



# Open Meeting Law: Holding Emergency Meetings

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[www.frcog.org](http://www.frcog.org)

# The Open Meeting Law

- The Law: M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Sections 18-25
- Regulations: 940 CMR 29.00 (29.01 through 29.11)
- Attorney General's Division of Open Government
- Town Counsel

# Meeting Notices

- All meetings of public bodies must be open to the public
- 48 hours notice is required, not including Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays
- Notices must be accessible to the public 24/7
- Notice must include a listing of the topics the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting.

# Emergency Meetings

- Definition of “emergency” in the law:  
“a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate action.”
- Reserved for circumstances that are:
  - Unanticipated, **AND**
  - Require an immediate response
- Generally, to protect public safety and/or health

# Emergency Meetings

- 48 hour notice requirement waived, but post ASAP
- Only discuss emergency topics during the meeting
  - Broken water main repair
  - Water Department employee's job performance
- Not appropriate for overlooked deadlines or other human error emergencies

# Remote Participation (940 CMR 29.10)

- Select Board must vote to adopt remote participation
- Permitted if physical attendance would be unreasonably difficult
- Technology must allow all participants to hear each other clearly
- Quorum of Board must be in the meeting room, including person chairing the meeting
- All votes by roll call
- Documents to be reviewed should be provided to remote participant

For more information go to the  
Attorney General's Open  
Meeting Law web site.

- The Law and Regulations
- Open Meeting Law Guide
- FAQs
- OML Determinations
- Trainings

**[www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law](http://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law)**