



VMUN 2024

House of Commons

STANDING ORDERS

Standing Orders: Flow of Debate — A Graphical Representation

FIRST READING

MPs submit PMRs before the conference, which are then edited and compiled into a single large bill. The First Reading will be the presentation of this collation to all the MPs. In practice, this means you, the MPs, will be given a document containing all of the legislative text. Following the First Reading, the Second Reading will allow for more in-depth examination of then proposed legislation.

CAUCUS

Near the beginning of the conference, each of the parties will meet in a caucus to decide which pieces of legislative text in the (PMR-compiled) Bill to support and develop their general political strategies. For example, the Conservative Party might decide they support MMP voting and want to ally with the Bloc Québécois to include a clause implementing it.

SECOND READING

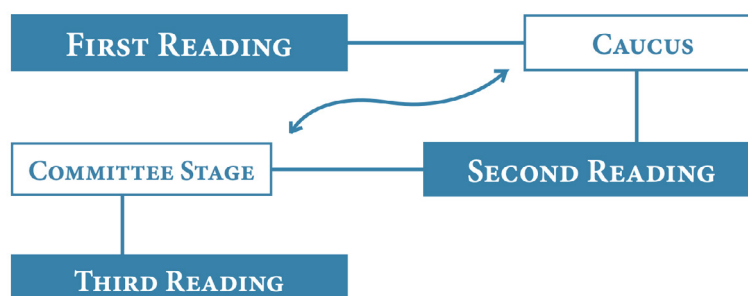
The Second Reading follows the First Reading and will occupy a large portion of the committee sessions at VMUN. During Second Reading, of which there will be several sittings (committee sessions), the House assembled will go through the bill clause by clause. Each clause will either be struck, meaning it is deleted, or assigned to a subcommittee. In extraordinary cases, the Speaker or their designees may allow MPs to defer voting on a specific clause of great contention in the interest of time.

COMMITTEE STAGE

This stage will occupy the other greatest chunk of the time at the conference. The House will break into three Standing Committees, each of which will discuss certain parts of the Bill. While in Standing Committees, MPs will be tasked with writing amendments, striking clauses, and if necessary, adding new text to the legislation. At period intervals, the Speaker will call caucuses, where the parties will convene to discuss strategy, before returning to the House for the Second Reading.

THIRD READING

After passage through the Standing Committees, the Bill will be voted upon, clause by clause, by the House of Commons. Following final passage of the text of the Bill, the Speaker of the House shall approve it, and it shall be submitted to the Governor General to be granted Royal Assent in the name of His Majesty the King.



Chapter I — Conference Rules

STANDING ORDER 1: SCOPE, APPLICATION, AND DEFINITIONS

These rules of procedure (“Standing Orders”) are applicable to the House of Commons (HOC) at Vancouver Model United Nations 2024, during all scheduled and extraordinary sittings. No other rules of procedure apply.

The term “House” in these Standing Orders refers to the main committee of the House of Commons in which all MPs (delegates) are participants, whereas the term “Standing Committee” refers to the three Standing Committees of the House of Commons. A “sitting” is the equivalent of a VMUN committee session.

STANDING ORDER 2: PARLIAMENTARY CONDUCT

Members of Parliament (MPs) shall be courteous and respectful to all staff and other delegates.

Moreover, as esteemed parliamentarians, MPs are expected to play their roles accordingly. This includes using appropriate diplomatic language, abstaining from profanity and other inappropriate behaviour, and respecting the privacy and property of others.

English will be the official and only working language of the conference. MPs may not use affected accents during committee. National costumes are not permitted; MPs must wear Western business attire during all committee sessions.

The Speaker will immediately call to order delegates who do not abide by this rule. MPs who feel that they are not being treated respectfully are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Speaker or a member of the Secretariat.

MPs are expected to be present at the beginning of every scheduled sitting, at which point roll call will be taken. MPs who will not be present for part or all of a committee session should inform the Speaker verbally or by email.

STANDING ORDER 3: ELECTRONIC AIDS

MPs are expected to attend the parliamentary session having already conducted the necessary research. However, MPs are permitted to use laptop computers to aid in the composition of parliamentary business, although notepads and pens will be provided. Such devices may only be used for the specified substantive and academic purposes. MPs are expected to attend the parliamentary session having already conducted the necessary research, but Internet resources, such as Google Docs, are permitted to aid in the composition of parliamentary business. Prior to the conference, MPs should ensure they have access to these platforms if they wish to use them during committee sessions. MPs are highly encouraged to limit their use of Internet and electronic devices to the specified substantive and academic purposes during the conference.

