

A GUIDE TO MEETING NOTICE



The Federation of Prince Edward Island Municipalities has prepared a toolkit to help municipalities implement the *Municipal Government Act* in accordance with the principles of open government – accountability, engagement and transparency. This guide has been prepared to provide Council members with information about Council and council committee meeting notice requirements.

Why is notice of Council meetings important?

An important step in ensuring openness and transparency is to provide clear and detailed advanced notice of meetings. Giving notice ensures that residents and taxpayers are aware, and can choose, to attend a meeting of Council. The *Municipal Government Act* and Procedural Bylaw Regulations lay out requirements about meeting notice.

Annual Schedule of Meetings.

Section 110 (3) of the *Municipal Government Act* requires that an annual schedule of meetings be prepared and published. At a minimum, the schedule must be published electronically by posting it on the municipal website and by a sign that is placed in a prominent location accessible to the public.

Schedule Change.

If the date, time or place of a regularly scheduled Council or council committee meeting is changed, the provincial Procedural Bylaw Regulations requires 24 hours notice. The notice must include date, time and place and must be published on the municipality's website and on a sign or poster placed in a location that is accessible to the public.

Special Meeting.

A special meeting can be called when requested by the Mayor or the majority of council members. Notice must be given 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Each council member must be provided with notice of the meeting and notice must be provided on the municipality's website and by another means prescribed in the procedural bylaw, such as a sign or poster posted in a place accessible to the public.

What is best practice?

- Include actual dates for Council and council committee meetings to reflect statutory holidays or variations in the schedule such as Christmas or summer breaks.
- Share the annual schedule of meetings in a variety of ways beyond the minimum requirements: advertise in the local newspaper; include the schedule in the community newsletter; post signs in a variety of public places.
- Share the annual schedule of meetings via the municipal Facebook page or by Twitter.
- Post an agenda in advance of the meeting which has sufficient information so that citizens can determine the matters to be discussed.

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NOTICE CHECK LIST

Annual Schedule

- Has an annual schedule of Council and council committee meetings been prepared?
- Does this notice include the date, time and place of each meeting?
- Has the annual schedule been published on the municipality's website?
- Has the annual schedule been posted on a sign or poster placed in a location that is accessible to the public?

Schedule Change

- If the date, time or place of a meeting changes, has a notice been given 24 hours before the meeting?
- Does the notice of the re-scheduled meeting include the new date, time and place?
- Has the notice been posted on the municipality's website?
- Has a sign or poster been placed in a location accessible to the public?

Special Meeting

- Has a special meeting been requested in writing by the Mayor or majority of council members?
- Has notice of the special meeting been given 24 hours in advance of the meeting?
- Does the notice include date, time, place and purpose of the meeting?
- Has the notice of the special meeting been posted on the municipality's website?
- Has a sign or poster giving notice of the special meeting been placed at a location that is accessible to the general public?

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