

Washington State Building Code Council

Public Testimony Rules of Conduct

Who can testify?

Public testimony will be received from all individuals having an interest in, or desiring to be heard upon any matter which is the subject of a specific public hearing during such public hearing.

Do I need to sign up?

Any person wishing to address the Council on a public hearing item must sign up on the appropriate form(s) for the agenda item(s).

What information should I give?

When speaking or testifying before the Council, please start by stating your name and affiliation for the record, and whether you are speaking on your behalf or your organization. Written testimony must also include this information and must be signed. The signature may be omitted from e-mail transmissions, but such transmissions shall state the author's full name. State your position on the issue (support, oppose, concerns).

How much time do I get?

Each speaker shall be limited to three minutes, or the Council Chair may set further limitations depending on the time allotted to the hearing. The time allotted may be extended to provide sufficient time to answer all questions posed by Council members.

Are rebuttal comments allowed?

Once the initial testimony phase is complete, any speaker may speak to rebut any previous testimony or questions raised in the public hearing for a maximum of one minute. New information will be ruled out of order. If new information is introduced unintentionally, and not caught by the chair, rebuttal of the same will be allowed. "Me too" testimony will not be accepted. By exception, Council Members may request no more than clarification of speakers' comments.

Once the rebuttal testimony is complete, any speaker may speak as re-rebuttal for a maximum of one minute. Comments must solely address specific information raised in rebuttal.

What about written testimony?

All written testimony must be addressed to the Council Chair and

- 1) sent to the Council email box at sbcc@ga.wa.gov;
- 2) mailed to the State Building Code Council, PO Box 41449, Olympia WA 98504-1449; or
- 3) hand delivered to staff at a public hearing (whenever possible, please provide 20 sets of collated copies of written or graphic material for distribution to the Council and staff).

Exhibits, letters, petitions and other documents presented as noted above become part of the record of the public hearing.

Any testimony or correspondence sent directly to council members **will not be accepted** as public testimony. Written testimony will be accepted up to one week past the final hearing date, unless otherwise noted.

Things to keep in mind.

- All testimony should be brief, concise, and honest.
- Speakers should address their comments to matters pertinent to the agenda item or subject matter at hand.
- Avoid reading lengthy written testimony; instead, orally highlight important points in the written report.
- If others are offering similar testimony, try to coordinate information to avoid repetition. Simply stating agreement with the points raised by prior speakers will help move the hearing along so that all who wish to speak will have the opportunity to do so within a reasonable time. Large groups whose members wish to speak are encouraged to designate a spokesperson.
- Be prepared to answer questions and comments by Council members. If you are unable to answer a question, offer to provide a written response later and always follow through.
- If you must give a personal opinion, make sure that the Council understands that you are not speaking for an organization, but for yourself.
- If proposing a modification of the material being discussed, please be prepared to provide your comments in writing.

What is not allowed?

- No disruption of the orderly conduct of the public hearing will be tolerated.
- The speakers and audience shall refrain from abusive or profane remarks, disruptive outbursts, applause, protests, engaging in disruptive conversation during presentations, speaking out of turn, preventing or attempting to prevent others who have the floor from speaking, or other conduct which disrupts or interferes with the orderly conduct of the public hearing.
- Personal attacks on the Council members, staff, or members of the public are out of order.
- It is not appropriate in the public hearing for a speaker to debate a matter under consideration with other speakers, the audience, or members of the Council.

Engaging in such conduct and failing to cease upon request will be grounds for ending a speaker's time at the podium or for removal of any disruptive person from the meeting room.