STANDING ORDER 4: GENERAL POWERS OF THE SECRETARIAT

The Secretary-General and other members of the Secretariat reserve the right to suspend or modify these Standing Orders at any time. Additionally, members of the Secretariat may also serve as an officer of the House and allow any speaker to address the session.

Chapter II — Presiding Officers and General Procedure

STANDING ORDER 5: PRESIDING OFFICERS

In the House, the presiding officers are the Speaker and the Clerks, as appointed by the Secretariat. They all have the authority to preside over debate in the House, grant the right to speak, and rule and enforce on matters concerning the Standing Orders.

In Standing Committees, the presiding officer is the chair of the Committee, who has the authority to preside over committee debate, grant the right to speak, and rule and enforce on matters concerning the Standing Orders.

When presiding over a sitting of the House or of a Standing Committee, the presiding officer is referred to as the Chair.

STANDING ORDER 6: SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker is the final authority on the Standing Orders in the House and in Standing Committees—their ruling on parliamentary procedure is final. The Speaker also has the authority to suspend the Standing Orders at any time, and may do so to address the House or Standing Committees or to allow for a presentation or guest speaker to address the House or Standing Committees. They may also advise MPs on choices and debate.

STANDING ORDER 7: DECORUM

MPs shall respectfully come to order when called to order by the Chair and sit down when the Chair rises.

No MP may address the House or a Committee without being first recognized by the Chair.

When an MP is speaking in the House or in a Committee, no MP shall interrupt their speech except for a point of order.

When a question (vote) is being put to the House, no MP may make any noise or disturbance, nor enter nor leave the House.

Upon the declaration of recess or adjournment of the session, MPs shall keep their seats until the Chair is vacated and the mace is put underneath the table.

STANDING ORDER 8: ADDRESSING THE HOUSE

An MP wishing to address the House shall rise from their assigned seat and say “Mr./Madam Speaker”; they may only address the House when recognized by the Chair.

All speeches and motions in the House shall be addressed to the Chair, using the form of address “Mr./Madam Speaker.” This applies to all presiding officers while occupying the Chair.

The Chair may, at their discretion, impose time limits on speeches, but has the final decision on when to call an MP addressing the House to order.

Speeches that refer to documents not yet introduced to the House are dilatory.

Speeches that are not germane to the motion at hand are dilatory.

STANDING ORDER 9: FORMS OF REFERENCE

MPs may not directly address other MPs while addressing the House, but shall refer to them in the third person.

MPs shall generally refer to other MPs as “the Honorable Member for [Constituency]” while addressing the House or a Standing Committee. MPs may also refer to each other by their position (e.g. Prime Minister, Minister of Health, Critic for Energy).

STANDING ORDER 10: PARLIAMENTARY DISCIPLINE

MPs who have acted with indecorum will receive a warning from the Speaker.

MPs who repeatedly act with indecorum and are impeding parliamentary business with unruly behaviour will be named by the Speaker and prohibited from speaking and voting for the remainder of the sitting.

STANDING ORDER 11: CROSSING THE FLOOR

An MP may apply to cross the floor, or change parties, if they can demonstrate that the views of their constituents no longer align with those of their party. All applications for party changes must be approved by the Speaker and the destination party’s leader.

STANDING ORDER 12: ORAL QUESTIONS (QUESTION PERIOD)

Oral Questions (commonly known as “Question Period”) will be conducted for a maximum of 20 minutes during the first available sitting in the House each day, per the Order Paper.

Chapter III — Opening of Sittings

STANDING ORDER 13: MACE AND ENTRANCE OF PRESIDING OFFICERS

The sitting of the House is officially commenced when the presiding officers take the Chair and the mace enters the House. The House begins each sitting in a similar fashion. When the House is in session and the Chair is present, the mace shall be set upon the table to represent the authority of the House and the Speaker. The mace shall be set under the table when the Chair is vacated, such as when the House is in recess.

STANDING ORDER 14: ORDER PAPERS

Before the beginning of each day of the parliamentary session, the Speaker shall provide MPs with an Order Paper, which is the agenda of the House's business.

House Leaders are responsible for ensuring that the Order Paper is followed by MPs.

Chapter IV — Standard Motions in the House

Debatable, and thus substantive (decision-making, not procedural), motions are marked by an asterisk.

STANDING ORDER 15: MOTIONS

When the Chair calls for motions from the House, any MP may raise their placard. The Chair will recognize MPs to state their motions.

