

Vermont's Open Meeting Law

Important Dates:

July 1, 2024 - Act 133 Open Meeting Law Changes Take Effect and COVID-19 Related Legislation Expires

January 1, 2025 - New Open Meeting Law Training Requirements take effect

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2024 Act 133 Open Meeting Law Changes

Instead of extending the temporary changes in Act 1 of 2023, in 2024 the Vermont Legislature made permanent changes to the Open Meeting Law with the enactment of Act 133 (S.55) that will replace the expiring changes. The new law:

- permits “advisory bodies” (those that do not have supervision, control, or jurisdiction over legislative, quasi-judicial, tax, or budgetary matters) to meet electronically without a physical meeting location (i.e., remotely);
- requires all other public bodies (i.e., “nonadvisory bodies”) to record, in audio or video form, their meetings and post the recordings in a designated electronic location for a minimum of 30 days following the approval and posting of the official minutes of the meeting which was recorded;
- allows all public bodies to meet remotely in response to an emergency meeting, state of emergency, or “local incident”;
- requires all public bodies to provide local residents, members of the press, or members of the body itself electronic/telephonic or in-person meeting access options to a regularly scheduled meeting, if requested (unless it causes an undue hardship);
- imposes annual training requirements on selectboard chairs, town managers, and mayors.

We are also available to assist town officials with any Open Meeting Law questions about their roles and responsibilities. Members can click the “Ask a Question” button below to submit their inquiry. They can also call VLCT at 1-800-649-7915 or email us at info@vlct.org.

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New Act 133 Open Meeting Law Resources

VLCT, the Vermont Secretary of State’s Office, and the Vermont School Boards Association jointly created a set of FAQs to help municipalities better understand these new requirements.

[2024 Open Meeting Law Act 133 FAQs](#)

2024 VT Secretary of State Act 133 Recordkeeping Chart

The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration has developed a [Recordkeeping Chart](#) specific to assisting municipalities comply with their Open Meeting Law record keeping requirements.

Municipal Website Required Posting Resources

VLCT developed the following resources to help municipalities comply with new website posting requirements.

- [Explanation of how to submit](#) an Open Meeting Law notice of violation
- [Model Open Meeting Law Complaint Form](#) (recommended, but not required);
- Required Posting: [Text of 1 V.S.A. § 314](#).

You can also access these and other Open Meeting Law resources below. (VLCT is currently updating our open meeting law resources to reflect changes in the laws. We will update the website as these become available.)

General Information

Transparency is an essential element of open and democratic government. In Vermont, the primary means of providing transparency are the State’s open meeting law, [1 V.S.A. §§ 310-](#)

[314](#), and the public records law, [1 V.S.A. §§ 315-320](#). These laws implement the command of Chapter I, Article 6 of the Vermont Constitution that officers of government are “trustees and servants” of the people and are “at all times, in a legal way, accountable to them.”

The Open Meeting Law clearly emphasizes the openness of and accessibility to government. It declares that “All meetings of a public body are declared to be open to the public at all times, except as provided in section 313 of this title [on executive sessions].” [1 V.S.A. § 312\(a\)](#). The Open Meeting Law and its requirements are meant to empower the public to play an effective role as not only an active participant in government but also a check on it as well.

Every municipal board, council, commission and committees (legally defined as “public bodies”) of a municipality is required to comply with the Open Meeting Law. The Law applies when there is (1) a quorum of a public body; (2) involved in a discussion or taking action; and (3) the subject matter of the discussion is one over which the body has authority or responsibility.

Disclaimer: This resource is only intended to provide information and it does **NOT** constitute legal advice. Readers with specific legal questions are encouraged to contact an attorney. The use or downloading of this resource does **NOT** create an attorney-client relationship and will not be treated in a confidential manner.

If you have additional questions please use the ask a question button to submit them.

Ask a Question

Open Meeting Law Updates - Act 133

Open Meeting Law Basics

Hybrid and Remote Meetings

Procedures and Effective Meetings