

MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Governor's Office

Subject: Notice of Public Meetings	Number: 250.1 Amended
Date: April 25, 2016	By Direction of:  Sharon P. Minnich, Secretary of Administration
Contact Agency: Office of Administration, Office of Continuity and Records Information Management, Telephone 717.783.5055.	

This directive establishes policy, responsibilities, and procedures to advertise public meetings in compliance with *The Sunshine Act* and *The Newspaper Advertising Act*. This amendment revises the process for submission of public meeting notices. Marginal dots are excluded due to major changes.

- 1. PURPOSE.** To establish policy, responsibilities, and procedures to ensure compliance with the requirements of *The Sunshine Act*, 65 Pa.C.S. §§ 701-716, and *The Newspaper Advertising Act*, 45 Pa.C.S. §§ 301-310, regarding advance notice and advertisement of public meetings.
- 2. SCOPE.** This directive applies to all departments, boards, commissions, and councils (hereinafter referred to as "agencies") under the Governor's jurisdiction.
- 3. OBJECTIVE.** To provide guidance to agencies for advertising public meetings in compliance with public notice requirements.
- 4. DEFINITIONS.**
 - a. Public Notice.**
 - (1) For meetings, Public Notice is:**
 - (a)** The publication in advance of the location, date, and time of a public meeting in a local newspaper of general circulation which is published and circulated in the political subdivision where an agency's public meeting is to be held, and

(b) Posting the place, date and time of a meeting prominently at the principal office of the agency holding the meeting or at the public building in which the meeting is to be held, and

(c) Notice to certain parties, upon their request (Refer to Section 5. Policy of this directive).

(2) For Recessed or Reconvened meetings, Public Notice is:

(a) Posting at the place, date and time of the meeting prominently at the principal office of the agency holding the meeting or at the public building in which the meeting is to be held, and

(b) Giving notice to certain parties, upon their request (Refer to Section 5. Policy, of this directive).

b. Emergency Meeting. A meeting called for the purpose of dealing with a real or potential emergency involving a clear and present danger to life or property.

c. Meeting. Any prearranged gathering of an agency which is attended or participated in by a quorum of the members of an agency and is held for the purpose of deliberating agency business or taking official action.

d. Rescheduled Meeting. A meeting that is rescheduled by an agency to be held on a date that is different from the originally scheduled meeting date.

e. Special Meeting. A meeting scheduled by an agency after the agency's regular schedule of meetings has been established.

5. POLICY.

a. Public notice is not required for an emergency meeting.

b. For meetings, agencies shall give public notice of:

(1) Regularly scheduled meetings at least 72 hours in advance of the time of the meeting.

(2) Rescheduled meetings at least 24 hours in advance of the time of the meeting.

c. For special meetings or rescheduled meetings, agencies shall give public notice of each special meeting or rescheduled special meeting at least 24 hours in advance of the time of the convening of the meeting specified in the notice.

d. For all meetings, special meetings, and recessed or reconvened meetings, agencies shall:

(1) Post the place, date and time of the meeting prominently at the agency holding the meeting or where the meeting will be held.

- (2) Upon request, supply copies of the public notice to any newspaper of general circulation in the political subdivision in which the meeting will be held, to any radio or television station which regularly broadcasts into the political subdivision and to any interested parties if the newspaper, station or party provides the agency with a stamped, self-addressed envelope prior to the meeting.
- e. For the Department of State: Professional licensing boards within the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs of the Department of State of the Commonwealth shall include in the public notice each matter involving a proposal to revoke, suspend or restrict a license.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES.

a. Harrisburg Capital Area.

(1) Agency Heads or Delegates shall:

- (a) Submit to the Office of Administration (OA) approved Public Notice for publication in the Patriot News, Harrisburg.
- (b) Ensure the accuracy of agency Public Notice documents.
- (c) Provide contact information for requesting a disability accommodation to attend public meetings. Example: Individuals who require an accommodation for a disability, such as a sign language interpreter, information in Braille or other reasonable accommodation.
- (d) Post documents in the appropriate physical locations at appropriate times.

(2) OA shall:

- (a) Establish procedures for agencies in the Harrisburg Capital Region to follow when submitting Public Notice documents to OA.
- (b) Establish procedures with the Patriot News, Harrisburg for submitting Public Notice documents, and paying for advertising costs for publication.

b. Outside Harrisburg Capital Area.

(1) Agency Heads or Delegates shall:

- (a) Establish procedures with the local newspapers of general circulation for submitting advance public notices and paying for advertising costs for publication.

- (b) Provide local newspapers of general circulation a completed and signed Form STD-521, Publications Authorization and Invoice, which can be obtained through the Department of General Services, Bureau of Publications and a list of persons authorized to sign Form STD-521.
- (c) Provide contact information for requesting a disability accommodation to attend public meetings. Example: Individuals who require an accommodation for a disability, such as a sign language interpreter, information in Braille or other reasonable accommodation.
- (d) Post documents in the appropriate physical locations at appropriate times.

7. PROCEDURES.

a. Harrisburg Capital Area.

- (1) **Meeting Publication.** Procedures for submitting meetings to OA for a publication in The Patriot News, Harrisburg are available at [Sunshine Notices](#).
- (2) **Publication Review. Proof of Publication in The Patriot News, Harrisburg.** Agencies can confirm the public meeting notice has been published in The Patriot News by visiting the [Patriot-News website](#).
- (3) Publication errors should be reported immediately to OA at telephone 717.783.5055 or email ra-sunshineactnotice@pa.gov.

- b. **Outside Harrisburg Capital Area.** Procedures for submitting meetings directly to the local newspapers of general circulation are available at [Sunshine Notices](#).

This directive replaces, in its entirety, *Management Directive 250.1*, dated February 14, 2013.