A motion must be seconded by another MP to be debated in the House. An MP may second a motion by saying: "Hear, hear!"

STANDING ORDER 16: MOTION TO PUT THE QUESTION

The House will not vote on a substantive motion until the question is put, the House equivalent of opening voting procedure. The Speaker will put the question automatically if no more MPs rise to debate a substantive motion.

An MP may choose to move to put the question, by saying: "I move to put the previous question." A vote will then ensue to determine if the motion to put the question passes.

STANDING ORDER 17: MULTIPLE MOTIONS AND SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

If multiple motions are recognized by the Chair, the Chair will call for a vote on these motions in their order of introduction to consider one of them for debate.

When the vote for debate on one of these motions is carried, the House will continue with the motion carried. These motions are allowed while a substantive motion is being debated in the House:

- » Motion to Put the Question
- » Motion to Caucus
- » Motion to Recess
- » Motion to Defer Reading

STANDING ORDER 18: GOVERNMENT HOUSE LEADER AND MOTIONS

The Government House Leader has the primary responsibility of introducing these motions, pursuant to their responsibility to direct the flow of Government business:

- » Motion to Accept the Standing Orders
- » Motion to Call the Orders of the Day
- » Motion to Recess
- » Motion to Adjourn

When concerning Government Bills:

- » Motions for Second Reading
- » Motion for Third Reading

STANDING ORDER 19: MOTION TO ACCEPT THE STANDING ORDERS

The motion, “I move to adopt the Standing Orders as the authority by which this House is governed,” opens debate for House when passed. No other motions or speeches are permitted before this motion is passed. The question is immediately put.

STANDING ORDER 20: MOTION TO CALL THE ORDERS OF THE DAY

The motion, “I move to call the Orders of the Day,” charges the Clerk to read out the Order Paper with progress reflected. This motion is carried without debate or vote.

STANDING ORDER 21: MOTION FOR FIRST READING

The motion, “I move that Bill ____ be read a first time now and be printed,” introduces a bill to the House for consideration when passed. The question is immediately put.

For Set Topic bills, this motion is carried immediately at the discretion of the Chair.

When put, the MP who motioned for First Reading will read out the Bill in question to the House, and may also summarize the Bill’s intent. They will be known as the sponsor of this Bill.

STANDING ORDER 22: MOTION FOR SECOND READING AND REFERRAL TO STANDING COMMITTEES*

The motion, “I move that Bill ____ be read a second time now and be referred to Standing Committees,” begins debate on the general principles and scope of the Bill.

When passed, the Bill in question passes the stage of Second Reading and is sent to the Standing Committees.

The House is automatically set in recess, until Standing Committees are adjourned. MPs then split into their Standing Committees.

STANDING ORDER 23: MOTION FOR SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE*

The motion, “I move that Bill ____ be read a second time now and be referred to a Committee of the Whole House,” begins debate on the general principles and scope of the Bill.

When passed, the Bill in question passes the stage of Second Reading and creates a Committee of the Whole House, with the House automatically set in recess until the Committee of the Whole House is dissolved.

STANDING ORDER 25: MOTION TO AMEND A CLAUSE*

A motion to amend a clause of the Bill in question must be submitted in writing to the Clerk during the caucus session before the Report Stage. Templates will be provided by House staff.

The amendments submitted will be added on the Report Stage of the Order Paper for debate.

STANDING ORDER 26: MOTION TO CONCUR IN THE AMENDED BILL IN QUESTION*

The motion, “I move that Bill _____, as amended, be concurred in,” ends the Report Stage for the Bill when passed. All amendments passed during the Report Stage will be locked in. No more amendments may be considered after this point.

STANDING ORDER 27: MOTION FOR THIRD READING*

The motion, “I move that Bill _____, be read a third time now and do pass,” begins debate on the final version of the Bill, including all passed amendments.

When passed, the Bill in question passes and is sent to the Governor General to receive Royal Assent. If rejected, the Bill in question returns to the caucus session before the Report Stage.

STANDING ORDER 28: MOTION TO ADJOURN AND RECESS

The motion, “I move that the House do adjourn,” ends the parliamentary session indefinitely when passed. This will only be in order during the last House sitting, and is subject to the Speaker’s discretion. This motion may be made only by the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. The question is immediately put.

The motion, “I move that the House do recess,” ends a House sitting when passed until the next scheduled or emergency sitting. It is subject to the Speaker’s discretion. The question is immediately put.

