Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The Legislative Assembly is the focal point of our democratic process. It is where laws are passed, policies approved and programs developed, all of which affect our way of life in Alberta.

There are 87 Members of the Legislative Assembly. They belong to political parties, each representing a different constituency. Following an election, the leader of the party having the most seats in the Assembly becomes the Premier and forms a government by choosing a cabinet from among the MLAs in that party. Each Cabinet Minister is responsible for a government department.

The elected Members from other parties form the Official Opposition. Their job is to serve as a check on the government, criticizing and suggesting alternatives to its policies. The Opposition party with the most seats is called the Official Opposition.

Some common terms used in the Assembly are also listed here.

Bill - A proposed law. To become law, a Bill must pass three readings, committee study and be given Royal Assent.

Black Rod - A ceremonial baton the Sergeant-at-Arms uses when accompanying the Lieutenant Governor on such occasions as Royal Assent or the Speech from the Throne.

Cabinet (Executive Council) - The heads of government departments, led by the Premier and chosen from the elected members of the party holding the majority of seats in the Assembly.

Cabinet Minister - A member of the cabinet, the head of a government department.

Caucus - All of the elected members from one party, a private meeting of this group.

Chamber - The room where the Legislative Assembly holds its sittings.

Clerk - The chief permanent officer responsible for keeping the Assembly’s records and providing procedural advice and administrative support to the Speaker and Members.

Committee of Supply - A committee of all Members of the Legislative Assembly which meets to discuss the government’s budget estimates in detail.

Committee of the Whole - A committee of all Members of the Legislative Assembly as well as the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Private Member - Any MLA who is not in the cabinet.

Readings - Three stages of a Bill. The Bill is introduced at first reading and may be debated at second and third readings.

Royal Assent - A ceremony in which the monarch’s representative, the Lieutenant Governor gives final approval to a Bill.

Sergeant-at-Arms - Legislative Assembly officer in charge of the security of the House and MLAs; also has custody of the Mace and the Black Rod.

Session - A series of meetings of the Legislative Assembly opened by Royal Proclamation and closed by cabinet order. When the session is divided into spring and fall periods, these periods are called sitting, as are the daily meetings of the Assembly.

Speaker - An MLA elected by all other MLAs to maintain order in the House in an impartial manner.

Speech from the Throne - The speech is delivered by the Lieutenant Governor to open each new session and outline the government’s proposed program for the session.

Legislative Assembly - A law-making body of elected representatives, sometimes called the House.

Lieutenant Governor - The representative of the monarch and formal head of state.

MLA - Member of the Legislative Assembly one of the 87 elected representatives.

Mace - The ceremonial staff carried into the Assembly each day before the sitting begins. It symbolizes the authority of the Legislative Assembly.

Opposition - MLAs belonging to parties other than the governing party. In the House they sit opposite the cabinet and serve as critics of government policies.

Premier - The leader of the party holding the most seats in the Legislative Assembly.

Winter Hours
September 1 to May 31
Monday to Friday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Weekends and holidays: noon to 5 p.m.

Summer Hours
June 1 to August 31
Daily including holidays: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tour NOT available on Christmas Day, New Year’s Day and Good Friday.

For information on educational programs or to book a tour for a group of 12 or more, please phone 780-427-7342. If you are calling from outside Edmonton, dial the toll-free line at 1-800-661-0000 and enter the 10-digit number.

Some terms used in the Assembly...