus.
11. That the Members of the Committee of Supply, Section A be: the Minister whose Estimates are under examination by the Committee and (*list Members*).
12. That the Members of the Committee of Supply, Section C be: the Minister whose Estimates are under examination by the Committee and (*list Members*).
13. That substitutions for Members of the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, be permitted. Advance notice of substitutions shall be transmitted to the Office of the Clerk by the respective Whip at least one hour prior to the scheduled meeting time.

Applicability of Standing Orders

14. That the provisions of Standing Order 45A, Schedule 5, setting out the time limits on speeches, apply to the proceedings of the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C.
15. That, consistent with Standing Order 6, the presence of at least ten Members, including the Chair, shall be necessary to constitute a proceeding of the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, for the exercise of its powers.
16. That, consistent with Standing Order 61(1), the Standing Orders shall be observed in the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, as may be applicable, except Standing Orders limiting the number of times a Member may speak.
17. That, consistent with Standing Order 61(2), speeches in the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, must be strictly relevant to the item under consideration.

Proceedings

18. That, pursuant to established practice, a Minister may defer to a Deputy Minister to permit such Deputy to reply to a question put to the Minister in the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C.

Voting and Divisions

19. That only the Members of the Committee of Supply, Section A or Section C, or duly authorized substitutions, shall vote in a division.
20. That, when a division is requested in the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, the Chair shall announce that a division has been called. No longer than 15 minutes thereafter, unless the Committee unanimously agrees otherwise, the Chair shall again state the question. No Member shall connect to or disconnect from the approved videoconferencing technology after the final statement of the question until the division has been fully taken, and every Member of the Committee present shall vote.
21. That, during a meeting of the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, if a division is underway, the Committee shall sit beyond the ordinary time of adjournment until the division has concluded and any consequential business has been disposed of.

Reporting and Completion

22. That the Committee of Supply, Section A and Section C, shall report progress or resolution and completion on the Estimates under consideration by it at the conclusion of every meeting. The Clerk to the Committee shall deposit the report with the Office of the Clerk in paper form or electronically, and such report shall be deemed for all purposes to have been presented and tabled in the House. The report shall be entered upon the Votes and Proceedings of the next sitting day of the House.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY, SECTION B

23. That the Committee of Supply, Section B, continue to operate pursuant to established practice as a Committee of the Whole House in whose proceedings all Members may participate.

CONCLUSION OF SUPPLY PROCEEDINGS

24. That after all Estimates have been reported as complete, Members of the Government Caucus shall have a maximum of seven minutes cumulatively, Members of the Official Opposition Caucus shall have a maximum of four minutes cumulatively, Members of the Third Party Caucus shall have a maximum of two minutes cumulatively, and Independent Members shall have a maximum of one minute cumulatively to summarize the Committee of Supply debate on all Estimates completed. Such summaries shall be in the following order:
 - a. Independent Members;
 - b. Third Party Caucus;
 - c. Official Opposition Caucus; and
 - d. Government Caucus.

OTHER

25. That this order expire on August 31, 2020.