STANDING ORDER 29: MOTION TO CAUCUS

The motion, “I move to caucus for _____ minutes,” suspends the Standing Orders and allows MPs to informally discuss and caucus with other MPs when passed for the defined amount of time. This is the parliamentary equivalent of an unmoderated caucus. The question is immediately put.

STANDING ORDER 30: MOTION TO DEFER READING

While a motion for Second Reading or Third Reading for an Open Agenda Bill is being debated in the House, the motion, “I move to defer the reading of the Bill in question,” when passed, moves the debate and vote for Second Reading or Third Reading of the Bill to the end of the Order Paper. The question is immediately put.

Chapter V — Points

STANDING ORDER 31: POINT OF ORDER

An MP may rise on a Point of Order to indicate an instance of improper parliamentary procedure. They may be asked to refer to the appropriate Standing Order to justify the point.

The Chair will then rule on the Point. In extraordinary circumstances, the Chair may allow brief debate on the point before making their ruling, subject to their discretion.

Points of Order may interrupt another MP's speech, but should wait until after the end of a sentence out of courtesy.

STANDING ORDER 32: POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

An MP may rise on a Point of Personal Privilege if they are experiencing personal discomfort or danger that impairs their ability to participate in the proceedings. The House staff will then address the problem.

Points of Personal Privilege may only interrupt speeches for instances of dire danger.

STANDING ORDER 33: POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

An MP may rise on a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry to ask a question regarding the Standing Orders and parliamentary procedure.

Points of Parliamentary Inquiry cannot interrupt speeches.

Chapter VI — Voting

STANDING ORDER 34: PROCEDURAL AND SUBSTANTIVE VOTES

Procedural votes may only be decided by unanimous adoption or a voice vote.

Substantive votes may be decided by unanimous adoption, voice, and recorded vote.

All votes require a simple majority (50 percent plus 1) to pass.

MPs who do not vote are considered to have abstained.

STANDING ORDER 35: UNANIMOUS ADOPTION (ACCLAMATION)

Upon voting on a motion, the Chair asks, “Is it the pleasure of the House/committee to adopt this motion?” If there are no dissenting voices, the motion is carried without vote.

If there are dissenting voices, the Chair moves to the voice vote in the House, or the recorded vote in Standing Committees.

STANDING ORDER 36: VOICE AND PLACARD VOTE

The Chair will call for those in favour of the motion to say “Yea,” and all those opposed to say “Nay.” They will then decide whether the yeas or the nays were the majority opinion of the House and announce the decision to the House.

If five or more MPs rise to object to the decision of the Chair, a recorded vote will take place (only for substantive motions).

STANDING ORDER 37: RECORDED VOTE

The Chair will call for a two-minute caucus before a recorded vote. During this time, parties may discuss voting strategy and Whips may perform their duties.

After this two-minute period, the Chair will call for those in favour of the motion to raise their placard or a virtual equivalent, and have the Clerk record their names. They may lower their placard after the Clerk calls their name. The Chair will then call for those opposed to raise their placard and lower it in a similar fashion.

The Clerk will then tally the votes and announce the vote.

In Standing Committees, placards are also raised for recorded votes.

STANDING ORDER 38: TIED VOTES

If the votes are tied for a recorded vote, the Speaker will cast their vote to break the tie in order to allow the continuation of debate, or to maintain the status quo.

STANDING ORDER 39: WHIPPING THE VOTE

All procedural votes are considered free votes; whipping procedural votes is not allowed.

Party Whips may remove a member from the respective party caucus if they demonstrate to the Speaker that the member in question went against party vote during a proven whipped vote. The member then becomes an independent, and can seek approval to join another party from that party’s leader and the Speaker.

Chapter VII — Committee Procedure

STANDING ORDER 40: STANDING COMMITTEES

There are three Standing Committees within the House: Public Safety and National Security, Defence and International Affairs, and Elections and Democratic Institutions.

Each MP sits on one standing committee.

STANDING ORDER 41: RULES OF PROCEDURE IN STANDING COMMITTEES

All Standing Orders except those in Chapter IV apply to Standing Committees and Committees of the Whole House.

Committee procedure is more informal than that in the House—the Committee Chair, with recommendations from Committee members, has the right to change the Standing Orders within Chapter VII to better and more efficiently produce an amendment report for the Bill in question.

