



Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement Western Cape Provincial Parliament IPalamente yePhondo IeNtshona Koloni

QUESTIONS

FACT SHEET 16

REVISION 1, 13 JULY 2016

The right of Members to put questions to Ministers is an important part of ensuring the executive authority's accountability to the Provincial Parliament. Replies to questions are either given orally in the House or in writing.

The rules for questions and replies are based on the standing rules, the Speaker's rulings and established practice. Questions may be put to Ministers related to their spheres of responsibility.

Briefly, the basic rules for questions are as follows:

- In putting any question, no argument or opinion may be offered.
- The question should only give basic information and should not be framed so as to suggest its answer.
- Questions must relate to government administration or policy and should be directed to the responsible Minister.
- Questions should not seek an expression of opinion, a legal opinion or ask whether statements made in the press are accurate.
- Questions should not seek a solution to a hypothetical proposition or be technical, vague or meaningless.
- Questions should not raise matters that are *sub judice* or anticipate an order of the day.

Questions without notice to the Premier

Questions may be put without notice to the Premier on the first Thursday of a session and every second Thursday thereafter, except on the Thursday of the week during which the Premier's vote in the schedule to an appropriation bill or his/her State-of-the-Province Address is discussed. Twenty minutes are allowed for questions and replies.

Important rules regarding questions without notice to the Premier are as follows:

- A Member may put a question to the Premier only if his/her name appears on the Order Paper for that purpose.
- Not more than seven names are selected at random to be placed on the Order Paper.
- If more than two names of Members who represent the same political party are selected, only the first two selected may be included in the names placed on the Order Paper.
- If the name selected to appear on the Order Paper first is that of a Member belonging to the Premier's party, it must be swapped with that of the next Member on the list who does not belong to that party.

- The Member called may put one concise question and – immediately after receiving the reply to it – two supplementary questions which must relate to the original question or to the reply.

Questions for oral reply

Questions for oral reply seek a concise answer from the relevant Minister and should not require answers of a detailed or statistical nature.

Important rules regarding questions for oral reply are as follows:

- Questions should be submitted timeously to give the Minister sufficient time to prepare a reply.
 - Questions for oral reply are limited to two questions per Member per question day.
 - Questions for oral reply are limited to four questions per Minister per question day.
- Questions for oral reply may not contain more than five subdivisions.
- The time allotted for questions for oral reply is 45 minutes.

Questions for written reply

Questions for written reply normally seek detailed or statistical information.

Questions should not give information only, convey a particular point of view, be a speech or be of excessive length.

Important rules regarding questions for written reply are as follows:

- Questions for written reply may not contain more than 15 subdivisions.
 - When the House is sitting, a Member may submit up to three questions for written reply per week.
 - When the House is not sitting, a Member may submit only one question for written reply per week.
- If the responsible Minister has not replied to a question within 10 working days of the House after the day on which the question is put down for written reply, or when the House is adjourned during a session, 13 working days after the question was first placed on the Question Paper, the Member who put the question may request that the Secretary place it on the Question Paper for oral reply.

Interpellations

An interpellation is a “mini debate” of 15 minutes on a question not containing more than two subdivisions.

The additional rules for interpellations are as follows:

- The number of interpellations per day is limited to three.
- Interpellations have precedence on Thursdays.