

# Brown Act Quick Reference Guide

1959 – Ralph M. Brown

## WHO:

“All meetings of the legislative body of a local agency shall be open and public...”  
-GC Section 54953(a)

## MEETING:

“Any congregation of a majority of the members of a legislative body at the same time and location to hear, discuss, deliberate, or take action upon any item that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body.”  
- GC Section 54952.2(a)

## SERIAL MEETINGS (Violation):

“A majority of the members of a legislative body shall not...use a series of communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, to discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item of business that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body.”  
- GC Section 54952.2(b)(1)

- Discussions known as Daisy Chains or Hub and Spoke, Written communication (email)

## TELECONFERENCE MEETINGS:

- Agenda must identify location and be accessible to the public (not in a car)
- Quorum must be met from participation from locations in the jurisdiction
- All votes must be taken by roll call

## BASICS:

- Agenda must be posted at least 72 hours in advance and freely accessible to public
- Notice, agenda, and supporting documents must be made available “upon request without delay” to the public if a majority of the members have received.

## ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

- Prohibit any action or discussion of non-agenda items unless:
  - 2/3 of members present determine an urgent need came *after* the agenda being posted

## SPECIAL MEETINGS:

- Called by presiding officer or majority of members.
- Notice must be posted at least 24 hours in advance.
- Only discuss items from agenda (no urgency additions)

## EMERGENCY MEETINGS:

- May be called with one-hour advance notice; Hour notice is waived for “dire emergencies”
- Limited to - “a work stoppage, crippling activity, or other activity that severely impairs public health, safety, or both, as determined by a majority of the members of the legislative body.” -GC Section 54956.5

## VOTING:

- No secret ballots
- All votes must be attributed to member casting vote
- No action on non-agendized items

## PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Each regular meeting agenda must provide an opportunity for public comment on any agenda item and on any item within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body.
- For special meetings, the agenda must provide an opportunity for members of the public directly to address the legislative body concerning any item on the agenda only.