

Standing Committee on  
Procedure and Privileges



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# Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, No. 2

Chair: Ms. Kate Reid

**MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES**

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES**

**REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, NO. 2**

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES**

**REPORT ON THE REVIEW THE RULES OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, NO. 2**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges (Committee) is pleased to report on its review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly (the Rules).

In June 2025, Committee received a letter from Speaker Shane Thompson requesting a review of the Rules. Specifically, the Speaker asked Committee to consider if the Rules related to Written Questions should require Members to provide the Speaker with 24 hours notice of a written question before it is read in the House as well as whether the Orders of the Day for Thursdays should be altered, moving Notices of Motion and Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery earlier in the day. In September 2025, Committee received a second referral letter from Speaker Thompson, seeking a recommendation from Committee on a request from the Government House Leader, to alter the annual sitting calendar.

The correspondence from Speaker Thompson is attached as Appendix A.

Committee has considered these matters and is prepared to provide a report to this House.

**Written Questions**

Speaker Thompson raised a concern about the Rule 7.3(3) requiring the Speaker to ensure that Written Questions conform to the rules and practices of the House but not providing the Speaker with time to adequately review a Written Question before it is read on the floor of the Assembly. This risks Members advancing Written Questions that the Speaker must rule out of order. Specifically, the Speaker indicated a desire to: a) ensure that Members are sufficiently supported in the development of Written Questions by the Office of the Clerk staff to ensure that questions are consistently presented in a manner in keeping with the rules and practices of the Assembly; and b) ensure that finalized Written Questions can

be provided to interpreters in advance to ensure that complex, technical questions are appropriately interpreted into our Official Languages.

Committee appreciates the concerns raised by the Speaker and agrees that providing written questions to the Speaker with at least 24 hours notice is reasonable. Therefore, Committee makes the following recommendation.

**Recommendation 1:**

The Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges recommends that the following be added to Rule 7.3:

(3.1) Written Questions must be provided in writing to the Speaker at least 24 hours prior to the commencement of the sitting day.

Further, while Committee appreciates the desire to provide Members with support during the development of Written Questions, Committee recognizes that different Members require different levels of support. For those Members who would prefer to do most, or all, of the work associated with developing their Written Questions, Committee believes that they can and should be able to do so. To that end, Committee makes the following recommendation:

**Recommendation 2:**

The Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges recommends that the Office of the Clerk develop and distribute to all Members of the Legislative Assembly a document providing Guidelines for Written Questions and including a template that can be used by Members.

### **Orders of the Day for Thursdays**

In February 2025 the Rules were amended to alter the placement and timing for consideration of Motions on Thursdays, with Motions moved to item 04 on the orders. This change was intended to highlight the importance of Motions, which often relate to pressing public issues. Committee believes this change has been beneficial in raising the profile of motions.

Committee has considered the need to further update the Orders of the Day for Thursdays, as outlined by Speaker Thompson, and believes the recommended changes are reasonable. Committee recommends:

**Recommendation 3:**

The Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges recommends that 4.1 (5) be amended to read:

The daily orders of business in the Assembly on Thursdays shall be:

01. Prayer
02. Ministers' Statements
03. Members' Statements
04. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
05. Notices of Motion
06. Motions
07. Returns to Oral Questions
08. Acknowledgements
09. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to Commissioner's Address
13. Petitions
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
16. Tabling of Documents
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

**Sitting Schedule**

The Government House Leader raised a concern with the Speaker that Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) meetings are frequently scheduled for the week of Thanksgiving, which coincides with the starting date for the Autumn sitting of the Assembly. For Members of Executive Council this creates a scheduling conflict in ensuring that Ministers are available for the business of the House, while also ensuring that Ministers can participate in FPT meetings.

Committee appreciates the concerns raised by the Government House Leader and makes the following recommendation.

**Recommendation 4:**

The Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges recommends that Rule 2.1(1)(c) be amended to read:

a Sitting beginning on the second Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

This concludes the Committee's report on its review of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, No. 2.

## **APPENDIX A**

- Correspondence from Speaker Shane Thompson



- **Orders of the Day for Thursdays** – The Assembly has recently moved “Motions” to item number 4 on the Orders of the Day. I wish for Committee to consider whether Notices of Motions and Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery should be placed earlier on Thursdays as well. This request has two goals in mind:
  - Moving Notices of Motions before Motions on Thursdays would allow a Member to seek Unanimous Consent to deal with a motion that day. In the current structure – A Member would need to seek Unanimous Consent twice in order to then deal with that motion on the same day; and
  - If Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery is put on after Member Statements, it gives time for Members to recognize visitors before debate on the any motions. Visitors typically attend the sitting during Minister and Member Statements and may not remain in the chamber for the entire debate. If a visitor is remaining in the gallery for the debate, moving Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery gives Members an opportunity to recognize them before the debate takes places.

I look forward to Committee’s report on these matters.



Hon. Shane Thompson  
Speaker

- c. Premier  
Members of the Legislative Assembly  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
Deputy Clerk, House Procedures and Committees  
Director, Legislative Affairs and House Planning  
Committee Clerk, Procedures and Privileges  
Committee Advisor, Procedures and Privileges





Aug 18, 2025

HONOURABLE SHANE THOMPSON  
SPEAKER, LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

### **Referral of Matter to Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges – Sitting Schedule**

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I am writing to bring to your attention a matter which you may consider appropriate to refer to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges for study.

The Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly guide the starting dates for our Sittings and for the October sitting. They specify that the Sitting will begin on the first Thursday after Thanksgiving, effectively resulting in two Sitting days set for that week.

It is frequently the case that FPT meetings are scheduled for the week following Thanksgiving. For example, three FPTs have been scheduled for that week this coming October, all of which involve matters of importance to the territory. This presents a challenge, especially with a small Cabinet, in ensuring that Ministers are available for the business of the House, while also ensuring that Cabinet Ministers participate in essential FPT meetings.

This recurring scheduling challenge may indicate that it is an anomaly that our Legislative Assembly sits immediately after the Thanksgiving holiday and other legislatures (perhaps most critically the House of Commons) do not. It may be assumed that scheduling FPT meetings on that week would be a safe time to do so as a result.

I appreciate that scheduling to ensure all conflicts are avoided would be exceedingly difficult; however, a consideration of whether to adjust the Rules to avoid sitting during the week of the Thanksgiving holiday may be beneficial to all Members who may be faced with a conflict affecting participating in meetings, conferences and professional development opportunities that are offered to parliamentarians during that week based on similar assumptions of availability.

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Thank you for considering this matter and please let me know should you wish to discuss it further.



Jay Macdonald  
Government House Leader

- c: Premier
- Ministers
- Chair, Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges
- Chief of Staff
- Secretary to Cabinet/Deputy Minister, EIA
- Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
- Deputy Clerk, House Procedures and Committees
- Deputy Secretary, Premier's Office
- Director, Legislative Affairs and House Planning
- Clerk, Standing Committee on Procedures and Privileges
- Advisor, Standing Committee on Procedures and Privileges