

# HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW IN VIRGINIA

The following steps depict the normal procedure whereby a non-controversial bill becomes a law. Bills may originate in either the House of Delegates or the Senate.

Delegate Accomack Lee, as requested by constituents, prepares to introduce legislation permitting the governing bodies of localities to prohibit the sale and use of certain fireworks.

Delegate Lee then explains exactly the proposal he has in mind to a staff attorney in the Division of Legislative Services. The staff attorney checks existing law and the constitutionality of the proposed legislation.



A bill is then drafted by the Division of Legislative Services. Draft copies of the bill are made and delivered to Delegate Lee.

Delegate Lee signs his name on the bill and introduces it by laying the original and duplicate copies on the desk of the Clerk of the House of Delegates.

The bill is ordered printed and referred to the Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns.

The members of the Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns—in public session—familiarize themselves with the bill and decide to approve it without amendments.

The Committee then reports the bill favorably to the House.

First Reading: The bill title is printed in the calendar or is read by the Clerk, and the bill advances to second reading.

Second Reading: The next day the bill title appears in the printed calendar on second reading. Bills are considered in the order in which they appear in the calendar. The Clerk reads the title of the bill a second time. A bill on second reading is amendable. The bill is explained by its patron (Delegate Lee) who answers any questions that may be asked. By voice vote the House votes to advance the bill to third reading.

A bill that has passed second reading with or without amendments is engrossed. If amendments are adopted the bill is reprinted in its final form for passage.

Third Reading: The next day, the engrossed bill title appears in the House calendar on third reading. The bill is read by title a third time by the Clerk. By recorded roll call vote the bill is passed by the House of Delegates.

Communication: When passed, the bill is sent to the Senate either by the Clerk in a communication or by a member in person, informing the Senate that the bill has passed the House and requesting the concurrence of the Senate.

In the Senate: The bill goes through substantially the same procedure as it did in the House. The bill is read by title a first time, referred to a standing committee, considered and reported by the committee, read a second time and a third time before passage by a constitutional majority.

After the bill has been passed by both houses of the General Assembly...

It is printed as an enrolled bill, examined and signed by the presiding officer of each house.

Then the bill is sent to the Governor for his approval.

After being signed by the Governor, the bill is sent to the Clerk of the House (Keeper of the Rolls of the State) and is assigned a Chapter number. All Chapters of a session are compiled and bound as the Acts of Assembly.

Bills enacted at a regular session (or the reconvened session which follows) are effective the 1st day of July following adjournment of the regular session, unless another date is specified.

Bills enacted at a special session (or reconvened session) are effective the 1st day of the 4th month following the adjournment of the special session, unless another date is specified.

The General Appropriation Act is usually effective July 1st and Emergency Acts become effective when signed by the Governor.

