

a guide to the  
**Legislative Process**  
at Cleveland City Council



This guide to Cleveland City Council's legislative process shows the paths an ordinance can take once introduced. The last column has some helpful wording for documenting the process. All ordinances can be found online at [cityofcleveland.legistar.com](http://cityofcleveland.legistar.com)

Meeting Type



Full Council Meeting



Committee Meeting



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Legislative Process

- DRAFTED:** Legislation is drafted by either council's lawyers or the city's law department.
- NUMBERED:** The Clerk of Council gives legislation a unique number and preps it for introduction to council. The clerk occasionally numbers legislation after it's introduced.
- FIRST READING:** Legislation is introduced and read for the first time at a City Council meeting. At this stage, it appears under the "First Reading Legislation" section on City Council's meeting agendas. See our Cleveland City Council **Agenda Guide** for details on how full council meetings are run.
- COMMITTEE:** Legislation referred after first reading initially goes to city departments for review, then to council committees, which can request amendments.
- SECOND READING:** Full council reads the legislation a second time. Legislation at this stage appears under the "Second Reading Legislation" section on agendas.
- THIRD READING:** Council reads legislation for a third time and votes on it. It could also table legislation or vote to amend it, but council rarely does either.
- SIGNATURES:** After council votes to approve a piece of legislation, the clerk and the council president sign it and send it to the mayor. The mayor can sign legislation but doesn't have to for it to take effect. Non-emergency legislation takes effect 30 days after the vote, and emergency legislation takes effect 10 days after the vote or immediately upon the mayor's signature. If the mayor vetoes (rejects) legislation, it returns to council, which may override the veto with a two-thirds affirmative vote.

Actions

**VOTED:** Council voted on the legislation. To vote on first reading legislation, two-thirds of council must first vote to suspend the rule requiring legislation to be read on three separate days.

**REFERRED:** Council referred the legislation to city departments and council committees for further review.

**TABLED:** Council tabled the legislation, which means that specific legislation cannot be considered anymore (this is rare).

**APPROVED:** If a committee approved legislation, it goes to the next designated committee or to full council for a second reading. **Note: Legislation only becomes law after a majority of full council votes in favor of it.**

**HELD:** The committee held the legislation, likely because it wants more information or has questions about the legislation.

Council voted on the legislation, suggested amendments, or tabled it.

You can say...

"Council suspended the rule requiring legislation to be read on three different days before a vote and approved (or rejected) the legislation," or simply, "Council approved (or rejected) the legislation."

"Council referred the legislation for review by city departments and council committees."

"Council tabled the legislation, meaning it will no longer be considered."

"The committee approved the legislation. A future vote by council would determine if the legislation becomes law." **OR**, "The legislation was passed out of committee. A future vote by council would determine if the legislation becomes law."

"The committee did not approve the legislation in this meeting."

"Council voted to approve (or reject) the legislation," or "council tabled the legislation, meaning it will no longer be considered."

"Council voted to amend the legislation" and include whether or not they voted for passage of the newly amended legislation.

