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## Fact Sheet No. 12 THE CHAMBER

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The Chamber, where the Assembly meets to conduct its affairs, is situated at the centre of the Legislative Building.

The horseshoe-shaped layout of the Members' desks in the Legislative Chamber is distinctive in Canada. The design, which can accommodate up to 58 Members, demonstrates foresight on the part of the architects in 1920, when there were just 41 MLAs.

Each Member's desk is equipped with a powerful microphone, and all words spoken in debate are broadcasted (in the building and on the web) and recorded for transcription.

The Speaker's Chair is placed at the open end of the horse shoe, providing a clear view of all Members. The Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Clerk Assistant sit at the Table in the centre of the Chamber. The Sergeant-at-Arms sits opposite the Clerk at the other end of the Table, with the Mace set out before the Sergeant; its crown pointing toward the Government side of the House. The Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms sits near the north door, and two Pages sit one on either side of the Speaker. See [Fact Sheet No. 8 The Role and Functions of the Table and Procedural Staff](#) for more details.

No piece of legislation may be debated or voted upon unless the Mace is in its appointed place: resting on the Table in the center of the House. The Mace signifies that the Legislative Assembly draws its power from the people, and its executive authority from the Crown.

### **THE PRESS GALLERY**

Above the Speaker's Chair is the Press Gallery, providing an excellent view of the Chamber. Accredited Members of the media can access this Gallery whenever the House is in session.

### **THE VISITORS GALLERY**

Situated atop the Chamber, following the semi-circle shape of the room is the Public Gallery for visitors of the House. The Gallery is open to anyone wishing to watch the proceedings. Visitors must obtain a pass from Security at the main front lobby of the building, or room 336, before proceeding through metal detection screening to enter the Gallery. All coats and hand luggage must be checked.

### **HOUSE SITTING TIMES:**

|           |  |
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| Monday    | 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.                           |
| Tuesday   | 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon<br>1:30 p.m. to 5:00 pm |
| Wednesday | 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.                           |
| Thursday  | 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon<br>1:30 p.m. to 5:00 pm |
| Friday    | 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.                         |

The Gallery doors open a half hour before the House sits.

Routine Proceeding (featuring our 40 minute Question Period) takes place:

- Monday through Thursday shortly after 1:30 p.m.
- Friday shortly after 10:00 a.m., during Throne Speech and Budget debates

### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

10:00 a.m. to 12 noon on Tuesday and Thursday, except during Throne Speech and Budget debates.

### **QUESTION PERIOD**

Begins shortly after the opening of each sitting, and continues for 40 minutes. (See Fact Sheet No. 7).

### **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GALLERY VISITORS**

1. Food and beverages are not permitted in the Gallery and must be disposed of prior to entry.
2. Visitors are asked to remain seated, with the exception of rising when the Speaker enters the House and remaining standing during the reading of the Prayer.
3. Visitors must refrain from making any interruption or disturbance in the Gallery.
4. Visitors must refrain from applause and loud conversations while in the Gallery.
5. Visitors must not display banners, signs or placards.
6. Video cameras, still cameras, audio recorders, telephones or other electronic devices are prohibited in the Gallery. Pictures are not to be taken, nor are the proceedings to be recorded.
7. Visitors sitting in the front rows are not allowed to lean on any part of the brass railing.

Visitors can refer to our detailed Code of Conduct at:

[http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/visiting/docs/code\\_of\\_conduct.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/visiting/docs/code_of_conduct.pdf), or ask for a hard copy from the Clerk's Office in room 237.

### **SITTING PERIODS**

These are the periods when the House may or must meet. It is divided into three main sitting periods:

#### **November Sittings**

The House may meet from Tuesday following the Remembrance Day week break to the first Thursday in December.

#### **Spring Sittings**

The House must begin to meet on the first Wednesday in March and may meet until the first sitting day in June.

#### **Fall Sittings**

The House may meet from the last Wednesday in September or until Thursday of the week prior to the Remembrance Day Week.

There are also four Constituency Weeks when the House shall not meet:

- the week in which Remembrance Day falls if it falls on a weekday, or the week following Remembrance Day if it falls on a Saturday or Sunday;
- the week designated under The Public Schools Act as a spring break or vacation;
- the week in which May 1 falls if it falls on a weekday, or the week following May 1 if it falls on a Saturday or Sunday; and
- the week commencing on the third Monday of October