



# BROWN ACT BASICS: QUICK FAQ

*General guidance only; does not replace County Counsel advice.*

**The Ralph M. Brown Act (“Brown Act”)** is California’s open meeting law. It keeps public business open, transparent, and available for community participation. This guide covers the Commission, standing committees, and key remote-participation rules effective January 1, 2026.

Where Brown Act Applies	Key Meeting Rules	SB 707 / AB 2449: Remote Participation
<p><b>Brown Act applies to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full Commission</li> <li>• <b>Standing committees:</b> Executive, MCE, PP&amp;A, and Standards &amp; Best Practices</li> <li>• Any other formally established standing committee</li> </ul> <p><b>Not Brown Act bodies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caucuses</li> <li>• Task forces</li> <li>• Workgroups</li> </ul> <p>These spaces may support preparation, input, and community voice. Formal Commission business returns to the Commission or proper standing committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Open meetings:</b> Commission and standing committee meetings are open to the public.</li> <li>• <b>Agendas:</b> Regular agendas are posted at least 72 hours before the meeting.</li> <li>• <b>Public comment:</b> The public may comment on matters within the body’s subject area and agenda items.</li> <li>• <b>Stay on topic:</b> Discussion and action stay within the posted agenda item.</li> <li>• <b>No serial meetings:</b> Members should not use texts, emails, side conversations, or intermediaries to deliberate or build agreement outside a noticed meeting.</li> <li>• <b>Clear record:</b> Motions, votes, recusals, remote-participation basis, technical findings, and outcomes should be reflected clearly.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Who may join virtually?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Just cause:</b> personal illness, caregiving responsibilities, military service, care of an immunocompromised family member, or other qualifying statutory circumstances.</li> <li>• <b>Disability accommodation:</b> approved remote participation for a physical or mental disability under the ADA; treated like in-person attendance for quorum, voting, and participation.</li> <li>• <b>Proclaimed local emergency:</b> remote meetings remain allowable when a qualifying local emergency is proclaimed and required findings are made.</li> </ul> <p><b>What is expected?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notify staff as early as possible and share the general reason/pathway.</li> <li>• Participate by audio and video, unless a disability-related physical condition requires audio only.</li> <li>• Disclose whether anyone age 18+ is present in the room.</li> <li>• Minutes must reflect just cause/accommodation use, without medical, personal, HIPAA, or private details.</li> <li>• AB 2449 limited remote participation provisions are extended through 2030; all conditions still apply.</li> <li>• If access is disrupted, staff will try to restore access for up to one hour; the body may then make findings and recess, continue, or adjourn.</li> </ul>

**Bottom line:** Agenda it. Notice it. Allow public comment. Keep formal Commission business in the public meeting.