



October 2015

WHAT IS A BRIEF?

A brief is a written submission that provides opinions, comments and recommendations on a subject being studied by a parliamentary committee.

WHO CAN SUBMIT A BRIEF?

Any individual or organization may submit a brief to a committee of the House of Commons, even if they are not given the opportunity to appear before the committee. Witnesses appearing before a committee, in person or by videoconference, are also encouraged, but not required, to submit a brief in support of their presentation.

CONTENT OF A BRIEF

Each committee may set its own criteria for determining whether briefs are relevant and acceptable, and the committee clerk can inform you of the specific requirements, if any. In general:

- Briefs must contain factual information and support the views expressed and claims made in a clear and concise fashion.
- Recommendations to the committee must be as specific as possible, especially suggested amendments to bills. They must also be summarized at the end of the brief.
- Briefs should normally not exceed 10 pages in length. Briefs that are longer than 10 pages must be accompanied by a summary of no more than 500 words. For lengthy briefs, a committee may decide to translate and distribute or publish only the summary. Please consult the clerk to determine how many pages the committee will accept for a given study.
- The author's name (and his or her organization, if any) must be clearly indicated on the title page of the brief. The address, phone number and email address of the individual or organization must be provided separately in a letter or email accompanying the brief.
- Organizations must provide a general description of themselves at the end of the brief.
- All reference materials used must be clearly indicated.
- Logos, line drawings, graphics, tables and charts should be rendered in black ink, as other colours may not be readily photocopied. Please avoid using such figures if they are not available in both official languages.
- Photographs submitted with briefs are preferably in black and white.

PUBLICATION OF BRIEFS

Briefs submitted to committees become part of their public archives and therefore, may be posted on the committee's website. In addition, a copy of every brief is retained by Library and Archives Canada as part of the records of the committee at the end of the parliamentary session.

When a committee presents a report to the House of Commons following a given study, a list of the names of the organizations and individuals who have submitted briefs will appear as an appendix to the report.

SUBMITTING A BRIEF

Although individuals and organizations may submit briefs in either official language, they are not distributed to committee members until they are available in both official languages. Consequently, witnesses submitting briefs in only one official language should do so at least five working days before their appearance in order to allow time for translation and distribution. Federal departments and agencies must submit their briefs in both official languages.

Committees often receive a large number of briefs for a study. Therefore, it is recommended that briefs be submitted to the committee clerk as early as possible to allow committee members sufficient time to consider them. Briefs are sent electronically to the committee's email address, which is available on the [Committees website](#). Please contact the committee clerk if you are unable to submit your brief electronically.

If you are appearing before a committee as a witness and your brief has not been sent to the committee clerk prior to your appearance, please consult the clerk to determine how many copies you should bring to the meeting. If the brief meets all the committee's requirements, including being available in both official languages, the committee clerk can ensure the distribution to committee members and staff. Copies may also be given to others attending the meeting and, just as those received in advance of the meeting, will be considered public documents.

For more information on committee business and the process of appearing before a committee, please consult the [Committees Practical Guide](#) and the [Guide for Witnesses Appearing Before House of Commons Committees](#).