In Standing Committees and in a Committee of the Whole House, these motions only apply:

- » Motion to Amend a Clause (written), using the same template as in the House.
- » Motion to Summon a Witness (“I move to summon _____ as a witness to this Committee”) charges the Chair to summon an MP from another committee to speak to the committee (only in Standing Committees). The MP has the right to refuse the summoning.
- » Motion to Instruct a Member to Present the Committee’s Report (“I move that the Committee instruct _____ to present the Committee’s report”) charges a member of the committee with presenting the Committee’s amendment report to the House (only in Standing Committees).
- » Motion to Adjourn (“I move that the Committee do adjourn”) finalizes the Committee’s amendment report and adjourns the committee. MPs return to the House.

There are no seconds nor motions to put the question; once a motion in committee is made, it is immediately voted upon.

Any other decisions (e.g. setting a topic for discussion, ending debate on a clause, ending clause-by-clause debate, caucus and recess) can be made informally with an informal vote.

STANDING ORDER 42: CLAUSE-BY-CLAUSE DEBATE

The Chair will lead the Committee in debating each clause by numerical order (i.e. clause one, then clause two, etc.)

Debate on clauses not germane to the Committee’s mandate is not allowed.

If the committee so desires, line-by-line debate and preambulatory clause debate may also occur after enacting clauses are debated.

STANDING ORDER 43: WITNESSES IN STANDING COMMITTEES

If a witness attends to speak to a Standing Committee, they must take an oath of honesty that the Chair will conduct.

Witnesses are allowed to make a brief opening statement, and then committee members will be able to ask the witness questions. The witness is not obligated to answer any questions.

STANDING ORDER 44: AMENDMENTS IN STANDING COMMITTEES

Motions to amend a clause will be accepted by the Chair in writing throughout the entire Committee session.

After clause-by-clause debate is exhausted, or the Committee decides to end clause-by-clause debate, the Chair will allow voting on submitted amendments by numerical order of the clause affected, and may group amendments if appropriate. On the Committee's discretion, brief debate may be permitted on amendments.

Chapter VIII — Amendments

STANDING ORDER 45: ADMISSIBILITY OF AMENDMENTS

An amendment motion can add or remove a single clause, or alter a single clause.

Amendments that contradict the general purpose or scope of the Bill in question, render the Bill powerless, or introduce irrelevant material to the Bill are inadmissible.

STANDING ORDER 46: ORDER OF AMENDMENTS AT REPORT STAGE

The Government House Leader sets the order of amendments at the Report Stage and may group certain amendments together into amendment packages. These decisions will be reflected in the Order Paper when the Government House Leader submits the order to the Clerk.

This must be done during the recess between the Report Stage Caucus and the Report Stage.

Groupings must be approved in writing by the sponsors of affected amendments.

The Government and Opposition House Leaders should discuss and agree upon this order and grouping of amendments before their submission.

Opposition parties may retaliate against unfair ordering or grouping of amendments by immediately putting the question and rejecting amendments.

STANDING ORDER 47: AMENDMENTS AT REPORT STAGE

During the Report Stage, the Chair will call on sponsors of amendments to present their amendments per the Order Paper.

For amendment packages, sponsors will present their respective clauses within the package.

The Chair will permit brief debate for a specific time period subject to their discretion, after which the question will be automatically put and the amendment or amendment package voted upon.

Chapter IX — Open Agenda and Emergency Situations

STANDING ORDER 48: ORDER OF OPEN AGENDA BILLS

The Government House Leader sets the order of Open Agenda Bills on the Order Paper. These decisions will be reflected in the Order Paper when the Government House Leader submits the order to the Clerk.

This must be done before the House moves from the Set Topic to the Open Agenda Bills.

The Government and Opposition House Leaders should discuss and agree upon this order of Open Agenda Bills before its submission.

Opposition parties may retaliate against unfair ordering of Open Agenda Bills by rejecting First Readings of Open Agenda Bills.

STANDING ORDER 49: EMERGENCY DEBATE

In the case of a domestic or international emergency, the Speaker may temporarily suspend the Order Paper to begin an emergency debate. The Speaker will continue to suspend the Order Paper at their discretion, or until a resolution for the crisis has been achieved.

Members may motion for an emergency Committee of the Whole House (“I move for an emergency Committee of the Whole House”) to discuss the emergency and entertain expert witnesses to learn more about the emergency.

STANDING ORDER 50: CRISIS MOTIONS

Written crisis motions that authorize government agencies to take actions must be made to resolve an emergency (e.g. “I move that the Canadian Forces...”). This is the House equivalent of a crisis directive.

In order to be considered for debate, they must be submitted in writing to the Clerk. The Chair is responsible for ordering the motions for debate. As with all motions, they are debated upon when made and are voted upon when the question is put.

These motions cannot be made in an emergency Committee of the Whole House.

