

Illinois House of Representatives – COVID-19 Special Session Plan

This document describes the preparation for and conduct of special session for the House while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to present a significant health hazard and large gatherings of people are being discouraged. This plan pulls from guidance issued by the Department of Public Health, which is informed by experts from FEMA, the CDC, and other medical advice.

Furthermore, this plan was developed in consultation with the Office of the Architect of the Capitol, the Secretary of State's Office, including the Capitol Police, the Illinois State Police, both Democrat and Republican members of the House, and bipartisan legislative staff. This plan is designed to ensure the health and safety of legislators, legislative staff, other support personnel, and the public.

1) In advance of session:

- a. Members will be asked to indicate their willingness to follow the public health and safety guidelines established by medical experts by signing a pledge.
- b. Travel to Springfield should be done individually, in one's own vehicle. Public transportation, car-pooling, and ride-sharing should be avoided.
- c. Individual hotel rooms should be utilized – those who typically share accommodations should stay in hotel rooms instead.
- d. Members and staff should be tested for COVID-19 in the days before the House is to resume, even if asymptomatic or recovered from a previous infection. Any member or staff who tests positive or feels ill should remain home, consult with a healthcare professional and self-quarantine.
- e. Those who are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 should consider not traveling to Springfield for session.
- f. Members should refrain from bringing companions to Springfield, including spouses and children.

2) Entry into the BoS Center:

- a. Security on site will be provided by the Illinois State Police.
- b. Members and staff will have access to the parking garage to the northwest of the building.
- c. Members and staff will enter the north side of the lobby for admittance to the floor level; members of the public will enter the south side of the lobby for admittance to the mezzanine level.
- d. Entry into the building, for all persons, will include passing through a magnetometer to prohibit weapons; this process of entry into the building will be overseen by law enforcement personnel.
- e. All persons entering the building must submit to a touchless temperature check; those with a temperature of 100°F or higher must leave and should submit to a test for COVID-19. Anyone testing positive should consult with a healthcare professional and self-quarantine.
- f. Signage will advise individuals of the common symptoms of COVID-19; those who are experiencing those symptoms or have been in close contact with someone experiencing them should return home, consult with a healthcare professional and self-quarantine.
- g. All persons admitted into the building must wear a face covering at all times. Cloth masks will be provided to members and staff.
- h. Law enforcement will limit the number of members of the public allowed in the building, based on the available area to seat and monitor them.

3) Protocols inside the BoS Center:

- a. Members will be arranged on the floor level, using individual, 6 ft. tables configured in a manner similar to the House floor, around a podium and well area.
- b. A limited number of staff will be physically present at both the BoS Center and the Capitol Complex. All other staff will continue to work remotely.
- c. Members of the public will be arranged on the mezzanine level, in a configuration that permits social distancing and in an area that can be sufficiently monitored, based on law enforcement guidelines.
- d. Members of the media will have access to a location above the floor, on the mezzanine level; they will be asked to create a pool to minimize the number of people physically present.
- e. Sanitation stations will be placed at key locations.
- f. Janitorial staff will be engaged in a robust sanitizing practice multiple times a day, with special attention to door handles, hand railings, and other frequently-touched surfaces.

4) Conduct of Session

- a. Committees, if needed, will occur on the House floor area. Members who do not serve on the committee may stay to observe, but are not required to be present at that time.
- b. As many microphones as possible will be placed throughout the floor for members to approach and access.
- c. The Clerk will conduct roll call voting, with a program that will allow the votes to be displayed on a screen. Members' laptops will be able to access ilga.gov to review the legislation, and staff analyses will be pre-loaded. No other browsing will be permitted on the laptops.
- d. In addition to coverage through the press, LIS will live stream the proceedings on ilga.gov.

5) Additional points of information:

- a. Access to the Capitol and Stratton Buildings are currently limited to the north doors only.
- b. No members of the public are currently permitted in the Capitol and Stratton Building, unless visiting the district offices on the first floor and escorted by the member or staff.
- c. Members will have access to their offices if needed; however, most staff will continue to work remotely.
- d. DPH recommends all meetings, such as committee pre-meetings, caucuses, and negotiation sessions for bills, should be conducted via phone or video conferencing system in advance, if possible.
- e. Information regarding the operational status of area hotels and restaurants will be provided.

6) Upon adjournment, DPH recommends social distancing and isolation for at least 7 days post legislative session.

In spite of the preparations and precautions being taken to protect the health and safety of members, staff, and the public, all in attendance must remain vigilant. All measures being recommended by medical experts, such as maintaining 6 ft. of distance from others and frequent hand-washing should continue to be practiced.